

Time to Rebuild
Part 6: Opposition
February 5, 2017

I **SLIDE** Opposition

A) First, Distraction

B) Second: Cooperation that leads to Compromise

C) Enemies

- 1) Word means, narrowness, distress, hemming in
- 2) Describes an oppressive political, economic, or military condition
- 3) They want to "hem" us in so that we cannot worship God in freedom
- 4) This opposition seeks to restrict and dictate how and when we can worship God
- 5) Much like Pharaoh did with Moses and Israel
- 6) **Luke 6:27-28 (NIV)** [Jesus said,]²⁷ "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."
- 7) We are to bless and not curse

II **SLIDE** Discouragement

A) **Ezra 4:4 (NIV)**⁴ Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building.

- 1) Discourage
 - a) Weaken the hands
 - b) Dishearten to the point of becoming weak
 - c) Dampen spirits so someone will give up
 - d) Leads to abandoning someone or something
- 2) **SLIDE** Discouragement leads to fear of failure
- 3) That fear tells us that we can avoid failure if we stop trying
- 4) Those who opposed the rebuilding of the temple now began to discourage the Jews

- a) You don't know how to build
- b) It will not stand
- c) You do not have the right materials
- 5) Discouragement is a powerful tool because it causes us to doubt ourselves and God
- 6) When that happens, we stop ourselves
- 7) Sennacherib (se nak' er ib) and Jerusalem
 - a) Sennacherib, King of Assyria, attacks King Hezekiah
 - b) Hezekiah "cooperates" and "compromises" by paying tribute to Assyria, to the point of stripping the temple
 - c) Not enough. Sennacherib sends an emissary to Hezekiah and to the people: I'm coming and you cannot stop us
 - d) **SLIDE** Sennacherib says he will destroy Jerusalem unless Israel bows to him
 - e) **2 Kings 18:22-23 (NIV)** ²² And if you say to me, "We are depending on the LORD our God"--isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, "You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem"? ²³ "'Come now, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria:
 - f) **2 Kings 18:29-30 (NIV)** ²⁹ This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. ³⁰ Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD when he says, 'The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'
- 8) Discourage the people so they will give up and not even fight
- 9) Has the enemy ever kept you from listening to the Lord by discouraging you?
 - a) Who are you?
 - b) Do you remember what you have done?
 - c) Do you really think God would use someone like you?
 - d) You don't know enough about the Bible?
 - e) You didn't hear from God; that was simply you.

f) People don't care about you

10) This is what the enemy used against Elijah and me

B) **SLIDE** Solution

1) God's word trumps anything else

2) We can do all things through Christ Who strengthens us

3) **Isaiah 55:8-11 (NIV)** ⁸ "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.

⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

4) The temple would be rebuilt because God said it would be rebuilt

III **SLIDE** Deceit

A) **Ezra 4:5 (CJB)** ⁵ They also bribed officials to frustrate their plan....

B) Is bribery still a problem?

1) Do this for me, and I will do that for you?

2) You want help? Make a big donation

3) This is an old device but a very effective one because it involves officials and the law

4) Its purpose is to frustrate us, to hurt us

C) **SLIDE** Frustrate

1) To break, to divide

2) Often used in conjunction with a covenant

3) Deceit makes it seem as if we are walking on shifting sand

4) We find it hard to trust

5) The deceit, the bribes result in betrayal

- 6) Betrayal leads to frustration which tempts us to give up and forsake our covenant
- 7) We follow Truth, but the world throws lies, deception, and betrayal at us

D) Judas

- 1) Judas felt Jesus had betrayed him
- 2) Jesus was not living up to Judas's expectation of a Messiah Who had come to deliver Israel
- 3) So, he broke his covenant
- 4) **Luke 22:47-48 (NIV)** ⁴⁷ While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus asked him, "**Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?**"

E) **SLIDE** Solution

- 1) Betrayal hurts
- 2) Following Jesus' example, we do not get even
- 3) We do not permit anger to direct our actions
- 4) We do not adopt the world's ways and abandon truth
- 5) For if we do, we abandon Jesus and forsake our covenant
- 6) We trust the Lord to deal with this
- 7) Allow the Lord to deal with this
- 8) **Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)** ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, **who for the joy set before him endured** the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- 9) We keep our eyes on Jesus and lift up our hands in praise

IV **SLIDE** Ridicule

- A) **Nehemiah 2:19-20 (NIV)** ¹⁹ But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?"

B) Ridicule/Mock

- 1) the subjection of someone or something to contemptuous and dismissive language or behavior:
- 2) to deride, to make fun of
- 3) to despise people to their face
- 4) denotes a strong attack, usually public
- 5) to show disrespect

C) **SLIDE** Opposition becomes public

- 1) The opposition so far has not necessarily been public
- 2) When the other attempts fail, the enemy goes public
- 3) Israel's enemy becomes very vocal so others can hear
- 4) This opposition is personal
- 5) Dr. Richard Dawkins is a staunch opponent of the church.
- 6) At his seminars, he encourages his audience to "mock them [Christians], ridicule them, in public ... with contempt."
- 7) Examples,
 - a) Baby Jesus in a nativity was replaced with a pig's head
 - b) "Angel from Hell" - women forcibly befriended by an angel that drinks and tells sexual jokes
 - c) "Impastor" - deadbeat takes place of a pastor who accidentally falls to his death - fake pastor takes advantage of women, steals drugs, and mocks Christianity
 - d) Cartoons that are too vulgar to show or mention mocking the crucifixion and life of Jesus

D) **SLIDE** Exodus 20:7 (NIV) ⁷ "You shall not misuse [use lightly, thoughtlessly, or frivolously] the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

- 1) When people misuse God's name or mock Jesus, they often ridicule us even more for objecting
- 2) Understand: God does not, will not, and never will take lightly anyone who misuses His name in any way

- 3) This type of attack has severe consequences
- 4) **Hebrews 10:28-29 (NJB)** ²⁸ Anyone who disregards the Law of Moses is ruthlessly put to death on the word of two witnesses or three; ²⁹ and you may be sure that anyone who tramples on the Son of God, and who treats the blood of the covenant which sanctified him as if it were not holy, and who insults the Spirit of grace, will be condemned to a far severer punishment.

E) **SLIDE** Solution

- 1) **Nehemiah 2:20 (NIV)** ²⁰ I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."
- 2) Be slow to anger for the anger of man cannot achieve the righteousness of God
- 3) Pray and keep moving forward
- 4) The Jews and Romans mocked Jesus
 - a) Save yourself
 - b) Call on God to send help
 - c) Soldiers placed robe and crown of thorns on Jesus and laughed
- 5) Jesus said nothing except, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."
- 6) Jesus left the correction to God while Jesus kept His eyes on the goal set before Him
- 7) Ridicule and mocking can hurt and can anger us
- 8) However, we are not to give in to this opposition
- 9) We belong to Jesus so we keep building on THE foundation set before the world was created