

Faith, Opposition, and the Fight for God's Work | Nehemiah 4 | Kyle Reno

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Nehemiah 4:1a (ESV)

Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged ..

THE ENEMY LITERALLY HATES GOD’S WORK IN YOU & THROUGH YOU

- **The moment they start trying to do what is right. He becomes “angry and greatly enraged”**

Nehemiah 4:1b-3 (ESV)

... and he jeered at the Jews. ² 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 burned ones at that?”³ Tobiah 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!”

- **Notice that he comes with the “army of Samaria”**
- **Then he mocks them...what are you going to do...”restore”, “revive” this place.**
- **Tell you mock that made me have a righteous anger I believe. When he says.... “Will they sacrifice?”**

Nehemiah 4:4-5 (ESV)

⁴ Hear, 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. ⁵ 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.

BRING THE LORD INTO THE WAR THROUGH PRAYER

- **In the words of John Piper...**

“The main reason prayer malfunctions in the mouth of God’s people is because they are AWOL and they are trying to turn a wartime walkie-talkie into a domestic intercom to call up the butler for another pillow, instead of to call the general for fire cover while they go to the city.

If all prayer is for you is to buzz the intercom for a few more comforts or you got a little ache in your tummy and you want the butler to bring in aspirin, the heavenly butler, it will malfunction. It will malfunction in your life. And you’ll stop doing it except maybe a minute or two a day because what’s the point? It’s just no big deal. I can get along frankly, I got doctors, and I’ve got insurance policies, and I’ve got grocery stores, and I’ve got a car, and I’ve got everything I need thank you. So, then what is the point of prayer? It’s just an unnecessary add-on. And the reason it is an unnecessary add-on is that we don’t know that life is war and that’s what prayer is for.

If you want to mobilize your life for prayer, you’ve got to know that life is war.

Prayer is a wartime walkie-talkie. It is not a domestic intercom to ring up the butler to bring another comfort to the den where we are already more secure than we should be. So, my picture of the Christian life is that when you get saved, you get recruited. God doesn’t recruit Christians for ministry. He recruits unbelievers for war. If you’re saved, you’re a soldier or you’re AWOL. And he recruits us, and he gives us a walkie-talkie called prayer.

He says, “There is a frequency to this walkie-talkie. It’s got one frequency, only one. It’s wired to the general. The general has the perfect oversight, the lay of the battlefield. He has a place for you to fight. It’s very dangerous. The wartime walkie-talkie is to help you locate yourself in there. It’s to help you have resources and strength and courage to be there. It’s to call in wisdom for what words to say. It’s to help you call in firepower when the danger comes. If you get wounded, it’s to call in for healing so that you can keep on fighting, not get more comfortable.” And if you try to change it to an FM station so you can call your favorite disc jockey and say play your favorite tune while you go over and cross your legs under a palm tree, it won’t work.”

EVERY OPPOSITION IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRAY

Nehemiah 4:6 (ESV)

⁶So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.

- **Because they “had a mind to work”.**

“I have seen many men work without praying, though I have never seen any good come out of it; but I have never seen a man pray without working.”

Hudson Taylor

PRAYING & WORKING HARD IS HOW THE KINGDOM IS ADVANCED

Nehemiah 4:7-14 (ESV)

⁷ But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites 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. ⁸ And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. ⁹ And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night. ¹⁰ 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."¹¹ And our enemies said, "They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work." ¹² At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, "You must return to us." ¹³ So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. ¹⁴ And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to 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 you get tired in the work and the war, take some time to... remember the Lord!

Nehemiah 4:15-20 (ESV)

¹⁵ 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. 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,¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. ¹⁹ And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another. ²⁰ In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

OUR FAITH FAMILY IS IN A FIGHT TOGETHER!

Nehemiah 4:21-23 (ESV)

²¹ So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out. ²² I also said to the people at that time, "Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day." ²³ 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.

MAKE UP YOUR MIND TO FINISH AND KEEP MOVING FORWARD