

“Done”

Nehemiah 6:1-19

Week of October 22, 2023

Opening Question:

- Have you experienced opposition regarding a plan or a way forward, someone who either disagreed with you or actually worked to thwart your plans? How did you respond? What was the outcome?

Pray this prayer (one person or the whole group together):

Lord, as we come together to study your Word, we bring all of who we are with our needs, our hopes and our expectations. Meet us here in the power and presence of your Holy Spirit. Give us insight and understanding as we listen carefully for your voice. And then give us courage and conviction to align our lives with the way of Jesus. We pray in his name. Amen.

Read aloud this introduction:

We learned last week that God had more in store for the Jews than just rebuilding a physical wall. This task was about a rebirth of hope where there was none. It was about stepping from disgrace into grace, moving from shame to joy. This included not just a fully rebuilt wall but a greater work of living together the way God wants us all to live.

The people who work beside each other have begun to learn how to be the people of God in a whole new way. God is at work rebuilding God’s people so they will live fully in the ways of God. God wants us to be remade as well. This is not just a history lesson. It’s really all about us. We read last week that the people, confronted with their sin, declare, “We will do what God wants and make up for what we did that was wrong.” Are we ready to say the same?

Right on the heels of this amazing, heartfelt response comes more self-serving opposition. The work is once again threatened by those concerned only with their own status and personal gain.

Read Nehemiah 6:1-19 aloud.

Some things to know:

- Ono was located about 27 miles northwest of Jerusalem in the westernmost area settled by the returning Jews.
- Letters during this period were ordinarily written on a papyrus or leather sheet, rolled up, tied with a string and sealed with a clay impression to guarantee authenticity.
- Vs. 9 “their hands will get too weak” draws on a Hebrew idiom that means “to demoralize.” (Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible p. 786-787)

Questions for Exploration:

- What forms of intimidation does Nehemiah face in this passage?
- How did Nehemiah show wisdom in meeting the challenge from his adversaries?
- What was the significance of Sanballat sending an “unsealed” letter?
- What was the effect of persevering in the work and not being deterred by the opposition?
- What have you noticed as a constant theme in Nehemiah’s life as he faithfully executes what God has given him to do?

Questions for Pressing it Out:

- How do we determine when to respond to a challenge and when to ignore it?
- What are some things to keep in mind when needing to respond to opposition to a plan or a way forward?
- How can you make prayer a more natural part of your response to all the situations that arise in your life?

Closing Prayer (pray together as a group or have one person lead):

Creator God, from the beginning of time, you have revealed yourself as the One who brings order out of chaos. You take what is broken and make it into something new and beautiful. Build and restore us, O Lord. Take the broken-down places of our lives and our world and build them up, not so we can hide behind walls of protection, but that from places of peace and safety, we can testify to your amazing grace and love that makes all things new.