

BATTLING OPPOSITION

“They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it.” —NEHEMIAH 4:8

Serving God is never about popularity, but about pleasing God, and doing what we discern and believe to be His will. Throughout Scripture, building and battling, work and warfare often go hand in hand, and that’s something we need to be prepared for.

In Nehemiah’s rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, there are three methods of attack that take place. The first is derision or ridicule, which came from opposing forces surrounding Jerusalem. Nehemiah 4:1 says, “When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews...” Ridicule is designed to undermine not only the work, but the people of God. It is psychological bullying, which is often sufficient to stifle our spirits and our work.

Secondly, Nehemiah’s work was attacked with the threat of destruction. He says, “Also our enemies said, ‘Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work’.” (Nehemiah 4:11). The stakes are upped from verbal abuse and ridicule to physical attack, which threatens to kill them. Such is the enmity of the evil one against God and His work all over the world.

The third area of attack is discouragement, which comes from their own people. Nehemiah 4:10 says, “Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, ‘The strength of the labourers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall’.” The temptation then is to give up the work.

Discouragement, especially induced by physical threat, can not only be paralyzing, but can provoke fear, and be the tipping point that brings defeat.

President Franklin Roosevelt, inaugurated in the Great Depression, said, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Fear is contagious and will either destroy faith or faith will destroy fear. In the work of rebuilding the walls what do the people do? Nehemiah gathers all the officials and labourers together and tells them, “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome...” (Nehemiah 4:14).

The people listened and in an astounding 52 days the rebuilding of the gates and walls surrounding the entire city of Jerusalem was completed. There are times when we need to reawaken the vision and bring God back to the forefront. Exodus 14:14 says, “The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.” That is God on our side, and any resistance to the work of God becomes His business. Though the opposition may gain a little ground, it is God who gains the territory.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, help me to overcome any resistance to your work. Keep me always driven by my faith in You. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: How would I handle opposition to the work of God?