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Opposition to the Kingdom

Nehemiah 4

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

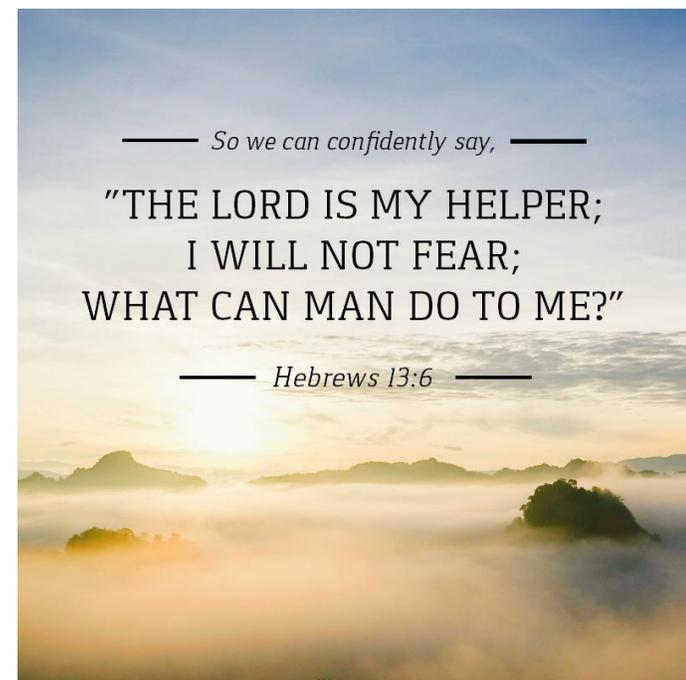


Nehemiah chapter 4 gives us insight to the stiff opposition that Nehemiah faces when he leads the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem. There are many threats to the people that are working on the wall. The opposition starts by ridiculing the work and saying that it is not any good and that the wall will not be able to hold anyone back. Then the rhetoric escalates to threats of violence and attack. Nehemiah responds to the threats with both practical and spiritual responses. In any work that we do for God we can expect to have opposition. This week we will talk about how we can appropriately respond to the threats. In today's society we can expect more and more threats toward the church. Join us this Sunday as we discuss how we can respond appropriately with wisdom and love.

— So we can confidently say, —

“THE LORD IS MY HELPER;
I WILL NOT FEAR;
WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?”

— Hebrews 13:6 —



Nehemiah 4 (NASB)

Work Is Ridiculed

4 Now it came about that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews. ² He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy *men* of Samaria and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore *it* for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble even the burned ones?" ³ Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* near him and he said, "Even what they are building—if a fox should jump on *it*, he would break their stone wall down!"

⁴ Hear, O our God, how we are despised! Return their reproach on their own heads and give them up for plunder in a land of captivity. ⁵ Do not forgive their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out before You, for they have demoralized the builders.

⁶ So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its *height*, for the people had a mind to work.

⁷ Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, *and* that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry. ⁸ All of them conspired together to come *and* fight against

Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it.

Discouragement Overcome

⁹ But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night.

¹⁰ Thus in Judah it was said,

"The strength of the burden bearers is failing,
Yet there is much rubbish;
And we ourselves are unable
To rebuild the wall."

¹¹ Our enemies said, "They will not know or see until we come among them, kill them and put a stop to the work." ¹² When the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times, "They will come up against us from every place

where you may turn," ¹³ then I stationed *men* in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, the exposed places, and I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears and bows.

¹⁴ When I saw *their fear*, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people: "Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your

brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses."

¹⁵ When our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had frustrated their plan, then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work. ¹⁶ From that day on, half of my servants carried on the work while half of them held the

spears, the shields, the bows and the breastplates; and the captains *were* behind the whole house of Judah. ¹⁷ Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who carried burdens took *their* load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon. ¹⁸ As for the builders, each *wore* his sword girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter *stood* near me. ¹⁹ I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall far from one another. ²⁰ At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

²¹ So we carried on the work with half of them holding spears from dawn until the stars appeared. ²² At that time I also said to the people, "Let each man with his servant spend the night within Jerusalem so that they may be a guard for us by night and a laborer by day." ²³ So neither I, my brothers, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us removed our clothes, each *took* his weapon *even to* the water.

o EXAMINE His Word (Observation) (For personal preparation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the foregoing passage.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.
2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.
4. Is there anything repeated?
5. What is emphasized?
6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?
7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

14. When is opposition to what you are doing the most effective?

15. What is the appropriate response from us when we find opposition to ministry?

16. What kind of opposition might our church face in the future? How should we be prepared to respond?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

Sermon Notes