



The Fight Nehemiah 4:1-14

Nehemiah 4:1-3 Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. 2 And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?” 3 Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, “Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!”

- **Opposition by Ridicule**
- Jeering. Psychological warfare.
- Hanoi Hannah in Vietnam:

How are you, GI Joe? It seems to me that most of you are poorly informed about the going of the war, to say nothing about a correct explanation of your presence over here. Nothing is more confused than to be ordered into a war to die or to be maimed for life without the faintest idea of what's going on. (Hanoi Hannah, 16 June 1967)

- Why are they so mad? City with tall walls is dangerous. They also know the power of the God of Israel. They also oppose God!
- Opposition is almost always caused by success, not failure.
- They know Nehemiah has the king’s backing. More importantly, they probably know he has God’s backing.
- Burned stones. Can God use burned stones? “At high temps., the strength of most stones is severely affected, and if thermal shock occurs, can disintegrate.” Also smoke staining and color changes.

Nehemiah 4:4-6 Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunt on their own heads and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives. 5 Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin be blotted out from your sight, for they have provoked you to anger in the presence of the builders. 6 So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.

- What is the antidote against **Opposition by Ridicule**? Looking to God--Prayer! 11 of 13 chapters, Nehemiah prays.
- Good leadership. Good following. Hard-working, obedient.
- Who wants to be despised? How do you maintain your focus and calling in the face of opposition?

- Is it ok to ask God to judge others with His righteous justice? Yes--the distinction--"they have provoked you to anger." When they come against God's work. Think "persecuted church."
- Prayer in the beginning--we have sinned against you...this is not a self-righteous guy. Humble. Not taking this personally.

Psalm 9:10 And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.

Psalm 56:3 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

1 Peter 1:8-9 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Nehemiah 4:7-9 But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. 8 And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. 9 And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.

- **Opposition by Plot**
- Now getting a little more angry.
- Opponents joining forces. God's work invites opposition joining sides to work against the work of the Lord.
- Opposition should be expected--"As we plan for God's work, the enemy is plotting and planning for evil as well"--Pastor Mike
- Enemies seek to "cause confusion." What is the antidote against **Opposition by Plot**? Looking to God--Prayer.

Nehemiah 4:10-14 In Judah it was said, "The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall." 11 And our enemies said, "They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work." 12 At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, "You must return to us." 13 So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14 And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes."

- **Opposition from Within**
- Now the enemies come unglued. Fed up.
- Now internal discouragement. This might be the worst.
- "There is no failure that is as discouraging as ministry failure."--me Feels like you are letting God down, God's people down...
- Nehemiah inspires, again. Don't be afraid--they had every reason to be afraid, humanly.
- Pointed them to the Lord.
- Stopped the work, arms the camp, gathers families to fight as clans (traditional way of fighting).
- Made it personal. Joshua did the same.
- What is the antidote to **Opposition from Within**? Looking to God--Worship.

Isaiah 61:3 says Jesus has come —to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the **garment of praise instead of a faint spirit**; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he

may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

Summary

What is God up to in Harlingen? What is He doing? What is He building...in the face of opposition by ridicule...by plotting...from within?

God is building a PEOPLE. A peculiar people. Set apart people...special people...and yet people who are to do His work. Be His hands and feet.

And He will call imperfect people. People with pasts. People with baggage. **He's using burned stones**. And He is building something magnificent and beautiful for His glory!

1 Peter 2:5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.