

Too Busy in the Work of the Lord
Nehemiah: Building Beyond Ourselves, Part 5
February 8th & 11th, 2018

A Modern Day Example – (see Mark 3:1-5)

- Lost people act like **LOST** people (see 1 Corinthians 2:14 & 2 Corinthians 5:17)
- Satan is a **DECEIVER** – those who reject the truth are being deceived; we should have compassion for them (see John 8:44 & 2 Corinthians 4:4)
- The consequences of sin are **TRAGIC** (eternity separated from God) (see Rom 6:23, Ezek 18:20, Rev 20:15)

To have the compassion of Jesus, we must have the **HELP** of Jesus

We cannot offer grace to enemies of the truth unless we've **RECEIVED** grace from our Father

A Well Timed Attack

The attack on Nehemiah and the workers occurred when they were **ALMOST FINISHED** rebuilding the wall; shortly before they were to have a great **CELEBRATION**
1 Corinthians 10:12 (NIV) "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"

Often it isn't the person who has almost **FALLEN** who is vulnerable; it's the person who thinks he will **NEVER FALL**

A Subtle Strategy – 3 attacks to strengthen

1. **There was a PERSONAL request** (on the surface it appeared innocent & harmless)
Nehemiah 6:2 (NIV) "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..."
Nehemiah 6:3 (NAS) "So I sent messengers to them, saying, 'I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?'"

You can't always be **AVAILABLE**; some people won't **UNDERSTAND** this

A mark of maturity is the ability to say no without **EXPLANATION**

Nehemiah 6:4 (NIV) "Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer."

Nehemiah 6:5 (NAS) "Then Sanballat sent his servant to me in the same manner a fifth time with an open letter [unsealed letter] in his hand." (also see Nehemiah 6:6-7)

2. **There were RUMORS**
Nehemiah 6:6 (NIV) "It is reported among the nations..."

Characteristics of a rumor...

- The **SOURCE** is never declared
- There is **EXAGGERATION** and **INACCURACY**
- Leads to **PERSONAL** hurt and misunderstanding

Perhaps the #1 enemy of Christian unity is the **TONGUE** (see Proverbs 18:21)

Wisdom forces us to ask searching questions such as:

***WHY** am I sharing this? (see Proverbs 26:22) *Can this person be part of the **SOLUTION**?

*Is it **NECESSARY** to say this? *Is this **CONFIDENTIAL** information?

*Do I have the **RIGHT** to say this? (see Proverbs 6:16-19)

- Lacks **ACCURATE** information

Proof of accuracy: Is this **TRUE**? Can the **ORIGINAL** source be quoted?

- Rumor spreaders lose sight of the proper **REASON** for sharing information

*Will this person **BENEFIT** from hearing this from me?

*Can he/she **DO** anything about it?

When you give unverified information to people who are critical and negative, knowing they can't do anything about the situation anyway, that's an **UNWISE** move.

When you go to an individual who can do something about relevant information, and in a spirit of love share it, that is **CONSTRUCTIVE** criticism.

The best response when confronted by a gossip is usually is **DIRECT** confrontation
Nehemiah 6:8 (NIV) "I [Nehemiah] sent him this reply: 'Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.'"

Nehemiah took his **HURT** to God.

Nehemiah 6:9 (NAS) "For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking, 'They will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done.' But now, O God, strengthen my hands."

When we have disagreements that need to be expressed, take them to those who can **DO SOMETHING** about them (see Ephesians 4:29)

3. There was **INTIMIDATION** (see Nehemiah 6:10-12)

Nehemiah was walking by faith and believed **GOD** would protect him.

Isaiah 41:10 (NAS) "[God said] Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Nahum 1:7 (NAS) "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him."

Nehemiah 6:13 (NIV) "He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me."

Being intimidated isn't sin, but **GIVING IN** to intimidation produces sin

Nehemiah 6:19 (NLT) "They kept telling me about Tobiah's good deeds, and then they told him everything I said. And Tobiah kept sending threatening letters to intimidate me."

Mission Accomplished (see Nehemiah 6:15-16)

God is **SOVEREIGN** and over all creation; His plan and will not be thwarted by **HUMANS**

2 Chronicles 20:6 (NLT) "He [the King of Judah] prayed, 'O Lord, God of our ancestors, You alone are the God who is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. You are powerful and mighty; no one can stand against You!'"

Isaiah 14:27 (NCSB) "The Lord of Hosts Himself has planned it; therefore, who can stand in its way? It is His hand that is outstretched, so who can turn it back?"

You can't **DO** the will of God and walk by **FAITH** without **ATTACK**

1 John 4:4 (NAS) "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."

"Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never..." Winston Churchill, Oct 29, 1941 in an address to students and faculty of Harrow School

When you know you are in God's will, **NEVER** give in.

My Next Step Today Is:

- I am in a "rumor" or "intimidation" situation. I am asking God to help me through it His way!
- I/we plan to attend the Sun, Feb 11th (or) the Fri, Feb 16th dinner (*circle the day you'll attend*) – # adults attending ____; # of children attending ____ – please list their ages: _____
- I will pray that God will enable us to meet our 3 year goal to raise \$1.5 million toward our building

Next week: Join us next week as we explore "Responding to God." Bring a friend!

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