

## Nehemiah 6 Victory in the Face of Fear

I love the smell of victory in the morning

### I. Conspiracy: Staying On-Task in the Midst Intimidation

1 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and **the rest of our enemies** heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), 2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, **let us meet together** among the villages in the plain of Ono."

- **God's work nears completion**
- Enemies want to meet with Nehemiah...

### 2b...But they thought to **do me harm.**

- **What had Nehemiah done?**
  1. **Forsook** his own comfort
  2. **Sympathized** for the hurting
  3. **Desired** their Restoration...sound familiar?
- **Why do the wicked seek harm of righteous?**
  1. Darkness hates the Light

**John 3:19** ...this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

- **Q.** What business was it of Nehemiah's enemies that he was building a wall?
- **A.** It was God's work. The wicked hate God and His people

**Psalm 37:32** The wicked watches the righteous, And seeks to slay him.

#### **Why do the wicked seek the harm of the righteous?**

1. **Darkness hates light:** Can't do what they want...sin

Established once again: The Wall, The Temple, the Law

God's Law blesses the heart of the Righteous; God's protection, care, practical love

God's Laws burns like fiery chords wrapped around the wicked

**Psalm 2:2** The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us **break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.**" 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh...

- The reason police officers are targeted: Lawlessness
- Lawlessness with regard to God's law is sin

**1 John 3:4** Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

- Lawlessness will be judged

**Matthew 7:23** ...then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who **practice lawlessness!**'

**Matthew 13:41** The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who **practice lawlessness...**

- Holy Spirit will remove His restraining power
- "Bonds and Chords of the law removed" Tribulation...time exemplified by lawlessness.

**Thessalonians 2:7** For the mystery of **lawlessness** is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

**Matthew 24:12** And because **lawlessness will abound**, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

- Lawlessness the reason we are not to be unequally yoked...

**2 Corinthians 6:14** Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has **righteousness** with **lawlessness**? And what communion has **light** with **darkness**?

- *Lawlessness is what God saves us from...*

**Romans 4:7** "Blessed are those whose **lawless deeds are forgiven**, And whose sins are covered; 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin."

**Titus 2:14** [Jesus] who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from **every lawless** deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

### **Why do the wicked seek the harm of the righteous?**

1. **Darkness Hates light:** Want freedom to sin
2. **Satan does not want us to finish well**
  - Nehemiah is almost done
  - God has blessed his work
  - Satan wants to take him out

### **Satan desire is for the man/woman of God to not finish well**

Well done good and faithful servant!

- How tasty it would be to the enemy for Nehemiah to *almost finish* the work?

**Luke 14:28** For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to **mock him**, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'?

- **Mocking**
  1. Your God was not able!

2. You were not able!
3. Who did you think you were!

### **Why do the wicked seek the harm of the righteous?**

1. Darkness Hates light
2. Satan does not want us to finish well
3. **Jealousy and Envy: Extinguish the Light**

**Genesis 4:1** [Read] Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord." 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

- The Blood: Verbal transmission from Adam and Eve
- Abel listened and did. Cain listened and did not. Period.

**6** So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

- Why are you angry? Who are you angry at?
- Why do you look down and discouraged

**7** If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

- **If you DO well:** Present tense; i.e. another opportunity
- Acceptance predicated on *God being Lord and not us*
  1. Blood is important
  2. You might not understand why God asks

**8** Now Cain talked with Abel his brother..

- **Let's meet together:** c.f. Nehemiah
- Cain talked with his brother:
  1. What do you think about what God said to me
  2. **"Brother, you knew the right thing to do and didn't do it"**

**8b...**and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Cain became Jealous/Envious and snuffed out the light; i.e. Any one telling him he can't do what he wants...lawlessness

- C.f. Joseph brothers wanting to snuff out the light of dreamer
- C.f. Religious leaders wanting to kill Jesus after they begin to lose power

**2b...**[Nehemiah's enemies] thought to **do** [him] **harm.**

### **Why do the wicked seek the harm of the righteous?**

## Why are Nehemiah's enemies not minding own business and seeking harm?

1. **Darkness Hates light:** Can't do what they want
2. **Satan does not want us to finish well:** Desire to mock God/us
3. **Jealousy and Envy:** Destroying that which makes uncomfortable

**Proverbs 27:4** Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who is able to stand before jealousy?

SUMMARY Conspiracy

## II. Victory over Fear

God's Work almost Complete: Enemy wants to congratulate Nehemiah?

**Proverbs 27:6** Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

- **Gift of Spiritual Discernment**
  1. Intent/Motive revealed by God
  2. Nurtured by our knowledge of God's Word
  3. Knowing Right/Wrong, Good/Evil, of God/not of God
- **Discernment:** Opposite of being naïve/simple

**Proverbs 14:15** The simple believes every word, But the prudent considers well his steps.

- **Spiritual Discernment:** Supernatural Wisdom. E.g. symbols for sun goddess

**Philippians 1:9** ... I pray... that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment

- **With regard to human relationships:**
  1. **Love has boundaries:** Boundaries are set in accordance with discernment
  2. Love *does not mean* believing/agreeing with everything someone says/does

**Come let us meet? Nehemiah Prayer: A. They mean to do you harm!**

**3** So [Nehemiah] sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.

- **I am doing God's work. You want me to...**
  1. Forsake God's work
  2. Waste God's time
  3. Leave God's people

**2 Timothy 2:3** ... endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. **4** No one engaged in warfare **entangles himself with the affairs of this life**, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

- Always many “good things” pulling at us...what is God saying to do?

**...Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?”**

### **Careful of being sidetracked from God’s real work**

If the enemy can distract God's people, then he has won; if we can start majoring on minors, and minoring on majors, we've lost our effectiveness for the work of the LORD. [Guzik]

- **What is really important?** Saving, Restoring, Healing lives

**4 But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.**

**4 x:** “Let us meet together!!!”

- **Enemy Scheme:** Press those buttons!
  1. Wear us down
  2. Wear us out until we give in
- **Q. Why that same thing again?** Why that same person again? Same button again?
- **A. Get us off-task.** Distract from important: **Saving, Restoring, Healing Lives**

### **Nehemiah stands strong.**

**5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. 6 In it was written: It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king. 7 And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, “There is a king in Judah!”**

New Tactic Introduced: **Intimidation**  
**“If you don’t stop you will be in big trouble”**

- **Intimidation:** We know you’re a rebel
  1. All the nations are talking... even Geshem [the Arab]. **You are alone in this**
  2. You are building a wall so you can be king: **Your motives are selfish**

We hear you even have prophets ready to announce your Kingship

**...Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.**

- **Enemies Desired Result:** First distract then **Paralyze us with Fear?**
- **E.g. Elijah**

**1 Kings 18:21** ...Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? **If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.**”

1. Elijah calls down fire. Killed Jezebel's prophets of Baal
2. Mountaintop experience
3. Jezebel threatens to kill Elijah, runs far away
4. Great prophet found paralyzed in fetal position wanting to die
5. I am the only one left. I want to die. Satan wins this one. God obliges

**Fear took a great man down...Fear caused him to forget that the LORD is God**

- **What about Nehemiah?** We are going to tell on you...

8 Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart."

- **Sanballat**, you're a Liar
- **Fact:** We can't stop people from talking about us...

"Since I cannot govern my own tongue, though it is within my own teeth, how can I hope to govern the tongues of others?" [Benjamin Franklin]

"No man can lead a work of God if he allows himself to be governed by what other people think. [Redpath]

- The wicked are *so determined to hurt/so overtaken by sin... lay awake planning*

**Micah 2:1** Woe to those who devise iniquity, And **work out evil on their beds!**

**Psalm 36:3** The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; He has ceased to be wise and to do good. **4 He devises wickedness on his bed...**

- Enemies threaten to tell King Artaxerxes of Persia; ruler over Israel at time
- Nehemiah worked for Artaxerxes and has permission to build the wall
  1. His enemies don't know he has permission/king favor
  2. Nehemiah doesn't share it...sometimes best just be quiet
  3. Nehemiah knew he was doing God's work

**"If you don't stop the work you will be in big trouble!" or "I'm telling"**

9 For they all were **trying to make us afraid**, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done."

- **Enemies motive:** Instill Fear
  1. To manipulate us
  2. To control us
  3. To gain power over us at
  4. The weaken us
  5. To put a halt to God's work in our lives

Ultimately Satan's agenda is to use fear to remove God from the throne of our lives  
Causes us to lose focus and make devastating decisions

- **Q.** What do we do when the enemy is trying to make us afraid?
- **A.** Make God big!

## 9b...Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

**The fear of God is the death of every other fear; like a mighty lion...  
It chases all other fears before it. [Spurgeon]**

**Your spirit has been bruised by cowardice,  
Which many a time so weighs a man's heart down  
it turns him from a glorious enterprise-  
as shadows fool the horse that shies away.**

(Dante, Inferno, Canto II)

**In this early scene from Dante's Inferno**, Vergil urges Dante to press forward in his God-ordained journey through the underworld. His vivid language draws a picture of *what fear does to the soul*. *Fear bruises the soul like a physical injury. Fear tricks the heart as shadows fool the horse*. How many times are we tricked into shying away from a mission because we are afraid of shadows? How many times have we missed a **"glorious enterprise"**?

- **Fear can be devastating. We do not have to exist as cowards**

**2 Timothy 1:7** For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. [NASV *Discipline*] [Training our minds not to fear by what to focus on]

- Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil
- The only thing we have to fear is fear itself [FD Roosevelt]

### **Q. What is your greatest fear?**

**A. Make God big.** Put your head down, run straight into your fear. You'll find it just a shadow in the light of Greatness of God and His eternal plan

**Fear haunts the steps of everyone who faces a glorious adventure.** In *The Hobbit*, Tolkien describes two great moments of decision for Bilbo Baggins. The first comes when he decides to leave his comfortable home to go on the quest with the dwarves. **The second** occurs when he is in the tunnel about to face the legendary dragon Smaug. **It was at this point that Bilbo stopped.** Going on from there was the bravest thing he ever did. The tremendous things that happened afterwards were as *nothing compared to it*. He fought the real battle in the tunnel **alone**, before he ever saw the vast danger that lay in wait. Remember that **he has still never seen a dragon.**

At this moment in the tunnel, it is just a shadow if you will, an idea of a scary beast. **So, it is here, in the moment of decision, that Bilbo fights the real battle.**

- **We have real dragons:**
  1. At work, at school, at home
  2. People/Situations want to instill fear and steal faith
- **Moment of decision...**
  1. Fear on throne?
  2. God on throne?

- **Stop the work...**We are going to tell the king
- We are going to lie about your motives and you will be put to shame...

### **9b...Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.**

10 Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was a **secret informer**; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you."

- **Nehemiah seeks his "friend" Shemaiah for comfort**
  1. Secret Informer: They are coming to kill you
  2. Let's go to the House of God, shut the doors and have a bible study

11 And I said, "Should **such a man as I** flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!"

- **I am doing God's work. You want me to run?**
  1. Forsake God's work
  2. Waste God's time
  3. Leave God's people...**to save my own life?**

**John 10:11** "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own."

- Jesus tempted to "Come down from the cross!"
- **True Shepherds don't run at danger**

### **I will not go hide...Why are you asking me to?**

12 Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because **Tobiah and Sanballat** had hired him.

- **Perceived deceit:** Not naive, not simple but using Spiritual Discernment

It sure sounds reasonable - and one might even take some Scripture to support it: Psalm 61:4 says, I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Nehemiah needed discernment now more than ever. [Guzik]

Even when everything looks sounds great. Even when your flesh says yes  
**...if God's Spirit says no...it is NO. Believer...What does your gut say?**

- Nehemiah knew in his gut and by God's Spirit he was being betrayed

**Even though he had no physical proof or explanation**



**1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God

- **Seemed right but something is definitely wrong**

**Posted:** Lost dog: blind in left eye, missing right ear, broken tail, recently neutered, answers to the name "Lucky."

- **Something is not right about this...this guy was a Judas...**

**13** For this reason he was hired, that I **should be afraid** and **act that way and sin**, so that they **might have cause** for an evil report, that they **might reproach** me.

- **Devils Desire:**

1. Intimidation leading to fear
2. Fear will lead to making poor decisions
3. Poor decision will lead to condemnation

- Some believers live in guilt/condemnation 24/7 believing devil's lies...
- Jesus took our condemnation on the cross...

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **17** For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

- We can agree with our adversary that we deserve condemnation
- We can also remind him that there is no condemnation left for us...Jesus took it all

**Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

- Nehemiah prayer

**14** My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have **made me afraid.**

- Vengeance is the Lords

*Jesus said He was going to throw it all at us and we would have to climb over it: C. Tharp*

**John 16:33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

- **Fact:** Everything that happens to us must first pass through God's filter of love
- **Fact:** Everything passes through God's filter of love is designed to make us better
- **Fact:** God is more concerned about your Spiritual growth than about your comfort

**Romans 8:28** ...we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. **29** *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son*

- Conformed into the image of Jesus
- **Jesus is fully God.** Jesus became fully man and learned as a man...

**Hebrews 5:8** ...though **He was a Son**, yet He learned obedience **by the things which He suffered.**

**Temporal Suffering: Cosmic Battle between good/evil at work, home, school**

- **Satan's Schemes as per Nehemiah 6**
  1. **Draw us away** from the work
  2. **Wear us down** in the work
  3. **Cause fear:** Paralyze us from completing the work...and if that doesn't work...
  4. **Offer a compromise** to run from real the work for something good but less

Nehemiah's Enemies used all these Satanic Tactics

- Nehemiah and Mature, Wise, God-Fearing Believers understand...

**Enemy's attacks:** Actually opportunities to glorify God, prove God out, to **make God BIG**

**... would have made me afraid.**

- **Would have made us afraid:** Do not fear 365 times in Scripture

**Hebrews 10:35** ...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. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, [we are] of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

We are those who "make God BIG"

**SUMMARY Victory in the Fear:** Nehemiah learned to conquer fear of man in Persia

## **II. God's Work Completed: Enemy Disheartened**

**15** So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.

- Nehemiah prayed for **over 120 days**
- Nehemiah completed Wall in **52 days**

**16** And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that **they were very disheartened** in their own eyes...

- **Enemies Disheartened:** Lit. cast down, to go limp

When our enemies thought about the last 4 months and their utter failure  
The bullies became like jelly...**Mentally physically defeated...**

**16...**for they perceived that **this work was done by our God.**

- **Q. What is Victory?**
- **A.** Victory in a way that forces our enemies give glory to God for what they see
  1. **If Satan can make us angry** ...he wins
  2. **If Satan can make us fear** ...he wins
  3. **If Satan can make us bitter** ...he wins

**Greatest revenge:** Living life well; i.e. "Keep watching God win!"  
**This could only be God!**

It is a glorious thing to dishearten the enemies of God's people and to let them be discouraged for a while. [Guzik]

- True victory is winning our physical enemies to Christ

**Battle won but the war rages on...and on**

**John 16:33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. **In the world** you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

- **While we are "in the world" we will have tribulation**
  1. Count on it
  2. Deal with it
  3. Overcome it

**1 John 5:5** Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

- **Key:** Constant communication with Jesus and His Holy Spirit
- **Fact:** Our enemies are in constant communication plotting/scheming:

**17** Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came to them.

- Constant correspondence between Leaders of Judah and ...Tobiah?
- **Take home:** Our enemies Spiritual realm constant communication with one another

**Screwtape Letters Quotes: CS Lewis**

Uncle Screwtape [demon] coaches nephew Wormwood [demon] how trip up his "patients"

**1. Lead them down an easy Road to Hell:**

Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. **Nurture their complacency**

"The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions." **[A.W. Tozer]**

**2. Keep them from the Word of God**

It is funny how mortals always picture us as putting things into their minds: in reality our best work is done by keeping things out. **Stealing the Word of God from people's minds.**

### **3. Cause them to ask what "what will happen to me if I obey God"**

There is nothing like suspense and anxiety for barricading a human's mind against the Enemy (God). He wants men to be concerned with what they do; our business is to keep them thinking about what will happen to them. **Fear of Man**

### **4. Be very concerned when they obey in the face of opposition**

Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken...and still obeys.

### **5. Cause them to rely on emotions rather than God's truth**

If once they get through this initial dryness successfully, they become much less dependent on emotion and therefore much harder to tempt.

### **6. Keep them anxious**

"There is nothing like suspense and anxiety for barricading a human's mind against the Enemy. He wants men to be concerned with what they do; our business is to keep them thinking about what will happen to them"

### **7. Offer Religion without Regeneration**

"If you can once get him to the point of thinking that 'religion is all very well up to a point,' you can feel quite happy about his soul. A moderated religion is as good for us as no religion at all- and more amusing"

### **8. Nurture their hard heart**

"The more often he feels without acting, the less he will be able ever to act, and, in the long run, the less he will be able to feel"

### **9. Offer them a far off phony dead god**

"For the presence of the Enemy, otherwise experienced by men in prayer and sacrament, we substitute a merely probable, remote, shadowy, and uncouth figure, one who spoke a strange language and died a long time ago. Such an object cannot in fact be worshipped"

### **10. Propose a Feel-Good Gospel that cannot save the soul**

"The thing to do is to get a man at first to value social justice as a thing which the Enemy demands, and then work him on to the stage at which he values Christianity because it may produce social justice. For the Enemy will not be used as a convenience". **The gospel is about saving sinners not social justice**

- Hierarchy of demons with one head [Locust] of Revelation the Devil
- **Studying, taking orders, tempting:** One agenda...take us down, take us out...follow them to hell

### **Nobles in Judah communication with Nehemiah's enemy Tobiah**

18 For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. 19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him.

- Many indebted to Tobiah [Later]
  1. Reporting to Nehemiah what a good guy Tobiah is
  2. Telling Tobiah what a bad guy Nehemiah is

**Sometimes leaders must allow themselves to be seen as “the bad buy”**

**God vindicates...God validates...God praises**

**1 Corinthians 4:5** [God is judge] Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. **Then each one's praise will come from God.**

- Empowered with self-righteous after the vain praise of men the enemy presses in...

**19...Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.**

- Intimidation will never end until we are one inch off the ground
- **God is our fortress and defender...**

**Proverbs 3:24** When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your **sleep will be sweet.**<sup>25</sup> Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;<sup>26</sup> For the **Lord will be your confidence,** And will keep your foot from being caught.