

The Source of Nehemiah’s Faithfulness

Where we were...

Last week, we saw the deceitful tactics of Sanballat and Tobiah to undermine the work to rebuild Jerusalem’s wall. Now, we learn how Nehemiah endured and the theological truths that empowered his continued faithfulness.

Today’s big question

The question: *What enabled Nehemiah to persevere in the face of adversity?*

The answer: *Private faithfulness is the engine of public impact.*

Invisible Preparation

A pattern twice observed (so far)

Chapter 1: Nehemiah secretly prays, mourns, and fasts for four months → He requests from the king

Chapter 2: Nehemiah secretly plans, observes, and prepares for three days → He moves into action

Who you are when no one’s looking

Character is formed by countless, invisible, micro-choices.

Cheating on a test or studying? Working only when the boss is looking? Owning the mistake or avoiding responsibility? Giving credit or stealing it? Bending the truth in your favor? Confessing a sin or covering it up? Finishing the whole workout? Breaking the rules of your diet?

In Nehemiah’s case: “How can I be afraid of Sanballat and Tobiah when I already summoned up courage in front of the most powerful man alive, Artaxerxes?”

Years of invisible preparation for this moment

In 1915, at age 40, Winston Churchill was publicly demoted from the admiralship after a failed campaign. The press and political machine placed all the blame on him.

Throughout his late 50’s, he warned against Hitler’s rise with no one listening.

Then, at age 65, on May 10, 1940, he became Prime Minister during WWII.

“I felt as if I were walking with Destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial... I thought I knew a good deal about it all, and I was sure I would not fail.”

Having a vision for your life

Not meaning goals: This much money, a wife by age such and such, a retirement in the hill country...

But meaning: Hard work. Discipline. Faithfulness. Integrity. Honesty.

Those goals are reached day by day.

Theological Comprehension

Examining the theological core of Nehemiah’s resilience

You have no portion → “This is not your inheritance, it is ours.”

You have no right → “There is no legal argument you can make for your cause.”

You have no claim (or memorial) → “This is where our people worship, not you.”

These are shadows of NT realities

Our portion → We are heirs of Christ with an inheritance that will never fade

Our right → We have a legal standing with Christ

Our claim/memorial → We have a permanent Jerusalem where we will worship forever

Theology undergirds mission

Questions for Further Study and Application

1. Who are you in secret? Is this strengthening you for the moment of testing, or making you weaker?
2. Do you make the choices associated with having great character?
3. How does Nehemiah’s statement to Sanballat prefigure New Testament gospel truths relating to our inheritance, justification, and eternal glory with Christ?
4. How does theology (knowing who God is, what He’s about) shape the mission of your life?