

Nehemiah 6:1-19 Doing a Great Work

Intro: Have you ever started a project that you didn't finish.

A) Started you were inspired – you were excited and motivated

B) But somewhere down the line – something happened – **You stopped** –

1) That project today– remains **UNDONE** ?

C) Now Chances are that somewhere along the way – you might of became **Discouraged**

1) It might have been that the task was bigger than you thought –

D) Once you got into it – you felt **Overwhelmed**

1) This thought popped into your mind – I am never going to finish –so why Bother.

Now that is where we saw the People of Israel in Nehemiah Ch. 4 –

A) **The Tribe of Judah** – Leaders: the strong ones Well they were discouraged {**Too much Rubbish!**}

B) When Leaders get discouraged – it can have a way of affecting everyone else

1) **Answer:** Get our eyes off the rubbish – onto the Lord – off the greatness of the task **Great God!**

So Discouragement is one of the things that has most likely affected some of us – Not finishing a project.

A) Another Reason though is Division: You start something with a group of People: **Maybe Family Become DIVIDED**

B) Happens like this: Family Project – the kids start fighting

1) One of the kids is complaining about the other not doing ENOUGH !! –

C) So What Started off in my mind as this great thing we were going to do together { **Clean the yard**

1) turns into a Battle – forget it

Or maybe it is not the Kids maybe it is me and Denise – Yes your pastor and his wife Fight

A) In projects – we almost always get into a fight – you know why?

B) We both have an opinion of how it **SHOULD BE DONE !!!**

1) Sometimes again – it is like – this is a pain this isn't worth it – forget – **Project undone**

C) Well that was the problem we saw in Ch. 5 We looked at this last time – **Division**

1) **If missed it** – get the Tape or CD of last week see how Nehemiah – dealt with that one

So Discouragement & Division are two things that can keep a Project from being finished!

A) **But I THINK** the biggest reason why Projects remained unfinished is **DISTRATCTION**

B) We get distracted in the work – we get pulled away **AND we never get back**

C) As we come to Chapter 6 – this is the issue facing Nehemiah –

1) the enemies choice of tactic here in Ch. 6 is **DISTRACTION**

D) It comes at Nehemiah in 3 different forms

1) Isolation / Insinuation and Intimidation

E) In each case the enemy is trying to Distract Nehemiah from the work of finishing the wall

Neh 6:1-4 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it(though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates),² that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying,

"Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.

3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

4 But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.

Now at this point the wall is done – All that is left is hanging of the gates

A) Still a massive job – the gates were huge sturdy structures and there were 10 of them

B) Here we see the enemies first tactic in trying to get Nehemiah Distracted – **Let's meet together**

C) ISOLATION: Come on down – to the Plain of Ono {**Neutral area** – Beautiful 20 miles from Jerusalem – near Samaria ... Sandballat's home

D) Now in each one of these situations we are going to see that Nehemiah doesn't get distracted

1) Because of Discernment –

E) Discernment is the ability to judge matters according to God's view of them.

1) and not according to their outward appearance.

F) We are often deceived by outward appearances;

(1 Samuel 16:7). *For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*

G) Discernment is the ability to see things from God's point of view! His perspective !

1) Samuel and everyone else saw a Young Boy

2) **God saw a MAN HEART!**

Nehemiah Discerns the real Motive and intent of their Invite V.2 They want to do me harm

A) Maybe it was the name – The plain OF ONO Nehemiah says – **Oh No ! to Ono – sounds bad**

B) **Like Dope** – Do some dope? – Dictionary – a stupid person -

1) A person with discernment – says – I don't want to do that ! { **really nothing to do w/ the name**

C) Nehemiah realized they were trying to Isolate him to get him by himself so they could hurt him

Listen the Enemy seeks to do the same thing: He wants to Isolate you – to harm you !

A) That is why the Lord in the book of Hebrews admonishes us

Hebrews 10:24-25 **And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting**

one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

B) The Word of the Lord ? **Don't Isolate yourself from fellowship**

1) Coals in a Fire.....

C) **Not just fellowship: Isolation in other areas is not wise – especially today { Safe guards**

1) **I never travel alone** – Never in hotels alone
If I Can't take Denise – bring one of the guys

D) Or I am meeting another Pastor

Note the enemy was Persistent here – the invitation came 4 times –

A) Each time Nehemiah rejected the invitation v.3 is Key

V3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

B) Nehemiah realized that he was involved in a great work – **The work of God for Him**

There was a missionary in China whose abilities were so outstanding that one of the American companies tried to hire him.

They offered him an attractive job with a salary to match, but he turned it down.

He told them that God had sent him to China as a missionary.

He thought that would end the matter, but instead they came back with a better offer and an increase in salary.

He turned that down too, but again they came back, doubling the financial package.

Finally he said to them, **"It's not your salary that's too little. It's the job that's too small!"**

Nehemiah knew that he was involved in a great work – a monumental task for the Lord

A) How do you view what you are doing?

B) **How do you view what you are called to?**

1) Pastors conference in Texas – Most of the works are under 100 people -

C) Temptation to think – what am I doing

1) Don't Despise the day of small things –
Doing a Great Work!

D) Mom – house wife – lesser thing or a great work ?

1) Home Schooling ? Necessity ? Or a Great work

E) Mechanic – help people – way to make ends
meets – or a great work

1) Whatever God has called you to is HIS great work
for you.

F) That is how He sees it / How do you see it ?

3 Guys Laying Bricks same job site – Little Boy
asked first guy what are you doing? -

A) What does it look like – Laying bricks
2nd Guy – I am building a building

3rd Guy: I am building a Cathedral where people
will come to worship the living God

B) Which Guy do you think was the most excited
about what he was doing?

1) And Motivated to finish!

C) How do you see the CALLING you are
involved in? Great work –

1) Laying bricks – building a wall? / Building or a
Cathedral

D) Listen if it is God's work – it is a Great work !

**Nehemiah Knew He was involved in a great work
What about you?**

A) So Distraction #1 Isolation

Distraction #2 Insinuation v. 5-9

**5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before,
the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand.6 In
it was written:**

**It is reported among the nations, and Geshem
says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel;
therefore, according to these rumors, you are
rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king.7
And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim
concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, "There is a
king in Judah!" Now these matters will be
reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let
us consult together.**

**8 Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as
you say are being done, but you invent them in
your own heart."**

**9 For they all were trying to make us afraid,
saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the
work, and it will not be done."**

Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

**Here is what Happens here – A messenger shows
up to the Job site with an OPEN LETTER**

A) That means that it was to be read in the
hearing of everybody –

B) Two key phrases in v.6 **It is reported among the
nations..... therefore, according to these rumors**

C) **This was a pure insinuation:** The rumor being
reported? Nehemiah wants to be King

1) That is what he is doing and why he is so eager to
get these walls built

**D) What is the Big deal about that ? Well if that
got back to King Artx – and he believed it**

1) It would cost Nehemiah his head and the People
of Israel would be squashed again

E) Now this is another Distraction of the enemy –

1) The enemy wants to get Nehemiah side tracked by
trying to defend himself against rumors

**Characteristics of a rumor: Never has a source - It
is reported among the nations**

A) #2 A rumor is noted for its exaggerations and
inaccuracy –

B) Sometimes someone will come to me and say – I
heard a lot of people complaining about

1) Define a lot ? - Well 3 or 4 – Me my wife – my
friend

C) Rumors spread in exaggerated fashion - Game
telephone - one person –

1) Suzy is having surgery tomorrow

D) Suzy is having brain surgery – she has cancer
and the doctors are only giving her two months to
live

1) **Rumors and Gossip – full of Exaggerations**

This rumor was meant to hurt Nehemiah – make them afraid & weaken their resolve

A) Listen if you are in any form of leadership:
TARGET ON YOUR BACK

B) People will watch you – pay attention to what you say/ how you act

1) Part of the price of being in the Position – life in a FISH BOWL

C) Because People are watching you they are also going to talk about you –

1) it comes with the territory

How does Nehemiah deal with this attack ?

A) Answer is he doesn't – He knows the accusations are not true – that is not his heart

B) Nehemiah did not mount an elaborate defense, trying to prove Sanballat wrong point by point.

1) He wasn't going to waste his time.

C) You don't satisfy men like Sanballat with facts, explanations, and evidence.

D) You can only satisfy them by giving in to their demands, and Nehemiah would not!

1) He wasn't going to get into a verbal battle w/ him

Nehemiah says – You are lying – that is not my heart – I trust the people know that

A) He prayed - **Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.**

B) Listen that is all you can do – let God be your defense – time will tell!

C) I have had times as the Pastor here where – rumors have started –

1) Judging my motives & actions in doing something

D) Half the time it is coming from a source that really doesn't know me at all.

What do you do? Stand on what you know to be true – that is not my heart – God knows – trust

A) Those who know me – they know my heart intention – etc –

B) That is all that you can do – Time will tell.

C) Nehemiah was wise enough to not get distracted by the Insinuations

1) So Distraction #1 Isolation / #2 Insinuation

Distraction #3 Intimidation v.10

10 Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you."

So Shemaiah who was of the priestly line and probably a confidant of Nehemiah – takes a turn

A) Trying to set Nehemiah up – run to the temple
Notice Nehemiah's response

11 And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!"

B) Nehemiah rejected Shemaiah's proposal because it was contrary to the Law of Moses.

1) It was forbidden for a layman to go beyond the altar of burnt offering at the temple.

(Numbers 18:7 *"The outsider who comes near shall be put to death", NKJV*).

C) (2 Chron. 26:16–21). When King Uzziah tried to invade the holy precincts.

1) God smote him with leprosy

Now it was at this point – that Nehemiah realized that something was wrong – Something wasn't right Shemaiah is contradicting God's word

A) Shemaiah was contradicting the Word of God

12 Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

Anytime someone has a word for you that doesn't line up with scripture – Reject it

A) God is not going to give a word that is going to contradict the written word

B) Word above his name !

13 For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so that they might

have cause for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

14 My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.

C) Nehemiah rejected it – was not distracted because he clung to the word – would not compromise

Neh. 6:15-19

So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.

16 And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

**So Awesome thing to have happen
Cause for CELEBRATION**

Here the wall is finished celebration – time to stop relax – Kick Back right? WRONG ! wrong

A) Chapter ends this way I believe to remind us of the need to stay on Guard

B) Watch out – the enemy won't stop

C) New Tactic – Not Isolation or Insinuation or Intimidation – now - Infiltration

1) Tobiah is corresponding with the rulers

17 Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came to them. 18 For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. 19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

D) This chapter ends this way: Stay on Guard

Tobiah will pop up again in Ch. 13