

Articles and Sermons :: Overcoming The Opposition From The Enemy -poonen**Overcoming The Opposition From The Enemy -poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/4/27 2:20****Overcoming The Opposition From The Enemy***by Zac Poonen*

In Nehemiah chapter 4 we see Sanballat the enemy becoming furious as he saw the wall coming up. The wall didn't cause any problems for Sanballat personally. Why then was he bothered? He was instigated by Satan. We see the same thing today too. When as Christians, we do a work for the Lord in some area, we don't harm anyone in any way. Yet many of the people there oppose us vigorously! We wonder why! We are doing good to all of them and being a blessing to society. Then why are the people angry? The only way we can explain the opposition and anger of such people is that they are being instigated by Satan. Why are people angry with Christians who are improving the lot of the poor people? We are not harming them in any way. They are angry because Satan hates anyone who glorifies the Name of Christ in any way. We find this principle throughout Scripture. In Nehemiah's time, the enemies of the Jews became furious and tried to bring governmental pressure on the Jews. We see the same thing in India today.

Sanballat then tried to influence the rich people to oppose the work of the Jews and Tobiah made fun of the work. What did Nehemiah do? He did not get into an argument or discussion with them. He prayed saying "O God, we are despised. These people are against us. We are only building the wall and these people are against us" (Neh.4:4). And the wall continued to be built, because "the people had a mind to work" (Neh.4:6). Sanballat and Tobiah then conspired to fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it (Neh.4:7,8). Nehemiah however continued to pray and set up a guard against their enemies day and night (Neh.4:9). In other words, they both watched and prayed. They were alert and watched for the enemy, and they also prayed. This is how we must work in our day too.

One of the biggest problems we face in Christian work is that in addition to the enemies who attack us from without, we also face those who murmur and discourage us from within. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that when the disciples multiplied, there was a murmuring among the Greek widows saying, "We are not getting as much food as the Hebrew widows. There is some partiality here" (Acts 6:1). Murmuring coming from within the camp was something that Nehemiah had to deal with too. People in Judah began to murmur saying, "There is a lot of rubbish here and we can't deal with all this" (Neh.4:10). And Nehemiah had to handle all that murmuring and discouragement. The Jews who lived near them were terribly frightened and shared their fear with others ten times saying, "They will come against you from every side, be careful" (Neh.4:12). In the church too, we will find many who seek to put fear and discouragement into our hearts.

But Nehemiah was not frightened. He told the people, "Don't be afraid. Remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers and your sons and your daughters" (Neh.4:14). "If we fear God, we need fear nothing else" (Isa.8:12,13 - Living). If we really believe that God Almighty is supporting us in what we do, it is ridiculous and foolish to fear anyone.

In Chapter 5:1-13, we see Nehemiah's great care for the poor and the oppressed and those who were in debt, in their midst. He spoke to their creditors and got them all released from their debts. In Nehemiah 5:18, we see Nehemiah's wonderful example in not taking any of the money he was entitled to, as governor of the province - even though he was working so hard and feeding 150 Jews and many from other nations at his table daily! He was a hospitable man who served God, like Noah and Paul did, at his own expense. He used all the money available for building the wall. Here was a man who lived with great sacrifice and did not use money that was used for God's work in any way for himself. Wherever God sees a servant of His who is faithful with money, there will be no limit to which God uses him. God forsakes many of His servants, because He sees them taking advantage of their brothers financially.

In Nehemiah Chapter 6 we read clearly that the wall was completed without any gaps whatsoever. Now Sanballat tried another tactic. He said, "Come, let us have a discussion together in the plain of Ono." But Nehemiah was not going to be deceived. He senses in his spirit that they were going to harm him. God takes care of his servants and protects them. Nehemiah gave them a wonderful reply, which we should give as well, in similar circumstances: "I am doing a great work, and I cannot leave it and come down to you" (Neh.6:3). When God has given us a task to do, we must stick to that, and never waste our time in useless discussions. With that attitude Nehemiah finished the wall in just 52 days (Neh.6:15). For 90 years, from the time that the first exiles had come back to Jerusalem, this wall had not been built. God had to wait until

il he found one man. When that one man was found, he did the job in less than two months. Many things that God wants done today are not being done. Many years go by. What is God waiting for? He is waiting for a man who has a burden, who will not be discouraged by opposition, and who will do the work at his own cost. Nehemiah also faced problems from the nobles in Judah who had marriage links with Tobiah, the enemy of the Jews. Nehemiah was surrounded by compromising rulers in Judah. But he went forward single-handed and fulfilled the task God had given him.

Re: Overcoming The Opposition From The Enemy -poonen - posted by enid, on: 2007/4/27 6:31

Quote: "I am doing a great work, and I cannot leave it and come down to you"(Neh.6:3).

I see this as the enemy, both man and devil, wants us to leave what God wants us to do and to come down to his level.

God forbid.

That which God has called us to do is that which we should be doing.

We should know that the enemy will oppose all that we try to do for God.

So keep praying.

God bless.