

RESISTING THE TEMPTATION TO QUIT

Nehemiah 4

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Nehemiah 4:1–23 (NIV)

“When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, ‘What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?’ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, ‘What they are building—if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!’ Hear us, O our God, for we are despised. Throw their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in the land of captivity. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders. So we rebuilt the wall until all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart. But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem’s walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. [The modern translation of that is “We prayed and kept our powder dry.”] Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, ‘The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.’ Also our enemies said, ‘Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.’ Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, ‘Wherever you turn, they will attack us.’ Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points

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of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, ‘Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the LORD, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.’ When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work. From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me. Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, ‘The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!’ So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out. At that time I also said to the people, ‘Have every man and his helper stay inside Jerusalem at night, so they can serve us as guards by night and workmen by day.’ Neither I nor my brothers nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water.”

We continue looking together at life, and the work of God that is under construction, the theme of the Book of Nehemiah. Today’s message is entitled, “Resisting the Temptation to Quit.”

Last week in Nehemiah 3 we had written for us the historical account of how the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt. But it wasn’t all as easy or as placid as Nehemiah 3, by itself, would seem to indicate. So Nehemiah 4, 5, and 6 should be sandwiched into the narrative of Nehemiah

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3. For Nehemiah 4, 5, and 6 tell us the inside story, the many times when failure seemed imminent as they worked on the wall. Many times the work was almost abandoned.

Look in the life of any individual or any church or any ministry that is doing a work for the Lord today and you will find that it has its times when it indeed looks like the work will be abandoned, the pressures are too great, the obstacles too much. There is a correlation of what is going on in the Book of Nehemiah with what goes on in our life and what goes on in the life of this church, and what went on too in the Book of Acts. In the Book of Acts basically the three ways that Satan has to frustrate the work of God are to attempt to pick off the leadership, to attempt to bring persecution against the church, and then to sow discord within the Body. The same process is going on in the Book of Nehemiah. If Nehemiah as a leader can be discouraged before he ever sets out on a long trek from Susa to Jerusalem, then the work will never get done.

If, on the other hand, the people can be intimidated by threats and opposition then they will back off and the work will never get done.

In Nehemiah 5 next week we'll see that if outside persecution doesn't work, the enemy tries to bore within by creating dissension among the people themselves as they work on the wall.

As Christians I think it would be fair to say we either wrestle or we nestle. We are in a battle. If we are really involved in dedicating our life to the Lord or if we have chosen to nestle and really not maintain that cutting edge of commitment we may not be aware of all the conflict. Because the conflict doesn't center around us. It's perfectly convenient for the enemy's plans to leave us alone. Any attempt to serve the Lord, any attempt by this church body to really serve the Lord is going to be met with strong opposition. That opposition will not be overcome in a moment's time. It's a struggle, as Nehemiah 4 indicates.

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Nehemiah found that in wrestling with the enemies of the wall, the task of wrestling with them took more than six seconds. As we open the chapter today, we find a source of pressure being directed against Nehemiah. The pressure is coming from Sanballat the governor of Samaria in the north, and Tobiah the Ammonite. And they're ridiculing Nehemiah and the work which is being done.

I. What is the source and nature of the opposition?

This would be a popular theme to speak on in the sense that whenever you set out to do something and anybody opposes you if you set out to do it and opposition is being directed against you then obviously you must be in the will of God and they must be out of the will of God or they wouldn't be criticizing you. This is a very convenient text for preachers to preach on, to brand everybody who doesn't think like them as enemies of God.

But I don't think it's ever quite that simple, black and white. Sometimes the opposition that we receive may actually be of God. So we need to look at some factors to determine whether or not we should be paying heed to the opposing counsel we're receiving. It would have been better off for Balaam had he listened to counsel. God finally had to speak to him through a donkey, quite an insult to his intelligence. It would have been better if Saul had listened to counsel, it would have been better if Rehoboam had listened to counsel. There are all kinds of illustrations in Scripture where people sought to give good counsel and they were refused and as a result of their being refused the whole work of God died on the vine.

But in the case of Nehemiah we have to ask what sort of a person stands in the path of the work. I think there are legitimate principles we can derive for our life when we begin to get conflicting counsel as to what we're doing. Are we in the will of God or are we out of the will of God? I think we have to ask, "Does that counsel come from someone whose life is really sold out to

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God?” That doesn’t mean that if they are not sold out to God we should automatically refuse the counsel. But the tendency is yes, we should discount it, especially if God has spoken for us to do something.

In Nehemiah’s case the counsel was coming from a guy named Sanballat, a Samaritan.

Samaritans were really persons who had backslidden. They had originally started out as Jewish people, but in 722 B.C. their land had been captured by Assyria and many people remained in the land. They began to intermarry with other people that were in the land. They lost their fidelity to God. They claimed a mixture of religion. It’d be today like having a religion that incorporated Christ and Buddha and Mohammed and Confucius and the like. That sort of watered-down mixture of religion. That’s exactly the kind of persons Sanballat and Tobiah were.

The counsel came from them. So we look at the reason why Nehemiah begins to withstand the counsel. It’s not coming from persons who really have their heart and mind set on the Lord.

Also in Sanballat and Tobiah’s case we find that their motives for their counsel are not pure.

They are speaking from anger. Notice how several times in the text Nehemiah indicates that before they say anything, something inwardly is going on: “Sanballat...became angry and was greatly incensed” (Nehemiah 4:1).

When persons are attempting to give us counsel and advise and that counsel and advise is springing out of an emotional life which is poisoned by negativity and bitterness and anger we had better be careful how we take that into ourselves. Counsel that is coming to us from that kind of spirit, probably 99 times out of 100, or maybe 100 times out of 100, will never do us any good.

Within family this is so critical as we seek to stimulate one another and correct one another. If our counsel to one another springs from a seething cauldron of anger in our life and emotional

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hatred and bitterness and rage all we are doing is spilling out the acid of our life and it's not going to help anyone. And the person upon whom it is poured has to develop a resistance to that acid lest it make it impossible for them to really serve the Lord.

Pouring out anger on someone is equivalent I think to taking acid and pouring it on a rose bush.

The rose bush isn't going to grow. And what the rose bush must do, I have somebody come along and put a protective shield on it so that the acid cannot hurt it. Nehemiah sees that the person who is trying to relate to him has tremendous acid in his life and rejects his counsel.

Nehemiah also reckons with the fact that here is a person who is totally negative. Sanballat and Tobiah are persons who do not have faith. They are not working on a solution to the problem. All they can do is criticize. Unfortunately in life all of us have rubbed shoulders with people who really have never done anything constructive themselves, but who are filled with advice on how you ought to do it. Or how you ought not to do it. The Scriptural counsel at this point is simply plain. Don't listen to persons who are of that frame of mind, always telling you how to go about conducting your affairs and perhaps giving the body of Christ counsel on how to do its affairs but have never themselves proceeded from a context of faith and involvement in God's Word. They have simply sat on the sidelines and taken potshots at those who attempted to work for the Lord.

II. Pressure in two directions

Nehemiah has located the source of the pressure and has discerned that the pressure is not coming from God's people or from godly counsel. What the pressure has done though, as Nehemiah 4 unfolds for us. and so common this is to our lives when internal pressure arises, it directs itself against us in two ways. If we are really wanting to serve the Lord with all our heart or a whole body is moving forward in faith the two things that will inevitably happen are that

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there will be an attempt to cause that person or that body to concentrate on their internal weakness. If that isn't successful there will then be an attempt to intimidate by reminding them of the external strengths around them and how overwhelming they will be as compared to the tasks that you're trying to do.

Let me illustrate this by taking the chapter in two halves. Verses 1–6 speak of dealing with internal weakness in our life. There is an attempt by Sanballat and Tobiah to simply ridicule the people who are working on the wall. The key phrases are “feeble Jews” and “heaps of rubble” (verse 2). The wall of Jerusalem, when it was destroyed by the Babylonians a century and a half before, had been thoroughly burned and the limestone had been weakened through the burning process. The people working on the wall are working with rubble. That's not very good building material. Also, Tobiah makes this ridiculous statement as they're working on the wall, “That wall is such a weak wall and you are such puny workmen that even if a fox climbed up on that wall the wall would come down.”

As you may well recognize, a fox is a very nimble creature. A fox would hardly move a pebble on the road. The insult is very clear, ridiculing what is being done and attempting to focus on our weakness. Isn't it an incredible thing what words do to us? If Sanballat and Tobiah had come along and said, “What are you strong Jews doing?” What a different perspective. If they had said, “If they drive a fifty-ton tractor on your wall it looks like it's going to stand,” that makes you feel good! It helps when people affirm you. But when they come and say to you mean and discouraging things, maybe an initial tendency is to begin to believe them.

How many times we have settled for something like this? The enemy comes to us and says, “You live the Christian life? Are you kidding? You're too weak to live the Christian life.” Immediately he will drag out all your past defeats. That's exactly what Sanballat and Tobiah are doing here.

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They're reaching through centuries of defeatedness as they tell these people who are trying to reconstruct the wall, "You can't do that. Your historic posture is one of weakness. Do you think you could ever do anything for God?"

In this climate of negativity it's hard to progress forward.

I think I've really learned the difference in my internal existence between the voice of the Holy Spirit and the voice of Satan when I have done something wrong or when I am weak. Satan will come along and remind me what an absolute failure I am and leave me in total hopelessness and say, "You're never going to make it. You're never going to cut it." But then the Holy Spirit will come along and say, "You failed in this area. Now get your coat back on and get going. Get on with life. Believe Me. I am the one who redeemed you and I will lead you through." The Holy Spirit always leaves us with hope. The enemy always pitches in on our weakness.

I wonder how many of us have really not served the Lord because we have settled for the fact that we are weak. How many of us have not witnessed to someone because we have said things like, "I'm not sure they would really be interested in what I have to say." Or beg off by saying, "I'm not a very good witness. Therefore I don't think I could trust myself to share."

What a way the enemy has of subtly coming in, exploiting our weakness and then the work of God not being done.

Learning to cope with these kinds of things is part and parcel of the Christian life. Nehemiah does a very wise thing which we would be advised to do in our own Christian life. When these sorts of things come to us, Nehemiah's first instinct is to go to the Lord. In verse 4 he prays.

"Hear us, O our God for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads." Nehemiah doesn't try to get into an argument with Sanballat and Tobiah. He doesn't try to best them with

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words. Rather he simply goes to the Lord and he is confident. As you go to the Lord, the Lord begins to rebuild your confidence.

Nehemiah prays a prayer that maybe some Christians would be uncomfortable with. After all we're supposed to pray, "Forgive our enemies," but Nehemiah is saying, "Bring their deck of cards down over their heads." You may be a little uncomfortable with that but I'm not so sure that Nehemiah isn't praying from a New Testament posture as well. There is a sense that someone in the Spirit can perceive when the opposition being directed against them really needs the illuminating word of the Lord to it. Only a spiritual person could pray the kind of prayer Nehemiah prayed.

Nehemiah in a very strong way comes to the Lord and jacks his courage up in the Lord. What happens when a harsh word is spoken to me or you? I usually speak back. If someone shouts at you what's the response? Shout a little louder. Nehemiah refused to get engaged in a verbal combat and instead goes to the Lord. When he has gone to the Lord, then in verse 6, he focuses on the task. He does more than pray. He puts himself to work. The easiest thing to do when we are criticized or when our weaknesses are pointed out is to simply give up. To feel unappreciated. To feel unloved. To feel impotent. Nehemiah though, when he prays, sets back on doing the task. He posts a guard day and night to meet the threat.

It was Teddy Roosevelt who said, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best

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knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory or defeat.”

As a church body we are now facing a significant moment of time as we’re facing a big project.

Nehemiah for me has been a tremendous learning experience. I went into it from selfish motivations because I wanted to be forearmed for the struggles coming ahead. It seemed there is precisely in Nehemiah as we overlay it against where we are as a church, a word for us today.

When Nehemiah was still back in Susa a word of discouragement came to him. He heard that Sanballat and Tobiah were conspiring against him, 2:10. Before he ever lifted his hand to the task he knew that there was going to be opposition. Then when he comes and announces that the work is going to start again Sanballat and Tobiah are there with discouragement. It’s so possible for us to focus on our weaknesses. Can we really do this? Where will we get the funds? Will we have enough people? Will there be enough people to be committed? Are you sure that God has called you to do this? All kinds of things really come to say, “Maybe you’re taking on something more than you can chew.” And many churches do.

But if we focus there, if we focus on the little that we have and leave the Lord out of the picture, we can never move ahead. We can never move ahead as a church, and we can never move ahead in our personal lives either. if we let the enemy point out to us all of our failures.

Having dealt with internal weakness then the external pressures start—Sanballat and Tobiah against Nehemiah.

We read in verse 7 that the conspiracy had been large. Sanballat from the north in Samaria, Tobiah from the west, the Arabs from the south, and the Ammonites from the west. Then men of

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Ashdod; this is a Philistine city in the west. So Nehemiah is circled by an alliance of enemies now that are going to come against him.

Sometimes when we're doing the work of the Lord in our individual life, when we're doing it as a body, criticism will not die down. It only intensifies. Have you found as you work through your own personal spiritual struggle that just when you came to a moment you thought you had victory and you had really broken through to God and it was going to be a whole new day then all of a sudden everything doubled back on you and the fight became harder than it ever was before?

That's exactly what is happening here with Nehemiah. The walls get half built. They're in a position of strength more than they've ever been yet the pressure is going to come against them stronger than it's ever been before. And critics have a way of running with critics. So Nehemiah has picked up opposition.

You get a person with a negative attitude and they're going to draw other people around them with negativity. I found this in my own life. I'm sure you must have found this in your employment, in your work. Once in my experience being a teacher in a church-related college I noticed I began to be supercritical in my life. I was critical about simply everything that came down the road. I realized that this was destroying not only my relationship with people but it was destroying and eroding into my relationship with God. I was not only associating with people who were negative in their outlook on everything, I hadn't surrounded myself with one friend who had a positive, forward-looking attitude about what God may be doing. I had joined those who could see everything that was wrong.

Nehemiah, as he confronts his external opposition, first of all behaves with a patterned response, in 4:7-9. He's already dealt with opposition by praying and working. So he does the same thing

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again. He says, “We prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.”

Nehemiah is aware that if you listen to constant criticism and negativity day in and day out it’s going to wear on you. It will wear you down if you let it.

Nehemiah keeps praying, keeps working. Then in verses 10–12, a serious crisis emerges:

“Meanwhile, the people in Judah said [as this alliance is building against them], ‘The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.’ Also our enemies said, ‘Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.’ Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, ‘Wherever you turn, they will attack us’” (NIV).

Here is now massive discouragement as the wall is halfway up. The discouragement in the lives of the people who are working on the wall is coming from several factors. One, they’re simply tired out. They are exhausted. The strength of the laborers is giving out. The danger of this statement is that it comes from the men of Judah. In the Scripture, Judah is always represented as a strong group of people. When Jacob prophesies over Judah in Genesis 49:8–10 he says, “Judah, your brothers will praise you. Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies...The scepter will not depart from Judah nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until it comes to whom it belongs.” Here’s the tribe of Judah. You’re always going to be on the neck of your enemy. Yet this group which was supposed to be so strong is now the one that says, “We’re wiped out.” And they’re bringing to Nehemiah the complaint. That shows you how serious the problem of exhaustion has become.

Not only that but they had begun to lose their vision. Nehemiah 4:10 says there was so much rubble they could not work on the wall. Remember they have the wall half done. They do not say, “We have completed half the wall,” they say, “There’s so much rubble we’ll never get it

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finished.” Isn’t that a classic description of how we may approach a problem. Maybe we’ve been going along really well and the enemy comes in with such tremendous strength or a negative critic comes along and all we get our eyes upon is the rubble. If you look very much in your life you can see somewhere in the past, maybe near or distant past, some evidence of rubble in your life. Get your focus on that and see how you caved in previously. Look at the rubble and if you keep your eyes long enough on the rubble you’ll never get your eyes again on the wall.

Not only that but verse 11 tells us they completely lost their confidence because of their enemies coming in and saying they’re going to kill them. They repeat this in verse 12—ten times over. Ten times they come to Nehemiah and say, “Wherever you turn they will attack us. We’re defeated, it’s hopeless.” We can be intimidated by problems littler than our spiritual power to deal with them. But so often they seem so big. Confidence is lost and all now that is being done is they are dwelling on the worst possible scenario.

Some one has said “Anxiety never robs tomorrow of its sorrow. It simply saps today of its strength.” Focusing on the worst possible scenario.

That’s what worry can do to our lives too.

How like in human nature to forget how God has helped through the years, and instead of banking on the backlog of what God has done, we focus on the immediate challenge and say that maybe he’s going to let us down. Sometimes I get frightened about the commitments we have in missions and the local church here and I look at the income that’s needed every week. I think maybe this week it won’t happen. And then we’ll have to start sending notices out to missionaries and staff saying, “Sorry, we can’t send our commitments.” Maybe I’ll get laid off. Maybe I won’t make ends meet. Maybe what I started won’t get done. Maybe everything’s going to come down. The worst possible scenario. The terrible thing with that is the more you

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concentrate on the worst possible scenario the more evident it seems the whole house is going to come down.

III. Mobilizing for success

This is a serious situation for Nehemiah and it's a serious situation when it happens to you.

Nehemiah must mobilize now for success, in verses 13–23. What a tremendous way of dealing with this problem. Nehemiah knows that discouragement can paralyze us if we let it. What does he do? I think in verse 13 he lets the devil know that he's in for a fight if he messes with Nehemiah. I think the devil stands behind the enemies. "When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work" (verse 15). An attitude to have when we are really going through this is to finally get back up and say, "Ok. I know I'm under unique attack because I'm on the verge of breaking through in my life. I'm on the verge of seeing God do something. Therefore for doing this to me, o enemy, you are going to get it! This has made me so super-strong that you're going to get licked harder than you'd ever be licked if you never messed with me in the first place."

That sounds like fighting words. That seems to me exactly what Paul does in Ephesians by the way, when he's in prison and the enemy has put him there for about a five-year period of time. His battle words were "Stand therefore," and he talks about having the armor of God on and he's going to let the enemy know he's in for a fight. What Paul manages to do in that time is write the letters that have been around in the church for two thousand years: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, later 1 and 2 Timothy. It would have been better if the enemy had never have had those words. But Paul stood up to him and said, "If you mess with me you're going to get it."

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Satan would have been better off if he had never messed with Joni Eareckson Tada. If he'd never messed with her, out of her life would have never come the stream, the flow of art, the flow of testimony and the power that this young girl has had on Christian people and non-Christian people all over the world. He touched her and he got clobbered.

That's the kind of perspective that we ought to have that Nehemiah epitomizes here. You touch me, devil, and you're going to get it! You're going to be sorry and I'm going to be glad because the end result of this is God is going to work this out for good. Joni keeps struggling with that Scripture, by the way, Romans 8:28. But she ultimately discovers its truth. God indeed does work things out for good. We are always better, always stronger people when we have faced opposition than if we had never faced it at all. Something happens as a result.

So the enemies are in for it because they messed with Nehemiah. Nehemiah goes back in verse 14 again looking to the Lord. He keeps praying all the way through this thing and we must attribute success to that. He keeps everybody working. In fact, he gives new working routines that they must work with the shovel and swords simultaneously. It may make things a little bit slower but it makes it safer. He even, because the work is so spread out, keeps a man with a trumpet by him so if anybody gets in danger they sound the trumpet and everybody rallies. What a shrewd biblical principle emerging here. When you are in the middle of a struggle and the attempt is made to pick you off, work with your family. Nehemiah stations the families in groups together. This may be the spiritual family or physical family. Have your family there in the struggle with you. Also, when you get in trouble, blow the horn and don't try to be a brave warrior and fight the battle all yourself. But get on the horn and call someone. Nehemiah had his horn and we have our horn. Get on the horn and say, "I'm really troubled today. I'm really

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depressed. I'm discouraged." Sound the alarm so people know what's going on about you. Fight the battle together.

Nehemiah, when the whole thing is said and done, reaches a new level of commitment. We find him working longer hours from dawn to dusk, changing his routine (verse 22). He has everybody now stay inside the city of Jerusalem and there is another shrewd reason for that. They were going outside Jerusalem and that's where all their critics live. So Nehemiah not only want to protect the city by having them stay there at night. But he wants to isolate them from their critics so that when they go home they're not filled with fear. Sometimes we need to do that. Isolate ourselves from the criticism.

Then Nehemiah even goes to the extent of denying himself legitimate comforts. He doesn't change his clothes.

The end result of being attacked is a new fresh commitment to God and to his work. We know that God will not allow walls to be built without opposition. Whether they were Nehemiah's walls or walls we build in our personal life, or whether they're walls we build as a church body together, opposition will be part of it.

Strength is gained by overcoming the adversity. Not by giving in to it. This is the victory that has overcome the world; even our faith.

Your situation may not always conform to every principle here. The basic principles are there but the progression may not always be the same. I don't want to give you some kind of neat package. Just spiritual encouragement. God is with us.

Closing Prayer

Our Lord Jesus Christ, we come to You today and we acknowledge Your resurrection from the dead. That tells us again and again that You have power over all things. Even death itself. Yet

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You did not use Your resurrection power until there had been crucifixion. How nice it would have been if You would have simply demonstrated Your resurrection power without going through crucifixion. How good it would be, Lord, if You would bring Your purposes to pass in our life and we would know Your power and never have been vulnerable, never had pain, and never been knocked down and out. But Your power is displayed in our weakness and we do have this treasure in earthen vessels that the glory might be Yours. Lord Jesus in Your name I bring before Your throne in this moment the individuals within this body who are facing adversity, who are looking at rubble in their life, who maybe even all their life have heard the taunts of those about them, members even of family who have said, "You'll never amount to anything. You're no good. What can You do?" Lord Jesus, in Your name, the name that sets us free, we refuse to hear that. We refuse to believe that. Because You who have set us free have set us free indeed. You came to give us abundant life. We believe in Your purposes, Lord Jesus, and in Your name this moment I would pray on behalf of us all a freeing prayer to liberate us from the rubble and the criticism and the detractors which would seek to prevent us from becoming Your sons and daughters clothed in wholeness and in light. We confess Your strong name and power. What we pray for us as individuals, and we pray for us as a body as well, that we would set our eyes upon You and You alone. Not upon the circumstances, not upon needs, not upon little resources. But upon Your strong power and authority. We praise You that You have promised to build Your church. We don't build it. You do. And the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Bring courage and strength to every one in this body who's at work on the walls of Your kingdom. Give us in Your name success. Praise Your name, Lord. We believe this moment. Thank You, Father. Amen.