



Don't Back Down! Build Up!

RECAP

This week's focus: When God's work starts up, the opposition shows up.

God called an ordinary man to do an extraordinary work. After spending several days in prayer and planning while uniting the people to rebuild, they began the good work of rebuilding the wall. Now, Nehemiah and his construction crew have been making significant progress and are close to the half-way point.

As the completion of the wall becomes more of a reality, opposition to rebuilding arises. Nehemiah and his crew are now under attack. The opposition comes at them from all directions (literally), and the opposition ridicules them using humanity's most accessible weapons, their words.

In response to the spiteful words, Nehemiah once again prays. His anger and frustration are mounting, and he lets the Lord know how he is feeling about his enemies in his prayer to God. But he doesn't act out any of his bubbling emotions. Instead of focusing internally on what he couldn't do (insecurities), he focused externally on what God had called Him to do (prayer). However, as the rebuilding continues after Nehemiah's prayer, the opposition grows even stronger.

As the threat against them becomes more realistic, Nehemiah begins to make plans to defend against a possible attack. He stations men at strategic locations around the project site. He instructs the workers to have weapons of war handy while doing the task of the rebuild.

Nehemiah kept his construction crew fully operational toward his call to complete the rebuilding of the wall, all the while being acutely aware of the potential threat from the outside.

It becomes vitally important for us, nearly 2500 years after this story takes place, to properly identify the opposition, the tools for building "God's house" and the tools God has equipped us "to fight" with. Anytime God calls us to do a good work for Him, it is guaranteed that the opposition will show up. The greater the opposition is against us, the greater the opportunity for God to fight for us.

Our battle is not against flesh and blood, however, there is a real enemy seeking to "kill, steal, and destroy". The spiritual battle is fought in the unseen realm. We must keep in mind that spiritual battles are fought with spiritual weapons. In Ephesians 6, Paul gives us a vivid picture of the weapons we are to use to fight this battle. Two vital weapons for every believer are God's Word and prayer.

Jesus faced the same type of opposition in His ministry. Yet, He never fought the spiritual battle with physical weapons. Instead, He used the weapons of God's Word and prayer to defeat the enemy. May we be the people who fight the enemy like Jesus fought, use the tools Jesus encourages us to use, and not to be drawn to fight a battle Jesus wouldn't fight or in a manner Jesus wouldn't fight!



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SHARE (5-10 min)

Icebreaker Question: Share of a time or season where a physical task or job was made harder due to an emotional threat or fatigue?

STUDY (about 30 min) Read Nehemiah 4

1. What stood out to you about the message on Sunday? Is there anything that was unclear, or that you have questions about?
2. Where in your life have you experienced the "momentum killers" as discussed in the sermon?
3. Give an example from your life when you have faced spiritual opposition. How did you handle the opposition?
4. Re-read Nehemiah 4:1-3. If you were in Nehemiah's shoes, what would your initial reaction be to hearing these taunts? What was Nehemiah's response?
5. Words work. They are a tool for building up and tearing down. How are your words building others up? At home? At work? Around town?
6. Read 4:7-8. What was "the final straw" that brought the nations together to plot against Nehemiah?
7. What are things in your life that cause you to fear and that you tend to focus on? What can you do to help you shift that focus?
8. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. What can you do to be ready and counter spiritual opposition and attack?

SUPPORT (15 min)

Pray for each other. Share your prayer needs when it comes to the opposition you are facing. Where are you feeling most "under attack"? Do you need help responding to the opposition more in the Spirit than the flesh in some areas of your life?

Ask for prayer!