

Keepers of the Gospel

Reflections on Nehemiah

Nehemiah 4

Nehemiah and compatriots are halfway there when old Sanballat and his buddies start playing nasty. Since we did not read all of Nehemiah 4 on Sunday, start by reading the chapter carefully. Consider what is happening and why the resistance is increasing. Then think hard about the opposition that exists to our own project of keeping the gospel: protecting it, living it, and sharing it.

Pastor Eric

Understanding the Passage

In Nehemiah 4, opposition to the wall intensified when the wall was half built. Why do you think the opposition intensified halfway through rather than at the beginning? Trace Nehemiah's actions in response to Sanballat and the others.

Ridicule is a powerful weapon. How have you experienced, or seen, mockery affect people's faith or calling?

Nehemiah responded to opposition with both prayer and action. Which of those comes more naturally to you, and which is harder?

Recognizing Spiritual Opposition

Ephesians 6 says our struggle is ultimately spiritual. How does remembering that change the way we view conflict, temptation, or discouragement?

What are some modern "schemes" that distract believers from the gospel at work in us and through us? Which distractions are most dangerous precisely because they are not inherently sinful (career, entertainment, comfort, busyness, hobbies, etc.)?

Do you think that the pursuit of the American dream can compete with devotion to Christ? How should Christians think wisely about driving for success, security, and ambition?

Reflect: What is one thing most likely to pull you away from loving God, following Jesus, and serving others?

Remaining Grounded in Christ

"The best way to keep the enemy out is to keep Christ in" (AW Tozer, *Born After Midnight*). What practical habits help you keep Christ central in your life? How does Scripture help expose competing priorities or distorted desires in our lives?

Why do you think prayer is so essential in spiritual battles? What tends to hinder your prayer life?

Taking Action

The people "worked with all their heart" (Nehemiah 4:6). What does wholehearted devotion to God look like in everyday life?

Nehemiah's people prayed while also taking up swords and continuing the work. What is a contemporary example of dependence on God paired with faithful action? How can you do the same?