

***Villains***  
***Nehemiah's Enemies***  
***Sticks and Stones***  
***Discover Church***  
***Mark Phillips***  
***8/2/26***

Good morning, today we are going to continue with our series "Villains." For those joining us the first time in this series, we see in the Bible stories of people that are examples and God says, be like these people, go do what they did. And there are stories of people that are warnings and God says, don't be like these people, don't do the things they did!

In this series, we are looking at the stories that are warnings to see what we can learn from these villains. So far, we have looked at a man named Haman and talked about **"Pride Comes Before Destruction."** His life is a warning to us about "Pride."

Then last week we looked at the story of Judas and his betrayal of Jesus which serves as the ultimate biblical warning against greed. We learned that greed starts with a small compromise and grows into dishonesty. We looked at the antidote to greed which is to embrace the grace of Jesus Christ and seek His Kingdom and Righteousness.

This week we will look at the enemies of Nehemiah as we talk about "Sticks and Stones."

You have heard the phrase: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." It was a taunt we used on the playgrounds when someone was saying something mean to you. Which works when you are on the elementary playground. But as we get older, it becomes more like: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can also hurt me."

At some point in our life, we all have to deal with the words from someone that cuts deep into our heart and hurts us. These words try to define us and make us act in ways that are not always the best for us. How do you deal with these words so that they don't define your life? Nehemiah had to learn how to deal with words from enemies that were trying to destroy him. Let's see what we can learn on how to handle hurtful words.

***Background: Nehemiah***

- Jews are in captivity
- Nehemiah was the cup bearer for the king
- He heard about Jerusalem in ruins and walls broken down and wept
- The king asks what's wrong
- Tells the king the problem and the solution he would like to implement
- Gets permission from the king plus military transportation and supplies
- Go build the wall!

Just like Nehemiah, when you commit to rebuilding your life, faith, or community, opposition is guaranteed. Nehemiah's enemies, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, are the villains of this story. We see a strategic progression of attacks to try to stop the rebuilding of the wall. We have an enemy that attacks us and sometimes it is through the words of people to keep us from building the things of God in our life.

By looking at their attacks and Nehemiah's responses, we can identify and overcome modern spiritual attacks against us. Let's talk about how to...

# Overcome the Attacks of Your Enemy

## 1. The attack of ridicule and mocking (Nehemiah 4:1-6)

The enemy attempts to paralyze you with insecurity through ridicule and mockery. Sanballat and Tobiah belittled the builders' strength and the quality of their work. Maybe at some time in your life, you heard something like "You're not good enough!" "You can't do that!" "You'll never amount to anything." "Why can't you be more like \_\_\_\_\_?" One time or constant ridicule and mockery!

In times like this, take it to God. Nehemiah didn't argue with his critics. He didn't even engage them in conversation. He brought their insults to the Lord in prayer and immediately got back to work.

Who is mocking you as you try to build your faith and life? Take it to God. Get back to work and care more about what God thinks about you than the critic! Believe what God says about you in Psalm 139...

**"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.<sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts, God!" Psalm 139:14, 17**

You are God's works and you are wonderfully made. Next, they try...

## 2. The attack of intimidation and fear (Nehemiah 4:7-23)

When mocking fails, the enemy escalates to threats of intimidation to create confusion and fear. The goal is to sow fear in your life and stop the work through anxiety. For us today, it is to create fear to keep us from trying – professionally, relationally, spiritually, or whatever area that is being attacked.

In those times, combine prayer with practical action. Nehemiah prayed for protection but also armed his workers, stationed guards, and reminded the people to focus on the power of God over their enemies. For us today, surround yourself with encouraging people, Godly people that will help you grow and overcome fear.

Who is threatening you to try to prevent you from building your faith and life? Pray and take practical action by believing what God says about you. Check out Psalm 139...

**"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.<sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts, God!" Psalm 139:14, 17**

Believe God and the encouraging people around you! Next...

## 3. The attack of compromise and distraction (Nehemiah 6:1-4)

If direct attacks fail, the enemy uses distractions. Nehemiah's enemies repeatedly invited him to "compromise" by meeting in the plain of Ono, trying to lure him away from the project. Today the enemy tries to get us to compromise. Compromise our time to get us too busy doing good things that we miss the God things. Things like: It's not that bad. It's just a little short cut. It won't really affect your integrity.

To battle this, know your calling. Nehemiah recognized their intentions and refused to let a side-mission derail his primary purpose. He stayed on the wall. You are called to a purpose with God. Stay on your wall to fulfill that purpose. Ephesians 2 says...

**“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:19**

Don’t stop short, fulfill your purpose! Do the work God has prepared for you to do.

Who or what is trying to distract you with compromise to draw you away from your God-given purpose? To help you, check out Psalm 139...

**“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.<sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts, God!” Psalm 139:14, 17**

Remember your calling! Next...

#### **4. The attack of lies and slander (Nehemiah 6:5-9)**

This would include character assassination and gossip. The enemies spread false rumors to make Nehemiah look like a traitor to the king. The enemy will lie to you, lie about you, falsely accuse you because he is the father of lies! John 8 says...

**“When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:44**

In these times, refuse to panic. Nehemiah identified the lies, prayed for God to strengthen his hands, and addressed the false accusations with the truth. Because according to John 8:32...

**“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32**

Who is lying to you or about you and your position with Jesus? Don’t panic and remember what God says about you in Psalm 139...

**“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.<sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts, God!” Psalm 139:14, 17**

After lies and slander, there is...

#### **5. The attack of deception and betrayal (Nehemiah 6:10-14)**

This would be infiltration. The enemy hired false prophets to try to deceive Nehemiah into sinning by hiding in the temple. It was an attempt to discredit his reputation. This was a person close to Nehemiah that was deceived. It could be in our life that someone close to you that you trust may be deceived to betray you and your friendship. Sadly, we see friendships and families broken because of a deception.

Before you react and believe the deception, test everything against the Word of God. Nehemiah discerned that the prophet’s advice violated God’s commands and rejected it, unmasking the deception. Don’t let anyone deceive you, even if they are a friend or family member. Romans 3 says:

**“Let God be true, and every human being a liar.” Romans 3:4**

Who is trying to deceive you? Recognize the deception and believe what the word of God says about you like from Psalm 139...

**“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.<sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts, God!” Psalm 139:14, 17**

Nehemiah's enemies wanted him to stop building out of discouragement. Instead, he kept a trowel in one hand to build and a sword in one hand to fight. The sword we carry today against our enemies is the Word of God. Choose to believe God's Word over all the accusations of the enemy and build the wall of your life.

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***Overcome the Attacks of Your Enemy***

1. The attack of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
2. The attack of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
3. The attack of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
4. The attack of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
5. The attack of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**Scripture:** *Ephesians 2:19; John 8:44; John 8:32; Romans 3:4; Psalm 139:14, 17; Nehemiah 4:1-27, Nehemiah 6:1-14*