

Nehemiah 5-6  
“Nehemiah: Leadership in the Rubble”

AS YOU SETTLE IN PLEASE TURN TO **Nehemiah 5-6...**

**LET'S PRAY -**

**INTRO -**

NOTE TAKERS I'VE TITLED TONIGHT MESSAGE: **“The Assassination of Character”**

WERE GOING THROUGH A SERIES CALLED...

- We also saw our friends again...
  - Who are these guys? - The BAD GUYS of our story
    - They were constant irritations to Nehemiah

SORRY BUT I HAVE A SPOILER...

- At the End of Chapter 6 They finish the wall in spite of all of the opposition
  - And what was impressive was that this wall covering 35 Acres only took 52 days to complete

- Summary of all of the attacks in the first 6 chapters

- Gaslighting - 2:19
- Mockery - 4:1
- Discouragement - 4:3
- Threats - 4:8
- Internal selfishness - 5:7\*
- Rumors 6:6
- Political assassination attempts 6:10

- What is interesting is that out of everything that our ‘Bad Guys’ tried, nothing worked.
  - But there was one thing that stopped forward progress on the wall...

**(READ V 1-5 NKJV)**

**IDEA 1 - Self-Sabotaging God's work (Chapter 5)**

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BACK IN CHAPTER 3 WE READ ABOUT ALL OF THE PEOPLE

- They all put their hand to the work, however they had to make a choice...
  - There was a personal sacrifice of time and money
    - They had to make a choice
      - 1. To sacrifice for a short season OR
      - 2. Continue the cycle of the last 100 years

IT REMINDS ME OF A PARABLE JESUS TAUGHT

- Luke 14:28-30 NKJV
  - The principle is that there is a cost to be obedient to Jesus
    - It may cost you your time, your energy, your money

CONTEXT ON THE ECONOMICAL SITUATION:

- 1. There was a Famine in the land (v.3)
- 2. There was a huge tax issue with the king Artaxerxes as well as the Local political powers
- 3. Since the walls were down for the last 100 years no one was able to accumulate wealth
- 4. The Jewish Nobles were lending money with insanely high interest rates to their own people

IN THIS CHAPTER WE SEE A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF ATTACK

- Previously its been from the outside in but now these attacks internal
  - This one however seemed to be far more successful because it actually stopped the work
    - Nowhere in these first 13 verses is there any wall building.
      - The saying goes: ‘If you can't beat them, join them’ And Satan like to take that to heart

(READ V 6-13 NKJV)

THE PEOPLE WERE SUFFERING DUE TO THE ECONOMICAL CONDITIONS

- But what were the nobles doing? They were shooting their wounded

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- That should never be the mindset of the church
  - James 5:19-20 NLT

### IRONICALLY...

- The Very nobles who wanted the wall to be built were undermining the process by enslaving their brothers
  - We often shoot ourselves in the foot when we operate in greed and selfishness
    - This was a moral issue and it wasn't until Nehemiah cleaned the house that progress was made on the wall

### TAKE NOTE ON HOW NEHEMIAH HANDLED HIS ANGER

- Verse 6 says that he became very angry
  - The Hebrew word literally translates to ‘Exceedingly Furious’
    - Ephesians 4:26 NKJV tells us to
      - “Be angry, and do not sin...”
        - Anger is and can be a very appropriate emotion when utilized correctly
          - I like how NLT puts that same verse:
- When Nehemiah was angry he controlled his emotions
  - In the very next verse “After serious thought...”
    - Proverbs 16:32 NKJV

### TAKE A LOOK AT VERSE 9 FROM THE NLT...

- They were ruining their testimony as being God’s Distinct people by acting like the world in charging their people interest
  - It was self destruction of their distinctiveness as God’s people
    - Exodus 22:25 and Deut 23:19-20 Both commanded that the israelites would not charge their brother interest

### LET’S READ VERSE 11-12

- True repentance for wrong always inspires a desire to provide restitution
  - This was not an attempt to buy forgiveness or throw money at a moral problem

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NEHEMIAH DID SOMETHING EXPERTLY HERE

- Not only did he identify the problem
  - He also made a plan to correct it immediately
    - Don't just stop at finding a problem
      - It was likely a very uncomfortable conversation

(READ V 14-19 NKJV)

THE FORMER GOVERNOR’S LAID BURDENS ON THE PEOPLE

- But Nehemiah did not adopt the status quo

OUR GOAL SHOULD BE TO BE A BLESSING AND NOT A BURDEN

- As the governor Nehemiah could have taken full advantage of what was rightfully his
  - Paul in the book of Romans spoke about how he had “rights and freedoms”
    - There are 2 types of leaders in this chapter, the Nobles who became burdens and Nehemiah who became a blessing.
      - You have a choice as to what you will be

(READ CHAPTER 4 V. 1-9 NLT)

**IDEA 2 - Not Today Sanballat (4:1-9)**

THE ENEMY HEARD THAT THE WALL WAS BUILT BUT THE GATES WERE LEFT UNHUNG

- This was their ‘now or never’ time to stop the work
  - Just a note on this: The plains of Ono were 20 miles north of Jerusalem and it was a beautiful vibrant Valley

THEY ASKED NEHEMIAH TO MEET IN THE MIDDLE

- It was the halfway point between Jerusalem and Samaria where they said they wanted to compromise and work together...
  - If you can't beat them...
    - And the reality is that if you meet the devil in the middle and invite him to join your team, expect him to change the rules.

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BACK IN 1 KINGS 20 A PROPHET TOLD A PARABLE

- About a soldier who was assigned a task to guard a prisoner of war
  - 1 KINGS 20:39-40a NKJV
    - Here is the key: you can't fulfill the calling or the role God has given you if you are too busy elsewhere

THE MAIN THING IS TO KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING

- Nehemiah knew what he was supposed to do and he didn't get sidetracked on anything else
  - [Billy Graham Illustration]
    - “God called me to be a preacher, and I believe it would be a great diversion from my preaching and my worldwide crusade”

(READ CHAPTER 4 V. 5-7 NLT)

THE OPEN LETTER INDICATES THAT IT WAS NOT SEALED

- Meaning that it was not an official document, It was quite literally fake news
  - Think social media
    - In the same way Satan loves to select gossips to be his messengers and damage God's work.

THIS IS THE KEY:

- If you take care of your Character, We can trust God to take care of our reputation
  - The key is to not provide your enemy with ammunition

On April 23, 1910 The 26th president of the United States gave a speech titled ‘Citizenship in a Republic’ in which he 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; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best 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

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shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

### THOSE WHO SPREAD RUMORS DON'T CARE ABOUT THE TRUTH

- Even Back in Nehemiah 2 they told the same lies

Nehemiah was just a cup bearer who was trying to help his countrymen

- Being ridiculed and assassinated was not something he signed up for
  - [RACEHORSE BLINDERS]

### ***IDEA 3 - Don't give the enemy ammunition (4:10-19)***

(READ CHAPTER 4 V. 10-14 NLT)

### WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY DEFINES INTIMIDATION AS

- “to make timid or fearful frighten, especially to compel or deter by using threats”
  - But when our identity is in Christ those treats no longer hold the same weight
    - 2 Timothy 1:7 NLT

### IT WAS A CONFUSING SITUATION FOR NEHEMIAH

- Yet The bible says that God is not the author of confusion
  - [HEAVY RAIN ILLUSTRATION]
- HALT - [DON'T GO GROCERY SHOPPING WHEN HUNGRY]

### FOR NEHEMIAH, A FALSE PROPHET OFFERED HIM AN EASY WAY OUT

- But it was a way of fear and disobedience, and Nehemiah would have no part of it
  - He refused to hide in the temple for 2 reasons
    - 1. He's a leader so what kind of message does that send to the people
    - 2. He knew that he wasn't a priest and It would have been sinful for him to enter into the temple
      - Numbers 18:7

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NEHEMIAH PERCEIVED AND HAD DISCERNMENT

- Christians today suffer a great deal because of a lack of discernment

WATCH - DON'T MISS THIS...

- Proverbs 29:25 NKJV

(READ V 15-16 NKJV)

THESE WALLS WERE BROKEN DOWN FOR 100 YEARS

- And yet it just took 52 days to repair the walls
  - So many people live their lives, spending exorbitant amount of Time in the rubble

IT TOOK A LOT OF WORK FOR A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME TO FIX A 100 YEAR OLD ISSUE

- If they worked 12 hour days working 6 days a week for 52 days
  - ~ 500 hours each during the project

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT IF YOU SPEND 100 HOURS IN ANY DISCIPLINE YOU WILL BE BETTER THAN 95% OF OTHERS IN THAT SAME DISCIPLINE

- That's 18 minutes a day for a year
  - How much different would our lives look if we dedicate time towards disciples of Godly men and women?
    - Psychologist tell us that It takes roughly 2 months to start a new habit or break a bad habit

**CALL WORSHIP UP -**

**APPLICATION**

1- THE ENEMY HAS LOTS OF DIFFERENT WEAPONS TO ATTACK YOU

- Psalm 62:2 “He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken.”

2- VICTORY IS DONE BUT THE BOOK DOESN'T END IN CHAPTER 6

- There are still 7 more chapters of ups and downs, victories and setbacks