

Nehemiah 4:1-9 Opposition Through Scorn

One of the best commentaries on the book of Nehemiah is Victorious Christian Service Redpath

A)Redpath begins his commentary on Chapter 4 with these words.

“WE are studying the lifework of one of the greatest characters of the whole Bible. Nehemiah’s courage and determination in the face of the fiercest opposition, his complete faith in God, his great passion for the service of his Lord: all of these things point him out as a man in a million, a man **whose life is worth emulating, whose character** is worth our close scrutiny and examination, and **whose example**—by the grace of God and the power of the indwelling Christ, through whom alone we can do anything—is worth reproducing.

Indeed, the service of the Lord Jesus Christ today desperately needs men of the caliber of Nehemiah.”

My prayer is that the Lord would make us men here at Calvary Vista those kind of men.

A)So far in our study we have seen the Burden for the preparation for the work -

B)Everyone of us is building something - Building process never ends in the Christian life

C)Building going on in our lives personally -

- 1)Walls of prayer, walls of purity**
- 2)Walls of passionate devotion to Jesus**

We are building as it relates to our families

A)Family structure that is centered around Jesus

B)Walls of protection and purity and passion in our marriages

C)The building process never ends guys

The book of Nehemiah reminds us that whenever there is building going on spiritually

A)There is always going to be battling taking place

B)Whatever God is seeking to build in our lives - Satan wants to tear down.

**C)Now the building actually starts in Ch.3 -
D)Nehemiah is appointing people to different parts of the wall.**

The Phrases and next to him/ after him or next to them appears over and over.

A)This was a unified effort - the people of God working side by side.

B)That is how the most work gets done the best way - side by side -

1)All different ages building the wall together - engaged in the work together

C)We also see there that Nehemiah does something brilliant here.

D)Ch.3 V.10,28,29,30 - We are told that these workers were assigned work that was in front of their own house or dwelling

E)Why was that a brilliant Strategy on the part of Nehemiah? - Most Vested

The Place where we should be most vested is our own houses.

A)Often times with men in the church we are more invested in our places of Business or even ministry

B)Our house - our kids - our families get neglected

Well tonight we come to chapter 4 - See the first form of opposition - Ridicule and Scorn

But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. 2 And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?” 3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, “Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall.”

4 Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! 5 Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked You to anger before the builders.

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

Pay attention to V.7-8

7 Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, 8 and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion. 9 Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

The First thing I want you to note here is that the enemy is conspiring together to come against the work of God.

A) Learned in chapter 2 Sanballat was a Horonite - Tobiah an Ammonite

B) Ashdodites and the Arabs - coming together

C) These groups were not friends - but what brings them together is their hatred of Israel

D) Same thing in the life of Jesus

The Pharisees and the Sadducees didn't get along

A) They were not on the same page - Theologically, Politically or socially

B) And yet they joined forces to come against Jesus and get him crucified

1) And we have seen them join forces in our study of the book of Acts against the church

C) Still happens today - See it in the middle east - see it in culture - enemies of each other

1) Unite to come against the people of God and the ways of God.

Notice that their first tactic is Scorn

V.1 again when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and **mocked** the Jews. 2 And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these **feeble Jews** doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?"

3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, **if even a fox goes up on it**, he will break down their stone wall."

A) Listen any time you decide to make a change for the better in your life

B) The enemy is going to be whispering in your ear – never going to happen - too weak - dumb -

1) Not spiritual enough

C) When you are seeking to rebuild the walls of purity in your life

1) You are always going to be this way / you are never going to have victory

2) This change will never work

Sometimes – he uses the voice of others

A) You want to get into the word more – bring Bible to work – read at lunch –

B) co-workers – *What is the deal are you BIBLE BOY – NOW !!!*

C) Husband – You want to start leading your family – wife snaps – You think after 10yrs – *1) You are going to be the spiritual leader now?*

D) David: **Too young / too small / too inexperienced**

What do you do when that type of opposition is coming against you – The Temptation is to lash out – fight back with words

A) We want to shout back – we want to yell louder - not the right response

B) Are we going to react in the flesh or respond to the Spirit?

C) Jesus example 1 Peter 2:23

when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously. 1 Peter 2:23

D) When Jesus was being reviled he didn't respond - he didn't give heed to it

E) He committed himself to his father and he committed himself to the work - the mission

Nehemiah does the same thing here

1st He committed himself to God - prayer

4 Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! 5 Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked You to anger before the builders.

A) Love this prayer: So bold - so honest -

B) Lord we are not going on the offensive - not going to get into a fight - She fight for us

C) Let God be your defense.

2nd things they do that Jesus did is they kept their focus on the work on the Mission

6 So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to **half its height**, for the people had a mind to work. {Work half way done.

We see three key things about the attitude and actions of the people of God in these verses.

A) V.6 They had a mind to work - they just stayed at the task - not getting distracted?

B) V. 9 They had a heart to pray and they had an eye to watch

9 Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

C) Working, praying and watching - Such keys to staying focused in the Christian Life

Redpath draws a great connection on prayer and working

“In the Christian life, if we have no heart to pray, we have no mind to work. Have you noticed if you forget to pray, or feel you have no time to pray, how irritable and critical you get? If you have no heart to pray, do not go on working.”

When Jesus was faced with his greatest work - remember what he did night before the cross

A) He spent the night in prayer - in the garden of Gethsemane - Olive press - pressing time

B) Sweat as it were great drops of blood.

C) Father if any way let this cup pass Not my will ... be done

D) Jesus spent the night in prayer - Yielding his will to the will of his father –

He used prayer to keep him focused on the work that was before him!

A) That time in prayer helped him fulfill the mission

B) Prayer is key guys for helping us stay on mission with God

1) Prayer is key to help us be the men that God has called us to be

C) Prayer times vs - prayer Life

Prayer times:

A) Make a list - pray through -

B) Prayer walks - Phone - pray through

C) Prayer days: Once every 6 weeks or so

A prayer life.

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

A) Pray without ceasing - talking to God throughout the day.

B) Going into a meeting - Pray -
1) Tough call - pray

C) Driving something or someone comes to my mind pray - heart of dependency

So they had a mind to work - a heart to pray and an eye to watch

A) This is another key element in dealing with opposition.

B) Aware of the schemes of the enemy - be on watch for the attacks.

C) The enemy never takes a rest – **never goes on vacation** – never has a holiday –
1) we need to be on guard to notice the attacks

D) Be ready – watching – leaders the flock – wolves
1) parents your Children for wrong outside influences

Consider these exhortations in scripture about watching

Matthew 26:41 *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

A) Watching and praying to guard against temptation

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. Mark 13:33

Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 1 Thessalonians 5:6

B) Watching as it relates to the urgency of the days and times we are living in.

"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:34-36

A) Watching as a means for staying on point in the last days - not getting side tracked by carnal living

Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 2 John 1:8

B) Watch as to not lose what you have already worked for -

1) This is a sober one - we through neglect and not giving careful oversight - start cruising

C) We can lose what has already been built up in our lives - our families and our ministries

NLT 1 Peter 5:8 ***Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour.***

D) Be on guard for the enemy is always on the prowl

E) Christian life is not a playground men – it's a battleground - take heed to yourselves