

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

05.03.2026 | Facing Opposition | Nehemiah 4 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning, I'd love for you to turn with me to Nehemiah chapter four. If you brought a Bible, you can turn in that one. If you need a Bible, there should be one in the pew and the chair in front of you. We're walking through this book of Nehemiah. In our fourth week, we began a few weeks ago looking at this devastating news that Nehemiah received about the fact that Jerusalem was in ruins. The people of God who had returned from exile were struggling, living in shame and destruction of their city. We saw in Nehemiah chapter one that Nehemiah's first response was prayer. When Nehemiah received this devastating news, he turned to God in prayer. Then secondly, he went to the king of Persia. He was the cup bearer to the king and he, trusting that the hand of God was upon him in obedience to God, he went to the king and he got resources and he got permission to go to Jerusalem and begin the work of rebuilding. And that's what we saw last week in chapter three, that this work of rebuilding in the city of Jerusalem began as the walls began to be rebuilt and we saw the whole community involved in this work. We're just reminded that in order to do the work of rebuilding and renewal that God wants to do, it takes a community. It takes all of us working together to see God do this work in us and through us.

Now as we've begun the series for these first few weeks, I've been pretty vague in general when I talk about rebuilding and renewal. And that's been intentional. I find that sometimes people approach the book of Nehemiah especially pastors will come to the book of Nehemiah with a specific vision or something they want the church to do. And they will use the book of Nehemiah to help cast that vision. And that's not always a bad thing, but I guess I just want us to see the book of Nehemiah and what is being told here as a bit broader. That's not always about a specific task being accomplished, but it's about the work of rebuilding and renewal that God wants to continue to do in his people. And so I've been a bit open because I just want us to ask the question, what kind of rebuilding and renewal does God want to do in my life? What kind of rebuilding and renewal does God want to do in my marriage, in my relationships, in my friendships, in my career, in my life? I've been trying to ask myself that question throughout the series. And I believe God's been showing me things and I hope he's been showing you. What kind of rebuilding and renewal does God want to do in our church and through our church as we are called to be God's church here in the city of San Francisco? As we seek to lead people to love and live for Jesus. What does that look like for us in our community, in our city in this season?

So I want us to be open about this. I want us just to continue to pray about the work of rebuilding and renewal that God is doing in us and through us. And I want us to be honest today, that when we embark on a work of rebuilding and renewal, just personally or in the church, we will face opposition. Anytime we seek to be obedient to God and to what he has called us to do, we will face difficulty, we will face discouragement, we will face opposition. That's what this next section of Nehemiah's story is all about. Nehemiah chapter four, we see the enemy using some characters we've already been introduced to to bring opposition to God's people and the work that they are doing. And let's just see how this unfolds in Nehemiah chapter four.

So I just wanna read the whole chapter for us. Nehemiah chapter four starting in verse one. It says, "Now when Sanballat heard "that we were building the wall, he was angry, "greatly enraged and he jeered at the Jews. "And he said in the presence of his brothers "and of the army of Samaria, "what are these feeble Jews doing? "Will they restore it for themselves? "Will they sacrifice? "Will they finish up in a day? "Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish "and burn ones at that? "Tibiah the Ammonite was beside him. "And he said, yes, what they are building. "If a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall. "Here, O our God, for we are despised. "Turn back their taunts on their own heads "and give them up to be plundered in a land "where they are captives. "Do not cover their guilt "and let not their sin be blotted out from your sight "for they have provoked you to anger "in the presence of the builders. "So we built the wall and all the wall was joined together "to half its height for the people had a mind to work. "But when St. Blat and Tibiah and the Arabs "and the Ammonites and the Ashetites heard "that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem "was going forward and that the breaches "were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. "They all plotted together to come and fight "against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. "And we prayed to our God and set a guard "as a protection against them day and night. "In Judah, it was said, the strength of those "who bear the burdens is failing. "There is too much rubble. "By ourselves, we will not be able to rebuild the wall. "And our enemy said, they will not know or see "til we come among them and kill them and stop the work. "At that time, the Jews who lived near them "came from all directions and said to us 10 times, "you must return to us. "So in the lowest parts of the space, "behind

the wall and open places, "I stationed the people by their clans "with their swords, their spears and their bows. "And I looked and arose and said to the nobles "and to the rest of the people, do not be afraid of them. "Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome "and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, "your wives and your homes. "When our enemies heard that it was known to us "and that God had frustrated their plan, "we all returned to the wall, each to his work. "From that day on, half my servants worked on construction "and half held the spears, shields, bows and coats of mail. "And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah "who were building on the wall. "Those who carried the burdens were loaded in such a way "that each labored on the work with one hand "and held his weapon with the other. "And each of the builders had his sword "strapped at his side while he built. "The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. "And I said to the nobles and to the officials "and to the rest of the people, "the work is great and widely spread. "We are separated on the wall, far from one another. "In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, "we rally to us there, our God will fight for us. "So we labored at the work. "Half of them held the spears from the break of dawn "until the stars came out. "I also said to the people at that time, "let every man and his servant pass the night "within Jerusalem, that there may be a guard for us by night "and may labor by day. "So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants "nor the men of the guard who followed me, "none of us took off our clothes. "Each kept his weapon at his right hand."

You know, one of the joys of being a pastor is I often get like a front row seat as to what God is doing in people's lives. I get to see the work of rebuilding and renewal that God is doing in people. Whether it's them coming to faith in Christ or rededicating their life to the Lord or being obedient to something God has called them to do, I often get to see that and encourage it and celebrate it. And I've come to learn that one of the things I need to grow in as a pastor is along with encouraging and celebrating what God is doing in their life, I need to be honest about the fact that when God is doing something in someone's life and when they are being obedient to what he is calling them to do, those people will surely face some type of opposition.

So often what I see is God begin to do something in someone's life and there's encouragement, there's celebration and there's the work beginning and then opposition comes and there's discouragement. So often when God's been speaking to us or moving in our lives, that's when we will most often face discouragement, we will most often face opposition. In fact for our women who gathered for our women's conference this weekend, maybe it was a great time on Friday night and Saturday of being together and drinking deeply from the Lord. Maybe that means that opposition will come, maybe it's already come as you got home last night. Maybe it means that something will come up in the coming days. So often we need to celebrate and be encouraged when the work of rebuilding and renewal happens, but we also need to be honest and expect opposition.

And this is actually the first part of the example that we see from Nehemiah in this chapter. That is we need to expect opposition when doing the work of God. When we begin to follow God and what he has called us to do, when we begin to obey him and do a work that he has called us to do, we need to expect opposition. We should not be surprised, we should not be shocked, it should not catch us off guard when we face opposition when doing the work of God. Now in saying that, I don't want us to become fearful or cynical. Sometimes I'll talk to certain Christians who think the whole world is against them. They think like every part of the world and every person is against them and what they're trying to do for the kingdom of God. I don't think that needs to be our posture. You know we believe in what we would call common grace. That is that God's grace is towards his creation in such a way that it's not a saving grace and that every person is saved, but there is a grace extended from God to his creation in which not the whole world or not every person who doesn't believe in God is against the work of God.

So I don't want us to become fearful as if everyone's gonna be against us. I don't want us to become cynical as thinking everybody who's not a Christian or everybody who's outside the church is going to oppose what we're trying to do as the people of God. But also don't want us to be naive. I want us to expect that when we're seeking to follow God and be obedient to what he's called us to do, when we're doing the work of God, we should expect, anticipate that opposition will come. Why does opposition come? Well I think we get a picture of it here in this passage. Why do we face opposition when doing the work of God? We'll go back to the beginning in verse one. It says that Sanbalat had heard that they were building the wall. And when he heard this, he was angry and greatly enraged and he jeered at the Jews. We hear about Tobiah and we hear about some of the other peoples and how this made them so angry. And you could read this and you could think, man, what is their deal? Do they just hate the Jewish people this much? Like why are they so against this

work happening in Jerusalem? Why are they so mad that the Jews are rebuilding their wall? And one of the things that we see is that Sanbalat is a ruler in this area. We met him back in chapter two as Nehemiah was going to Jerusalem and said that he met this guy, Sanbalat and Tobiah, and they were rulers in the provinces surrounding Jerusalem. We find out here that Sambalat is a ruler over Samaria.

What does that mean? Well it means that a Jerusalem that has been destroyed, a Jerusalem that has its walls been broken down, a Jewish people that is weak and is vulnerable is good for Sambalat and for his power and for his influence. He is experiencing a great deal of rain and authority in this region and part of that is because the Jewish people are weakened and they are vulnerable and he can take advantage of that. Why is he so mad that Jerusalem is being rebuilt? It's not necessarily that he's got something specific against the Jews, although that might arise. But I think what's really happening here is he is upset that his authority and his influence and his kingdom is being challenged. And I think this is why opposition comes when we seek to do the work of God. Because the kingdoms of this world love their influence. They love their authority. They do not want to see the kingdom of God established and grow. They love their authority and their influence so much they do not want to come under the authority of the one true king, God.

In fact, Psalm chapter two, Psalm two says, why do the nations rage and the people plot in vain? That's exactly what we see happening in the Amiah chapter four. It says that they were enraged. It actually talks about the way they began to plot, make plans. It says in Psalm two, why do the kings set themselves against God and against his anointed? And the answer is because they feel like the authority of King Jesus, of the King of Heaven, is a bondage over them. They want their own authority. They want their own kingdoms. And so when the kingdom of God is being established, it's being expanded. When the kingdom of God is reigning out and God's authority is being seen, people who love their own authority oppose that.

This is why we should expect opposition when we're doing kingdom work. It's also why we need to be cautious because this can happen in our own hearts. Now we'll talk more about our own problems in the coming weeks as we study the book of Nehemiah. But we just need to recognize that sometimes we like to be our own authority and not submit to the one true king. Sometimes we like to build our own kingdoms rather than his kingdom. Sometimes we get so drawn into the kingdoms of this world and the things that they have to offer us that we can actually oppose kingdom work. So let's be cautious because this can happen in our own lives, but let's also be expectant that it will come from others. When God's kingdom is being established, it's being expanded. When we are doing kingdom work, we can expect opposition because the kingdoms of this world love their authority and their influence.

Now part of expecting and anticipating opposition is knowing what it's going to look like. Well there's so many different forms that opposition can take. We see so many different examples in scripture. We probably don't have time to look at them all, but I just wanna offer you one example that we see specifically here in this passage. What does this opposition look like? Well in verse two, it says that Sanbalat, in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, he said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? "Will they restore it for themselves? "Will they sacrifice? "Will they finish up in a day? "Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish "and burn ones at that?" What is Sanbalat doing? He is asking these rhetorical questions, making fun of, taunting these Jewish people as they're seeking to do the work of rebuilding. And what he's trying to do is he's trying to get them to doubt the work that they have been called to. He's trying to discourage them as they question their ability to accomplish what God has called them to and even get them to question their relationship with God and the work that he is doing in them. Notice that he calls them feeble Jews and he talks about how can they possibly expect to rebuild. All this has been destroyed, it's been torn down, some of it's been burned.

There's no way that they can ever accomplish this work that they are setting out to do. Then he says, "Well, will they sacrifice?" I think the question is there, what are they gonna do? Are they going to worship their God and expect their God to miraculously rebuild the wall for them? They really have faith in their God to do this work, even when they can't do it. What the enemy, what the opposition is trying to do is get them to doubt God and what he has called them to and the work that he is doing in them and through them. This is the way the enemy works, it's the way he has worked since the Garden of Eden, getting you to doubt God and what he has called you to and that he is going to work in you and through you. He might tell you, you've messed up too much. What's happened in your life can't be rebuilt and renewed because you've just sinned too much. He might tell you the problems are too big in your church, in your city. You're just

not gonna be able to overcome it. What you really think you're just gonna get to and pray and God's gonna do something miraculous to change your lives, to change your city. The enemy wants you to doubt, he wants you to become discouraged. At times the enemy will go even farther. We see here just these taunts that are given out but then even later on there's this plot that happens and in verse seven, it says when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashtudites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it.

Sometimes it's not just doubt or discouragement the enemy will place in your mind but sometimes there will be clear opposition, even physically stopping the work of God from happening. Throughout history and even around the world today, there are many Christians who face threats of violence or face violence, persecution, for seeking to do the work of God. When we are seeking to obey God, when he's doing a work of rebuilding and renewing in us, we should expect opposition and part of the reason I think it's so important to expect opposition is that when we anticipate it, when we know what it looks like and we expect it, it actually gives us the ability to not just react but respond. This is the second part of the example I want us to see in Nehemiah chapter four, that when we expect opposition and it does come, we then are able to respond. It's important to respond to opposition with trust in God. Respond to opposition with trust in God.

We just saw that one of the main goals of the enemy is to get you to doubt God, the work that he has called you to, the work that he is doing in you and through you. And so if the main goal of the enemy is often to get us to doubt and to be discouraged, the best way that we can respond is to trust God, what he has called us to, the work that he is doing. We've already seen that Nehemiah is a man of prayer. We saw that he prayed to begin this whole book as he received the devastating news. We see here that he responds to the taunts and the jeering with prayer. Go to verse four and verse five. We see Nehemiah respond in prayer. He says, "Here, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunt on their own heads and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives. Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin be blotted out from your sight, for they have provoked you to anger in the presence of the builders."

Some of us read that, we think, man, that's pretty harsh language. Some of us read that and think, yeah, I could pray that about some people. Yeah, God, turn their taunting back on them. Give them over to some type of destruction, punishment. Let's talk about the content of the prayer in just a second. But first, let's just look at the fact that the first response is prayer. Nehemiah doesn't return a taunt with a taunt. He doesn't return back with talking trash to Sanballat and those people who are saying things to them. Instead of talking to them, he talks to God. Instead of taking matters into his own hands, he entrusted to God's hands. And this is why I would say it's important that we respond to opposition with trust in God. Nehemiah here is trusting that God is going to work. Imagine if we just took the same posture, that when people opposed us, instead of immediately reacting and saying something to them, we turned and talked to God.

Our kids in the room, how many of you have siblings? Some people have siblings, adults have siblings too. I mean, just imagine, this is just kind of a side note, but just imagine even if when your brother or sister was rude to you, mean to you, instead of being mean back, you just prayed for them. Now again, you might read this, you might think, yeah, let me pray that God would judge them and carry them off to a land to be plundered, right? But what if that was our first response to trust God and to pray? Now let's talk about this prayer. Is this what we should pray? Should we pray that the opposition that we are facing, people, forces that oppose us would be judged that their sin would not be blotted out? You know, there are examples of this type of prayer throughout the Old Testament. The book of Psalms will often find imprecatory prayers, imprecatory Psalms in which there's prayers that the enemies of God's people would be judged, they would be brought down, they would be, their power, their influence would be taken away.

I think it's important to know that if you read the Bible and you see the kind of the movement of redemptive history, what is happening in this part of redemptive history? What's happening is that the people of God are a nation state. The people of God are the people of Israel and they have a city, they have a capital, they have buildings. This is why it's important in their work to rebuild a wall. It's also important why they would recognize that there are people who are gonna be physically attacking them, just like nations so often do, or especially did back then. It's why they would pray that God would stop this from happening and prevent their enemies and even take their enemies away. Because they

exist as a nation state, living in a certain place and occupying a certain position in the world. But what do we see as we see the Bible unfold? We see things change in redemptive history, that no longer are we the people of God exist in a nation state, but we are a people of every nation. I think it's why you see the shift in the New Testament. You don't see the people of God called to go to a certain place and build a wall, rather you see us called to go out and build bridges to people.

It's why you don't see these types of prayers in the New Testament against certain groups of people, because it's no longer the same position that it was back then. In fact, Jesus kind of changes things when he says you need to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Paul reminds us in Ephesians chapter six, which was read over us just earlier, that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. People are not the enemy. There is an enemy, a spiritual enemy, spiritual forces. There is a work, a personal being, spiritual being that is against us, and he uses people, but people are not the enemy.

So what does all that mean for us? Well, I would say it is good for us to respond to opposition with trust in God and even prayer like Nehemiah does. And I think we can keep the same heart that Nehemiah has, although our prayers will look different. Instead of praying against a certain group of people to be brought low or to be judged, we would pray that places and people of injustice, things of injustice that are happening would cease, that God would change hearts or take people out of power. I think we would pray that, God, if you've called me to do this, this work that you've placed before me and I'm seeking to be obedient, God, I pray that you would remove the opposition. Take that person out of my life, take that person out of their place of influence, or change their heart so that they're no longer opposing your work. We pray against opposition. We pray that God's work would continue in our lives but in a different way. The recognition that people are changed, that people can be saved. So we keep a similar heart from Nehemiah, but our prayers look a little bit different. We're not praying against a certain people, but we are praying against opposition, that God would work so that his kingdom can go forth, that we can continue in what he has called us to.

Whatever you might be facing this morning, whatever opposition might be before you, will you turn to the Lord in prayer? Instead of first reacting in maybe anger, first just trying to take things into your own hands, would you turn to the Lord in prayer? That's what I want us to take away. More than thinking about, well, what exactly should I pray against people or for? Respond with trust in God. Respond with prayer to God. Instead of reviling in return, pray to God. Isn't this what Jesus modeled for us and set an example for us in? When reviled, when taunted, Jesus did not return with taunting words, but he prayed, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Respond to opposition with trust in God, specifically prayer to God, that he would continue this work.

Now the people, they respond in prayer, and what we see is that the work continues, but then more opposition comes, plots and threats of violence, and they pray more, but then the people begin to get discouraged. In fact, Jews from all around the region are saying you can't keep doing this, you need to come, abandon the work there, come to us. Nehemiah encourages the people to continue on, and does so in this way, in verse 14. When discouragement begins to set in, even as the people have already turned to God in prayer, he says, "I looked and I arose, "and said to the nobles and the officials "and to the rest of the people, "do not be afraid of them. "Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, "and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, "your wives, and your homes." When the people get discouraged and disheartened, what does Nehemiah tell them to do? Remember the Lord. He doesn't say it's really not that bad, don't worry about it. He doesn't say, well just look within, you've got the courage, you've got the bravery, you've got the strength to do this. He says, remember the Lord.

Our hope for the work of rebuilding and renewal actually be completed in our lives, in our church, in our city, is not in us, it is in the Lord. So when we face opposition and we get discouraged, what we don't need is just more inner resolve. What we don't need is just more effort and more work on our part. What we need to do is remember the Lord. We need to remember that he is the one in control, that he is sovereign. This is why we turn to him in prayer. And what have we seen throughout this whole story? That when you go to God in prayer you trust that he is great and awesome, as Nehemiah has just said, and you trust that he is sovereign overall, it doesn't make you passive. To go to prayer, to go to God, and to remember that he is over and all, it doesn't make you lazy and think, well God's got this. No, it makes you dependent upon him and then obedient to him.

What happens throughout the story is that the people go to God in prayer, they trust that he's in control and that empowers them to work. This is what it looks like to respond with trust in God, that we would go to God in prayer, that we would trust that he is over all, that we would remember God. Would you this week in the midst of your discouragement, whatever that might look like, would you remember God? Would you remember that he is great and awesome? Would you remember who he is? Would you remember what he's done? Would you remember what he's done in your life? How have you seen him be great and awesome in your life? Would you remember that and would you allow that to empower you to continue the work that you've been called to?

Responding to opposition with trust in God will lead to us continuing on in the work that he has called us to. It will lead us to persevere through opposition with faithfulness to God. And this is the last part of the example we see in this passage that I just wanna unpack for you. That we should expect opposition to come. When we expect opposition, when we anticipate it, we cannot just react, but we can respond. We respond with trust in God and when we have our trust in God. So we just saw from Nehemiah, as he told the people, as we remember God, that he is great and awesome, it empowers us to fight and to work. He says, continue this work and fight for your families. Don't get discouraged, don't give up on the work, but persevere through the opposition with faithfulness to God. This is what I wanna call us to, is God's people, that we would trust in him, but we'd also be faithful to him. That we face opposition, when we meet discouragement, we would continue in the work because he has called us to it. We know that he is in control of it.

We see that when the people went to God in prayer, he did something in them that they might continue in the work. Go to verse six with me. This is right after Nehemiah's prayer, when he says, God, do this work, we know that you're in control. It says, so we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to have its height for the people had a mind to work. The people had a mind to work and continue the work. What gave them this mind to work? Is it not spending time in prayer and trusting God? So often our minds get distracted away from the things that God has called us to because we have not trusted in him and turned to him. But what happens when Nehemiah goes to God in prayer? What happens when Nehemiah trusts in God? It gives the people a mind to continue on in the work. When we find ourselves getting distracted, taking our eyes off of what we're supposed to be doing, let us continue to go to God, trusting in him, and he will empower us to be faithful in the work that he has called us to do.

Let's see how it continues. That the people do the work in verse six, but then more opposition comes, they get discouraged, they wonder if they're gonna be able to do it. That's what Nehemiah tells him in verse 14, which we just saw, remember the Lord and continue in the work, and they do. And notice the way that they persevere. Verse 16, from that day on, half of my servants worked on construction and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. And each of the builders had his sword strapped in his, at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. What a powerful picture of perseverance. That even when they thought violence was gonna come against them, an attack from the enemy was coming, they did not stop the work. They just prepared themselves for the opposition and continued the work. One of the ways they did that is by working together. We talked last week about the importance of community. We see that here. Half the people are standing guard while half the people are working.

Listen, it takes a community to do the work of rebuilding and renewal. Sometimes for you to continue on the work that God has called you to, you're gonna need people who are watching your back, who are encouraging you to stay faithful when you get discouraged. People who stand guard for you while you're seeking to do what God has called you to do. Do we have people like that in our lives? Are we working together as a community? Do you have relationships and friendships where people can support you in that type of way? They persevered together, but not alone, also working together to be guarded, but each person, themselves, being guarded. He says that people were building with one hand and guarding themselves with the other hand. They would have like a trowel in one hand as they built the wall and a sword in the other hand as they stood guard.

But what do we do with this? We think about needing to be guarded, ready for opposition while continuing to do the work. What does this look like? What is the reason I brought up earlier the fact that we don't face an enemy that is flesh and blood, but we face a spiritual enemy? There's a reason we had earlier read Ephesians chapter six, which reminds us of the spiritual armor that we have. Because I think for us to do the work of God, we're gonna need to be guarded.

For us to persevere, we're gonna need to be able to stand guard, but it's not gonna be with a sword or a spear. It's gonna be with the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith. We're gonna need to have the armor of God put upon us. We need to put it on each and every day if we're gonna persevere through opposition and continue in the work that God has called us to. And you'll notice when you just read through that description of the armor of God, it is all given to us in Christ. All of it is connected to the gospel. All of it is connected to Jesus and the work that he has done. We have the spiritual armor to protect us through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ? Have you trusted in him? Do you believe in him as your savior? Do you worship him as king? The Bible says this is how we have the armor that we need, the protection that we need. It is actually in Christ, but it is given to us in him. But Paul tells us we need to daily put it on. So often we can take for granted this armor that has been given to us. And that's when the opposition will get the better of us. I can speak from experience as someone who has the armor, but just doesn't always put it on. It's those times when I see the enemy get victory over me. Let us not take for granted. Let us not neglect the armor that has been given to us. If we're going to persevere through opposition, it's going to be because we stand guard, because we are guarded and we continue on in the work. That's gonna happen as we daily put on the armor that is given to us in Christ. But it's also gonna happen when we remember that God will fight for us. And in fact, God has already fought for us and has already won.

Listen to what Nehemiah says to the people. This is where we'll close. In verses 19 and 20, it says that he said "to the nobles and the officials "and to the rest of the people, "the work is great and widely spread. "We are separated on the wall far from one another. "In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet "rally to us there, our God will fight for us." Listen to me closely. We have the blessing of not just saying our God will fight for us, but we have the blessing of saying our God has fought for us and he has won. The Bible says on the cross, Jesus Christ disarmed the enemy and put our enemy to open shame. The Bible says that he's already won. This is why in just a moment we'll respond to studying God's word together by singing those words, that we're fighting a battle that he's already won. We can say we know how the story ends because we know the one who is writing the story and we know how it is going to end.

When you face opposition, remember, remind yourself that you are fighting not for victory but from victory. That you put on this armor not because you're facing an enemy who can defeat you, but because you already have the victory in Jesus Christ. So that doesn't again make you passive, it empowers you to do the work that God has called you to do. It gives you the ability to each day, even when you're discouraged, even when it seems like the odds are stacked against you, to know he's already won. He's already written the end of the story, so get up, put on your armor and continue on in the work. Yes, let's expect opposition. It's going to come. It's gonna come internally, it's gonna come when we're seeking to rebuild and renew in our lives and our church and our city, we're going to face opposition from others. The enemy will use a variety of tactics to discourage us and make us doubt. Let's expect it. Let's respond with trust in a God who will fight for us, who has fought for us, who's already provided the victory. Let's respond in faithfulness by continuing on, standing guard with the armor he has provided in Christ and continuing in the work that he has called us to.