

Nehemiah 4 New Year Message 2023

Jesus

- **Exile over.** 70 years since Temple Burned/Wall around Jerusalem broken down
- **Ezra goes back builds Temple/Nehemiah encourages people to build wall...**

Nehemiah 2:17... "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and **let us build the wall of Jerusalem**, that we may no longer be a reproach." 18 And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, "**Let us rise up and build.**" Then they set their hands to this good work. 19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they **laughed at us and despised us**, and said, "**What is this thing that you are doing?** Will you rebel against the king?" 20 So I answered them, and said to them, "**The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build**, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem."

Where God is working the enemy is also at work

1 But it so happened, when **Sanballat** heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was **furious** and very **indignant**, and **mocked the Jews**. 2 And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these **feeble Jews** doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?"

When God's People are doing God's Work God's Way
The enemies of God get their shorts in a bunch...

- **Furious** Madder/Madder
- **Indignant** Evil people provoked to anger by others doing good?
- **Mockers** Left w/nothing sensible to say **call names...Feeble Jews**

Satan uses those *not working* to attack those *who are working*
Those not involved in what God is doing become bitter/resentful/malicious

- **Satan's Tactic** Cause Discouragement/Doubt they are doing God's work
- **Satan's Goal** Cause God's people to abandonment the work of God

Sanballat slanders God's workers for two purposes
1) Lift himself up and 2) To draw others to his cause...

Such a man as Sanballat never lacks friends. If there is a bad man anywhere, there is sure to be another close at hand. The devil does not make a fire with one stick. When he has set the first one alight, he can generally find another stick to put on it. [Spurgeon]

It is wonderful how unanimous bad men can be. It has always struck me as a very startling thing, that you have never heard of any division among the devils in hell. There are no sects among the devils; they seem to work together with an awful unanimity of purpose in their wicked design. In this one thing they seem to excel the family of God. Oh, that we were as hearty and united in the service of God as wicked men are in the service of Satan! [Spurgeon]

- Gossip makes us a partner of Satan the **Accuser of Brethren**

- **Put down Gossip hard/fast even if it comes off as insulting**

Satan looks for willing vessels...Puppets he can manipulate

3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall."

- Hardy has his Laurel/Abbott his Costello/**Sanballat his goofy Tobiah...**

Q. Why were they mocking?

A. God's People are doing God's Work God's Way...Mockers are puppets of Satan

Nehemiah 2:10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard [that they were planning to build the wall] , they were **deeply disturbed that a man** had come to **seek the well-being of the children of Israel...** **19** But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, **they laughed at us and despised us**, and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?"

Constant/Tedious attack of the enemy can wear us down...

Hebrews 10:35 [There will be suffering yet...] do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. **36** For **you have need of endurance**, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: **37** "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry."

Isaiah 59:19 When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard [way of escape] against him.

- **Way of Escape:** Turning it over to God.
- We will lose every time in our own strength

We don't ask God to give us strength...but to be our Strength

Nehemiah understands this principle and prays...

4 Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! **5** Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have **provoked You to anger before the builders.**

Your people hear Your Name being mocked. Arise O Lord. Glorify Your Name
Let Satan be pummeled/His Schemes overturned/His Workers humbled

- **Prayed in Expectation:** Gave it to God knowing His God heard/process answering
- **Worked by Faith:** As if his enemies were being dealt with/His people strengthened

6 So we built the wall, and the **entire wall was joined together** up to half its height, for the **people had a mind to work.**

[Mind to work] This is exactly what Satan wants to destroy with his attacks - the mind to work. He wants to make us feel defeated, or passive, or self-focused, or discouraged. [Guzik]

Critics demoralize. **Leaders encourage.** When the critics spoke, the workmen heard them and were demoralized. But when the capable leader stepped up and said, 'Let's look at it God's way, stay at the job,' the crew members were back in there." [Swindoll]

Gods got this...Now let's finish the job!

7 Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the **gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry...**

It's not bad to make the devil angry. [Guzik]

Satan sees the gaps beginning to close in our church God's People doing God's Work God's Way w/no Compromise

- Bible Based Discipleship: Couples, Men's, Women's, Youth
- Bible Based Corporate Prayer: Last Thursday of month
- Bible Based Bible Study Thursdays at 7. Psalms. Seminary guys.
- Bible Based Technology: New Web Site, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube
- Bible Based Children's Church Sun 10am
- Bible Based Youth Group Thursday Nights
- Bible Based Young Adults Group Sun after Church
- Bible Based Seminary Feb/March
- Bible Based Marriage Forum Last Fri Sat of Jan
- Bible Based Parenting Forum Last Fri Sat of Feb
- Bible Based Men/Women weekly studies...**Notice any theme?**

Ministries congealing/falling into place/bugs worked out to promote Gospel
God's People are doing God's Work God's Way...

Remember: Satan uses those *not working* to attack those that *are working*
Those not involved in what God is doing become bitter/resentful/malicious

If you are not involved in the wave of what the Holy Spirit is doing in this church, you are setting yourself up for a bad exit. [NJC]

...8 and all of [God's enemies] conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and **create confusion.**

If a work has no opposition from Satan, we may be half afraid it is good for nothing. If you cannot make the devil roar, you have not done him much harm; but the more he roars, the more cause is there for the angels singing the praises of God before the throne. [Spurgeon]

Sanballat/cronies know time is short before wall is complete

- Satan pulls out all stops/Full bore/Guns blazing/Mouth roaring

Revelation 12:12... the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

- **Satanic Attacks/Distractions**
 1. Break in
 2. Sickness. Lots. Still

3. Replacements [last minute]
4. Parking Lot Lights
5. Animals sick
6. Holiday Depression
7. Personal Issues
8. Weather. As God's people are doing God's Work God's way...

The enemy will seek to wreak havoc **create confusion** in the church
Satan will use anything/everything to do it...

9 Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

- **Gaps closing up/Enemy closing in...so we Prayed and Watched**

It isn't hard to imagine some super-spiritual among them saying, "Now Nehemiah, we don't need to set a watch. We have prayed, and God will protect us." Nehemiah would likely respond, "Yes, God will protect us...**as He finds us doing our duty before Him.** [Guzik]

- **Nehemiah Prayed** Direct line to God in Heaven while in His will
- **Nehemiah Watched** Aware earthly surrounding ready to act on God's Word

Everything's going swimmingly outside the wall...

10 Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall."

Dealing with the Enemy Within

- **Challenge from outside to finish well** Satan and World. Give it to God
- **Challenge from inside to finish well** Flesh. Rubbish in our lives. Give it to God

Hebrews 12:1b...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us

- Don't say you don't have rubbish...

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

- Our junk will pile up if we convince ourselves that it's not junk!

They have so much rubbish they were not able to build the wall. So what?

- Rubbish gets in the way of completing God's work. What needs to be gone?
- **Rubbish allows the enemy to hide and attack...**

11 And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease." 12 So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, "From whatever place you turn, they will be upon us."

- **Enemy sees our garbage**, i.e. Porn, Gossip, Lying, Deception, Hypocrisy as an asset
- **Blinded by sin/Self Deceit**

When our sin is piled so high, we can't see what's coming...it's time to strike

The attacks we suffer from spiritual forces of darkness are...strategically timed. Our spiritual enemies know when we are discouraged, tired, angry, or proud in self-confidence. [Guzik]

13 Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people **according to their families**, with their **swords**, their spears, and their bows.

- **Positioned Men:** Places most exposed to enemy penetration
- Special Forces/God's SEAL Team
 1. Men tried by fire/Men you could count on
 2. Men like we have in our church
- **Positioned Families:** Utilized the benefits of family structure
 1. Father/Leader. Mother/Nurturer.
 2. Provided w/Weapons...inc. sword. Instruction manual. **Do this and win...**

Colossians 3:18 18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." I brought you into this world and I can take you out and make another just like you

- **Men of War/Families correctly positioned:** Ready for enemy's attack

14 And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people...

- **Nehemiah the Leader...**
 1. **Looked** Got a temp on **all** his people
 2. **Arose** Assessed fear was setting in
 3. **Spoke...**

14b... "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."

Battle Ready: Eyes off self and on God and others

- **Remember the Lord** Great/Awesome. Bigger than any enemy inc. death
- **Fight for your families** Be courageous for them.

Nehemiah motivates God's people by getting their hearts/minds off self and on God/others
Always, always works to eliminate fear if people listen...they did.

Numbers 14:9 Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for **they are our bread**; their protection has departed from them, and the **Lord is with us**. Do not fear them.”

2 Samuel 10:12 Be of good courage, and **let us be strong for our people** and for the cities of our God. And may the Lord do what is good in His sight.”

15 And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that **God had brought their plot to nothing**, that **all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work**. 16 So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah. 17 Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that **with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon**. 18 Every one of the builders had his **sword girded at his side** as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

The kingdom of God is built with both a sword and a trowel, a sword to come against every spiritual force of wickedness in high places, and trowel to do the work of building up the people of God. [Guzik]

19 Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, “The work is **great and extensive**, and we are separated far from one another on the wall. 20 Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. **Our God will fight for us.**” 21 **So we labored in the work**, and half of the men held the spears from daybreak **until the stars appeared**. 22 At the same time I also said to the people, “Let each man and his servant stay at night in Jerusalem, that they may be our guard by night and a working party by day.” 23 So neither I, my brethren, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me took off our clothes, except that everyone took them off for washing.

- **So where is your part on the wall?** Don't be left outside.
- **2023:** Year we magnify the Lord as **exemplified by our priorities**

Q. How do we Magnify the Lord? **As Nehemiah...**

A. Acknowledge Him as greater than any enemy/circumstance **and live like it**

Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses