



HOW TO SURVIVE A SHUTDOWN



S E R M O N G U I D E

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Nehemiah 4:1-6

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

A few years ago, my daughters and I watched the movie Creed, starring Michael B. Jordan. Halfway through the movie, when Adonis Creed was taking hit after hit and getting beat down badly, both of my daughters turned away and said, “Daddy, I don’t wanna see no more. He’s losing.” I told them to keep watching. He’s going to win. Later, one of them asked how I knew that when I hadn’t even seen the movie yet. I told them I knew because it was part of the Rocky franchise, and every film follows the same plot: it always looks the worst before things begin to turn around. There’s always the specter of defeat on the front end, but if you hold on, there will be victory on the back end. I’ve been reflecting on that conversation as I think about the political brutality, social conflict, constitutional confusion, and economic chaos we are witnessing right now. It feels like we’re in a big fight, and we’re losing, but God told me to tell you to keep watching. He’s going to win.

KEY POINTS

1. Honestly Assess the Damage

Before Nehemiah rebuilt anything, he first took time to inspect what had been broken. He didn't deny the damage or minimize the loss. He named it. Honest assessment is necessary for restoration. Shutdowns expose what has been neglected, damaged, or ignored, whether in our spiritual lives, relationships, or emotional health. But something powerful happens when we face the truth: we often discover that not everything is destroyed. Even in the ruins, remnants remain. There are still foundations to build on, pieces God can use, and hope embedded in the rubble. God leaves material for a miracle, even in broken places.

2. Activate Your Faith

After surveying the damage, the people still had a mind to work, and that is faith in action. Faith is not passive belief; it is active trust. It is choosing to keep moving forward when circumstances are discouraging. Faith looks like continuing to serve, pray, love, and obey even when things are difficult. Nehemiah shows that faith works best in community; it is shared, strengthened, and sustained together. It is courageous enough to keep building despite criticism and focused enough to avoid distraction. Faith puts what we believe into practice and refuses to quit when the work gets hard.

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3. Learn How to Build and Battle

Nehemiah teaches us spiritual ambidexterity: building with one hand while holding a weapon in the other. Half the people worked while the other half stood guard. Builders carried materials in one hand and weapons in the other. This is how God's people survive shutdowns: preparing for progress while protecting what has already been gained. Nehemiah reminded the people, "Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us." Shutdowns test endurance, but when we build together, battle together, and believe together, the wall will rise again.

NOTES

No Limits with Pastor Delman

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What areas of your life, community, or faith feel shut down right now, and how does Nehemiah challenge you to see beyond the ruins?
2. Why is it important to honestly assess damage before rebuilding, and what remnants might God already be using in your life?
3. What does it look like for you to build and battle at the same time, protecting your progress while continuing to move forward?