

OPPOSITION

NEHEMIAH 4

JERUSALEM HAS ALWAYS FACED OPPOSITION

- 444 BC, Nehemiah comes on the scene...let's review
- 597 BC, Nebuchadnezzar attacked and besieged Judah and Jerusalem. Remember Daniel and his friends?
- 538 BC, Zerubbabel was sent by God to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and opposition comes from the locals—they REALLY didn't want to see the temple in Jerusalem rebuilt.
- And opposition to Jews continues today.

OPPOSITION TO NEHEMIAH'S WORK

- So Nehemiah, came to re-establish Jerusalem's boundaries
- He came to restore worship
- As a result, he became the target of opposition forces that had been there for years
- The governors of that area had nothing to gain by the restoration of Jerusalem, so they are going to oppose the work of Nehemiah

NEHEMIAH 4:1-3

- The leaders of the opposition attacked:
 - their character
 - their motives
 - their mission
 - their God
 - their ability

OPPOSITION TO NEHEMIAH'S WORK

- It was not about Nehemiah.
- If someone else had come to restore and rebuild the city of God, the opposition would have come.
- The local leaders represent the status quo, and Nehemiah has come to disrupt that...big time.

HOW DOES NEHEMIAH RESPOND TO THE OPPOSITION?

- Nehemiah absorbed the attacks.
- He didn't come to pick a fight with the local leaders, even though he *knew* they would oppose his work.
- Even though he had the king's army with him, he didn't go after the opposition forces. *
- He comes in and starts his project. He is FOR the wall going up! He came to build, not to fight.

DOES THIS HAVE APPLICATION FOR US TODAY?

- As believers, we want to restore goodness to a chaotic world and society, through the gift of Jesus Christ.
- Will there be opposition to us as we attempt to do this?
- It would NOT be beneficial for those who represent the status quo to see the church of Jesus Christ built in this city, in this area of Japan, in all of Japan.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-10

- Nehemiah meets with the governors of the area, explaining to them that he is acting with the permission and blessing and provision of the king.
- The governors publicly acquiesce, but they will oppose Nehemiah every step of the way because the King is 1,600 kilometers away.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-10 CONT'D.

- “very much disturbed” => literally, *trembling with anger*
- Nehemiah has not even started construction yet, but they were already foaming-at-the-mouth angry.
- The system in place was beneficial to the enemies of Jerusalem and now, this powerful Jew with credentials from the King, was going to mess it up.

NEHEMIAH 2:9-10 CONT'D.

- "...promote the welfare of the Israelites."
- welfare => good, healthy, well being
- keeping the Jewish people DOWNS was beneficial to the local governors

TWO RESPONSES

- The local governors responded to Nehemiah's plan with feelings of anger so powerful, it literally caused them to tremble.
- Nehemiah responded to their anger by simply moving forward with his plan to rebuild.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CHURCH TODAY

- What is our local, God-given mission?
- Is there anyone who might oppose our mission?
- Would their opposition be personal or would it be in opposition to the disturbance in what they considered normal or status quo?
- Do I know MY God-given mission? Nehemiah did.

HOW DID NEHEMIAH KNOW?

- Nehemiah was 1,600 km away from Jerusalem in modern-day Iran serving on the king's court.
- He hears about the desolation of Jerusalem and it turns his emotional and spiritual world upside down.
- He goes into prayer and fasting for 4 1/2 months where God refines the mission.
- He presents the plan to the unbelieving King and gets approval.

NEHEMIAH EXPECTED TO BE OPPOSED AND PREPARED FOR IT

- He spent much time in prayer before leaving Persia and all along the way to Jerusalem.
- He brought the king's authority (paperwork).
- He met with the governors of the area.
- He brought the king's army (because he expected to be opposed).

DO YOU KNOW YOUR OWN GOD-GIVEN MISSION?

- Would you be willing to pray and fast until God confirmed the assignment God is giving you?
- It is NOT enough for us to just to talk to other believers about the salvation of Hiroshima when we come to church, during fellowship time, during our weekly bible studies, or online.
- You need to take this thing that is stirring in your heart to God. And do you know what He is likely to do?
- **MAKE YOU A PART OF THE SOLUTION!**

IF GOD HAS CREATED A DISTURBANCE IN YOUR SPIRIT...

- Don't sit on it!
- Fast and pray about it!
- Listen to God!
- Do what He leads you to do!
- Expect and prepare for opposition!

A LARGE PART OF OUR MISSION IS LAID OUT FOR US IN SCRIPTURE

- Matthew 28:19-20
- If we were to do this aggressively, in our city, in our community, at our jobs, would we face opposition?
- Have we been told in Scripture, should we realize that we will face opposition, to quietly confine our activities to church and to not start making waves?

NEHEMIAH 2:19-3:1

- When the opposition heard about Nehemiah's plans, they mocked and ridiculed him and his crew.
- Nehemiah responded, NOT by retaliating, but by starting to rebuild.
- Nehemiah started with the sheep gate!
- Nehemiah solves the spiritual problem FIRST!
- How? He re-establishes worship.*

NEHEMIAH 4:1-6

- Those in opposition are getting more and more angry!
- He mocks and ridicules, and then tries to incite the local army to rise up against Nehemiah and his wall builders.
- Does Nehemiah respond by challenging Sanballat to a fight? Or does he pray an amazing prayer?
- Nehemiah didn't curse his enemies. He just prayed for God to curse them.
- But what did Nehemiah do? In vs. 6, they built the wall.

NEHEMIAH 4:7-9

- The opposition CONTINUED even though the people were encouraged by the progress in the wall building.
- Those opposed to the project, plotted to fight and stir up trouble.
- What was Nehemiah's *immediate* response?
- He prayed.
- He posted a guard.

THOSE WHO OPPOSE US
WANT TO DESTROY US
AND STOP OUR PROGRESS

WHEN WE UNDERSTAND OUR MISSION FROM GOD...

- We must fast and pray.
- We must know we will be opposed, and be prepared.
- When they talk against us, we must talk to God.
- When they continue to oppose us, we simply continue to build what God has told us to build!

