

Dealing with Opposition – Nehemiah 4

Have you ever been faced with opposition? Have you ever been ridiculed? Have you ever been threatened? How did you respond? How should you?

Ch. 4 is all about how Nehemiah dealt w/ opposition! This task of rebuilding the wall was met with great opposition - every good work of the Lord is!

The same is true for us today! Being involved in God's work of building His Kingdom here in our day will bring about great opposition for us too! Why?

- The patterns of this world are in opposition to the Kingdom of God! Eph. 2:1-3
- The people of this world follow the desires of their father. John 8:42-44
- Our 3 enemies will not stop opposing us—the world, our flesh & the devil

What can we learn about the opposition that we too will face in this world by observing Nehemiah & how he faced the opposition he encountered?

1) Opposition often starts with ridicule, & it comes in numbers!

What started in Ch. 2:19 with the jeers of Sanballat, Tobiah & Geshem have now grown into a public display of taunting, w/ a whole army behind them!

Listen to these public taunts in the form of 5 questions recorded in Vs. 2:

- "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, & burned ones at that?"

Taunting questions often have the ability to lead us to question our actions!

Don't let the taunts of the enemy lead us to question our calling as God's people

And also don't buy into the lie of Tobiah in Vs. 3! If a fox could truly break it down, then a whole army wouldn't be there trying to stop its progress!

Boice says, "The reason people ridicule those they oppose, aside from it being so easy, is that it is demoralizing & frequently effective. It is effective because it strikes at the hidden insecurity or weakness that almost everybody has."

So what was Nehemiah's response to this opposition of ridicule?

- He prayed – Vs. 4! He didn't answer these fools according to their folly, he prayed that God would intervene & that God would defend them!

Praying intentional prayers is our first line of defense!

- He continued the work – Vs. 6! No second guessing, they had a mind for the work. Matthew Henry said "The reproaches of our enemies should quicken us to our duty, not drive us from it."

Continuing the work was the necessary follow-up to their faithful prayers!

2) Opposition can also take the form of physical threats & intimidation!

Vs 7 –They were literally surrounded by those making threats against them!
- Samaritans – North, Arabs – South, Ammonites – East, Ashdodites – West.

The opposition didn't just go away b/c they prayed for it, it actually increased!

What was Nehemiah's response to these threats and to their intimidation?

- He prayed again and he also posted a guard – Vs. 9.

Nehemiah's prayers were always accompanied by action! He believed that God would act, but he also acted upon that belief!

3) Opposition can also come from our own weaknesses, fears & insecurities!

Vs. 10 – "Our strength is failing... There's too much rubble... by ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall."

4) Opposition can also come from within our own families – Vs. 12!

How did Nehemiah respond to these two forms of opposition? – Vs. 14

- He told them to "Remember the Lord, who is great & awesome, & fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives & your homes."

No opposition can stand against a work of God – it will ultimately fail!

No opposition can stand against God's people when they stand together!

5) Opposition can be resisted if we are properly armed & prepared for it!

Nehemiah, after enduring these forms of opposition, devised a plan where by the work could continue & the people could be protected – Vs. 16-21.

God has devised such a plan for us today as well, by supplying us w/ the armor of God to protect us & help us fight the good fight of the faith! Eph. 6:1-18 – reminds us of the battle we are in, & of our defense against the opposition!

2-4-18 Dealing with Opposition – Nehemiah 4

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