



Recap: December 11, 2024

Speaker: Bishop A.L. Smith

Title: Don't Let Fear Stop The Rebuild

## Sermon Overview

We know that the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy. At times, it can be all three at once. He wants to steal your destiny by destroying your charter/ faith and killing all that God will have you accomplish.

### **Point One - The attempt to discourage the workers.. –Nehemiah 4: 1-3**

- **But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant:** Sanballat and Tobiah were first deeply disturbed when they heard a man wanted to help the people of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:10). Then they used scorn and intimidation to prevent the work from starting (Nehemiah 2:19). Now that the work had begun, they were furious and very indignant.
  - **Will they offer sacrifices?** This has the idea of, “Will they seek God through sacrifice and expect Him to miraculously build the walls? Will they pray the walls into existence?” **Will they complete it in a day?** This has the idea of “Do they have any idea what they are taking on? This isn’t an easy project.”
  - Like most attacks of discouragement, there is a trace of truth in the words of the enemy. As builders, the Jews were **feeble**. They would not complete it in a day. They didn’t have the best materials to work with. A lying, discouraging attack will often have some truth in it, but it will neglect the great truth: God is with us and has promised to see us through.
  - Sanballat and Tobiah sought to bring discouragement through criticism. There were many of them together taking part in the sarcastic, mocking criticism – and observed “critics run with critics. (If a dog will bring a bone, her will take one away)”
  - One measure of a leader is to be able to measure criticism; to not allow oneself to be run down by the critical, while still being sensitive to God’s voice even in the midst of criticism Discouragement is such a powerful weapon because it comes close to the opposite of faith. Where faith believes God and His love and promises, discouragement looks for and believes the worst – and tends to almost forget about who God is and what He has promised to do.

### **Point Two - Nehemiah comes against the discouraging attack with prayer –Nehemiah 4: 4-5**

- **Hear, O our God:** Nehemiah's response was a great example. He didn't debate, he didn't form a committee, he didn't even deal with the two enemies directly. Instead, he took it to God in prayer. For Nehemiah, prayer was a first resource, not a last resort. When times of opposition come, God wants us to rely on Him – and the purest way of expressing our reliance on God is through prayer
- **Turn their reproach on their own heads...give them as plunder.... do not cover their iniquity:** Nehemiah then asked God to fight their enemies for them. He depended on God to fight the battle. God gave him a work to do, and he would not be distracted from it.
  - This prayer seems rather severe, but prayers in the Psalms are even more severe: *Break their teeth in their mouth, O God* (Psalm 58:6). *Let their dwelling place be desolate; let no one live in their tents* (Psalm 69:25). It is proper for the children of God to pray such a prayer because they are then giving their violent inclinations over to God and letting Him deal with them.
  - If we are angry with someone or have a real enemy, then we can deal with them in prayer. Never in the sense of praying evil upon them, but in turning them over to a good and just God because He knows exactly what to do with them.
- **They have provoked You to anger:** Finally, Nehemiah's prayer gave God a reason to show mercy and to come against his enemies. Nehemiah recognized that this was God's cause, not his own.

### **Point Three - The work continues on with greater and greater strength. -Nehemiah 4: 6**

- **So we built the wall:** God answered the prayer by giving them all a mind to work. A mind to work is a gift from God, and no significant job will ever be accomplished until people come together with a mind to work.
  - This is exactly what Satan wants to destroy with his attacks – the mind to work. He wants to make us feel defeated, or passive, or self-focused, or discouraged.
  - Critics discourage. Leaders encourage. When the critics spoke, the workmen heard them and were discouraged. But when the capable leader stepped up and said, 'Let's look at it God's way, stay at the job,' the crew members were back in there.
- **For the people had a mind to work:** The immediate answer to the prayer did not change their enemies. The prayer was answered by the people of God doing the work. Nehemiah's prayer asked God to take care of his enemies, and God answered by taking care of His people.
  - Often times we miss God's answer to our prayers because we pray for Him to do a work in the lives of others we are in conflict with – and He answers by moving in our lives, but we resist that moving. It is as if He tried to give us a mind to work in a situation, but we resisted it.
- **The entire wall was joined together up to half its height:** The work was half-finished. It was an exciting, but dangerous time; much had been done, but much was left to do. Fatigue and discouragement were ready to set in if given an opportunity.

### **Point Four - The conspiracy to attack the work.. -Nehemiah 4: 7-8**

- **The gaps were beginning to be closed:** The wall was only half as high as it should be, but it was almost continuous now. Therefore, the enemies of the work became very angry.

- The work of God often makes the enemy angry. He often rages against the progress being made by God's people in touching a lost world for Jesus Christ. We have to know, It's not bad thing to make the devil angry.
- **All of them conspired together to come and attack:** As the work progressed the enemies became more serious. Now they didn't simply complain or mock, they threatened and planned for violence.
  - On the one hand, this was serious: the wall was built to protect against the attacks of violence, and now it seemed that the very building of the wall might prompt an attack to come. It would have been easy for the people to fear and to think perhaps all their work would be made useless.
  - On the other hand, this wasn't serious at all. We notice that they didn't attack – they just talked about it. Sanballat and Tobiah were hoping that the threat of attack would be enough. Satan uses the same strategy of fear against us, and if we are paralyzed by a threat the threat has worked – even when nothing actually happens.
- **And create confusion:** This was an important strategy of Satan – to create confusion among the people of God. Confused people will never move forward and fulfill God's work. They are usually confused because they are distracted by the tricks of their enemies instead of focusing on God and His promises.

**Point Five - The attack is guarded against by prayer and watching. -Nehemiah 4: 9**

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**Nehemiah 4:10 -The challenge from the inside: discouragement among the people because the work seemed too big.**

**Nehemiah 4:11 -The challenge from the outside: the enemies plan a surprise attack**

**Nehemiah 4:12 - God allows the Jews to be warned about the coming attack.**

- This is a wonderful example of the power and goodness of God. The enemies of God and His people did their best, but God was always in control. The enemies did not know there were faithful Jews listening to their plotting.

**Point Six - Nehemiah organizes the defense. -Nehemiah 4:13-14**

- **Therefore:** These verses tell us what Nehemiah did, but we can also think of what Nehemiah could have done in this situation.
  - He could have done nothing – and even been spiritual about it. “Well brother, we're just trusting in the Lord. We prayed about it and believe the Lord will deliver us somehow.” He could have panicked – and started thinking it was his job alone to defend against the attack. He could have doubted God. Instead, he wisely and calmly trusted God amid the storm. He did the practical things God would have him do to gain the victory.