

**General Topics :: God, strengthen our hands!**

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“Then I sent to him, saying, ‘No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart.’ For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, ‘Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done.’ Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.”

**Nehemiah 6:8-9**

God, strengthen our hands! It is saddening to see that the work of Christ is largely being opposed and crossed by people who call themselves “Christians”. If it isn’t being opposed openly, then it is being crossed secretly (like backbite). If it is not being rejected publicly, then it will be condemned privately (in the homes of people, after a service).

The people who are opposing the work of Christ aren’t merely the Satanists and the atheists, but also (and most of all) the religionists, traditionists and Christian-humanists. These people aren’t living outside our fellowship, they’re living amongst us. God didn’t only say through Paul: *“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock”* but also: *“from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves” (Acts 20:29-30)*. These people aren’t denying Christ like atheists do. They sing, worship, praise God...but neglect and refuse the whole truth of God. They don’t want to be changed radically. They don’t want to leave all and follow Jesus...they’re seeking own honour and use Christ to add a bit of security to their lives and follow Christ as long as it is suitable to them...

Figuratively spoken (in the context of the book of Nehemiah), these people are living in Jerusalem. They are feeling comfortable and are highly placed. The Church has become a popular place to go to. All ages are being given equal attention. The organisation is running smoothly, until...

“...someone comes along *“to seek the well-being of the children of Israel” (Nehemiah 2:10)*. It says that they were *“deeply disturbed”*. “There we go. Everything is running just fine and now some irritating, godly person comes around...seeking the well-being of the Church. He’s preaching the whole counsel of God. He speaks about heaven and hell, about repentance and godliness. About separation from the world and devotion to God. He speaks about leaving all and following Jesus. He’s trying to ruin our organisation! He’s trying to wake up the people here. He’s trying to sow discord. This will cause problems! We need to get rid of this guy”.

Who was this guy? His name was Nehemiah. His name means: “Consolation” or “repentance of the Lord”. It was a man who heard about the terrible state of Jerusalem. A man who heard about the lukewarm state of the Church.

Where this man saw the outward destruction of Jerusalem, we, as Christians, see the inward annihilation of the Church of Jesus Christ. This man wept, mourned, fasted and prayed to the God in heaven (Nehemiah 1:4). He wasn’t seeking the destruction of Jerusalem. He was seeking a revival! But to Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, he had come to put an end to their “kingship”. They knew what this man of God came to do. The same thing Jesus did when He came to Jerusalem:

“Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. Then He taught, saying to them, ‘Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a den of thieves.’” (Mark 11:15-17)

They had to stop this man. This man was disturbing the whole community. He was taking away the peace and pleasure of the church. Therefore, these men began to spread lies, trying to hinder the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Nowadays, it isn’t much different. We’re not seeking to divide a Church or community. We’re seeking revival from God! But the people don’t see it, because they don’t want it. As Leonard Ravenhill once said:

There are two great reasons we

don’t have revival. One: we’re content to live without it. Two: It’s too costly

It doesn’t take you to be a non-believer to be an enemy of Jesus Christ. You only have to oppose the cross of Jesus. And God clearly tells us when we are rejecting the cross of Christ (Philippians 3:19):

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

• Whose god is their belly

• Whose glory is in their shame

• Who set their mind on earthly things

**You're an enemy of the cross of Christ** when your god is your belly. You're only seeking yourself and what you can gain with being a Christian. You're only seeking own fame and own pleasures. God speaks about that in 1 Timothy 6:5 *"men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself"*. You, as friend of the Bridegroom, are drawing more attention to yourself than to the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ!

**You're an enemy of the cross of Christ** when you glory in what should be your shame. You're telling everyone that you think smoking isn't wrong. You're telling everyone that you and your girlfriend have heard from God that it isn't a bad thing to go to bed with each other before marriage. You're telling everyone that having a relationship with a non-Christian isn't a bad thing at all. You're like the persons that are being described in 2 Peter 2:20: *"For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error."* **You're an enemy of the cross of Christ** when you're earthly minded. What gives you more pleasure: watching Ocean's Twelve or being alone with God? If an answer like this comes to mind: *"What do you mean by being alone with God? Isn't that a bit drab?"*, you're earthly minded. If you consider praying, reading your Bible, fellowshiping with other Christians as *"too boring to fill my whole life with"*, you have set your mind on earthly things. You haven't entered into the fullness God has in store for you in Christ Jesus (Colossians 2:10). As Keith Green remarked:

If your heart takes more pleasure in reading novels, or watching TV, or going to the movies, or talking to friends, rather than just sitting alone with God and embracing Him, sharing His cares and His burdens, weeping and rejoicing with Him, then how are you going to handle forever and ever in His presence with no TV, movies, or singles' retreats? You'd be bored to tears in heaven, if you're not ecstatic about God now!

Friends, let's become like Nehemiah who was bitterly grieved about what had happened to the house of God. *"I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room. Then I commanded them to cleanse the rooms; and I brought back in to them the articles of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense"* (Nehemiah 13:8-10)

We will face opposition, but let us endure. Let us be praying men, not trying to defend our rights or our positions. Let us be men of prayer and men of devotion to Christ. Let us seek Christ! Let us not preach about hell, because nobody preaches about hell anymore. Let us preach about hell, because it is part of the whole counsel of God and we are seeking the *"well-being of the children of God"*. Let us not preach **against** a community, but let us preach in service to God, for the audience of One (and that will include preaching against sin, lukewarmness etc.). Let us focus on Christ, who was (and is) perfectly **balanced** in what He preached and lived. To preach the truth of Jesus Christ without compromise, means to preach both heaven and hell, repentance and forgiveness, sanctification and grace, holiness and being perfect in Jesus, action and rest, war and surrender...well...it means to prepare the way of the Lord. We don't need to force Him coming. He will come, if only we will prepare His way by living lives that are absolutely surrendered to, sold out to and dependable on God!

The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the LORD;

**Make** straight in the desert

A highway for our God.

Every valley **shall** be exalted

And every mountain and hill brought low;

The crooked places **shall** be made straight

And the rough places smooth;

The glory of the LORD **shall** be revealed,

And all flesh **shall** see it together;

**For** the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (Isaiah 40:3-5)

**Lord Jesus, strengthen our hands!**