Stay on the Wall

(Nehemiah 6:14 KJV)

*My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear*.

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ehemiah in the past visited the Palace of Shushan when he encountered a group of men from Jerusalem. Judah has been carried into exile and it had been a long time since Nehemiah had heard anything concerning his homeland. The news was not good. The men had told Nehemiah that the remnant that had survived the exile was in great trouble and shame. The walls were broken down and the gates had been burned. When he heard this news he began to cry and became greatly distressed and depressed. He took the situation to the Lord with prayer and fasting. Thereafter, with a sense of urgency, Nehemiah decided to start a building program.

Here is Nehemiah the cupbearer for king Artaxerxes to assure that he would not drink poison. Here is a prophet supporting the vision of an invisible God. Here is a man who was vigorous and soon will challenge those who were venomous towards the work.

Whenever God calls us to do something often the excitement that initially accomplished it can soon turn into frustration. It’s amazing how the amount of opposition, frustration and fatigue we experience often begins as soon as we start to move towards the direction God has given us.

1. **Nehemiah’s Anointing:**

Nehemiah is a great example of staying focused and committed to an important task. This Israelite Nehemiah has gone through the task of living in exile in Babylon. One day the king asked Nehemiah why he seemed so sad.

Nehemiah replied, “Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ grave, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?”

God gave Nehemiah an anointing. And his anointing was so evident that it rubbed off on the king who showed him favor to inspect and rebuild the walls to the city. In every task God gives us; he will place upon us favor. But! Our enemies think God’s favor isn’t fair! Remember it’s dangerous to touch God’s anointed one who’s been favored in the Lord.

1. **Nehemiah’s Assignment:**

One thing that clearly emerges from this book is that life is a battle from beginning to end. Nehemiah ran into opposition the moment he set his heart to obey God's command to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem. He faced difficulty before he even got to the city. Then, after he reached Jerusalem enemies rose up to oppose everything he did. You may not yet have experienced all that in your Christian life, but you will! The Apostle Paul warns, “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood,” (Ephesians 6:12). Men and women, other humans, are not really our problem.

What we are up against is invisible forces: “*the world powers of darkness*” (Ephesians 6:12b), Paul calls them. These same enemies are found in the book of Nehemiah also. Thus we are confronted by an invisible enemy who hates law and order, and justice and peace. He loves to mangle, trap, destroy and murder. He lives to oppose the work of God in creating harmony, beauty, love and respect for one another. That is what we are battling.

But that didn’t stop Nehemiah’s assignment! When nighttime would tip toe in, and the sun would rest her head, Nehemiah would ride upon a horse and inspect the walls for rebuilding; and share with the people who became willing working, that God has approved of the reconstruction.

But Satan was waiting and watching through his binoculars of adversity. He was conspiring plans to derail the Lord’s work. What a tuff assignment from the Lord Nehemiah would endure.

In fact, in the Bible we find numerous accounts of people to whom God gave various assignments in which He expected them to succeed by taking specific actions that He had commanded them to take. Here’s what I’m trying to explain:

* God told Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac (Genesis 22:2).
* God told Noah to build a giant ark by which he, his extended family, and Earth’s animals could be saved from a coming universal flood (Genesis 6:14).
* God told Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 3:10).
* God told Joshua to lead the Israelites to battle their enemies as they occupied the Promised Land of Canaan (Joshua 1:1-9).
* God told Jonah to preach to the huge city of Nineveh in order to convince its inhabitants to repent of their sins (Jonah 1:2).
* God told Nehemiah to rebuild the walls and city of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:12).
* God told Hosea to marry a harlot in order to show the Israelites that they had polluted their service to God (Hosea 1:2).
* Christ told His disciples to take the Gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19-20).
* Christ told Christians to be faithful even unto death (Revelation 2:10).

Do you think it was easy for them? No! It was not easy for those people to carry out such tasks or to endure such suffering. And no catchy sayings or cute mottos could make their lives any easier. So what was it, then, that helped such individuals succeed in carrying out the tough assignments that God had given them? Answer: It was their Faith!

1. **Nehemiah’s Action:**

In the first five chapters of the book of Nehemiah; it tell of the ways Satan tried to stop the people from rebuilding. Satan tried **derision** by laughing at the work, **discouragement** that the project would be a complete failure, **danger** of bodily harm, **discord** to get the people to fight against each other, **depletion** of taking away needed resources to complete the assignment.

In Chapter six, following a series of attacks and threats against him in an effort to intimidate him, the enemies of Nehemiah suddenly change their tactics. Suddenly they resort to **distraction** of friendliness and persuasion.

Listen to what Nehemiah testifies. “*When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it - though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates - Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono. But they were scheming to harm me; so I sent messengers to them with this reply: I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?" Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer*” (Nehemiah 6:1-4 NIV).

These individuals once enemies; suddenly become Nehemiah's friends and invited him to a conference down on the plain of Ono. But Nehemiah senses danger: “they were scheming to harm me,” he says. Some commentators suggest that they were trying to trick him into leaving Jerusalem, where he had armed support, to come to a conference where they could set upon him and perhaps kill him. Nehemiah evidently senses this. He firmly declines, saying, “I am carrying on a great project, and I cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?”

They could not stop the work of building by threat and attack, so they switched their tactics. You will experience this too when you try to correct wrong things in your life. It is possible that your friends will become your most dangerous foes.

Nehemiah was persistent in his refusal. Here is his reason:  “I am doing a great work,” he says. “I have a great calling. God has committed a tremendous project to me, and if I leave, it will be threatened.” One of the most helpful things that we can do to resist temptation is to remember that God has called us to a great task. “*So this wall was finished*” (Nehemiah 6:15).