

“Doing A Great Work”
Nehemiah 6:1-19
4/27/24
Message 6

Introduction

- Title Of The Message: “Doing A Great Work”
- **Question: How Many of You - Started a project and DID NOT FINISH It?**
 - **When we Started you were...**
 - Inspired
 - Excited
 - Motivated
 - But somewhere down the line –
 - Something happened – You stopped
 - That project today – remains UNDONE
 - Illustration
 - Desk Chair – Refinished
 - **ALL Kinds of Reason to NOT Finish**
 - **1st Discouraged**
 - Once you got into it –
 - You felt Overwhelmed
 - The task was bigger than you thought

- I am never going to finish –so why Bother?
- Nehemiah Chapter 4
 - That where the people are
 - The Tribe of Judah – Leaders: the strong ones
 - They were discouraged / Too much Rubbish!
 - When Leaders get discouraged
 - It can have a way of affecting everyone else
- **2nd Division**
 - You start something with a group of People
 - Become DIVIDED
 - Turned into a Battle – forget it
- Nehemiah Chapter 5
 - That where the people where at
 - Famine / Hard Time Paying taxes to the king
 - Barrowing from other Jews
 - Being Taking advantage of by their brothers
- **3rd Distraction**
 - We get distracted in the work –
 - We get pulled away AND we never get back

- Nehemiah Chapter 6
 - This is the ISSUE facing Nehemiah in our text today
- **Important to Remember**
 - Your walk with God
 - Is Doing a GREAT Work
 - Never forget you have an Enemy that seeks to get you away from that great work
 - The Enemy will seek
 - To Discourage You
 - To Divide You
 - To Distract You

• **Review – A Running Start**

- **God Judged Israel for the Years of Rebellion**
 - **The Northern Kingdom FELL**
 - Fell first and the people were taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.
 - The Northern Kingdom were absorbed into Assyria and eventually into other cultures.
 - **The Southern Kingdom FELL**
 - To the Babylonians brought in 586 B.C.
 - The Southern Kingdom remained intact in Babylon

- After Babylon FELL by the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C.
 - Many Jews returned to their homeland.
- **The Return**
 - 3 Main Parts to the return
- **Chapter 1 - Nehemiah – “A Burden & Prayer”**
 - Nehemiah Kings Cupbearer
- **Chapter 2 – “The Good Hand of My God Upon Me”**
- **Chapter 3 “Let US Rise Up And Build”**
- **Chapter 4 “Workers and Warriors”**
- **Chapter 5 “Resolving Conflicts Within”**
 - **The Conflict vv. 1-5**
 - Famine in the Land
 - People Borrowed from wealthy Jewish brethren to pay taxes and buy food
 - The Wealthy took advantage of them – Interest – Sin the Word
 - **The Courage Of Nehemiah vv. 6-11**
 - Nehemiah Stood up to the wealthy (Nobles)
 - Exhorted them to FIX THIS
 - **The Commitment Of The People vv. 12-13**
 - The agreed to fix it

- **The Character Of Nehemiah vv. 14-19**

- Nehemiah as the governor could have used his position BUT refused to do so
- What he did was use his position to HELP people not take personal advantage

- **Now This Morning 4 Ways the Enemy Will Attempt to get you to Quit Doing a Great Work**

- The Enemy Will Attempt To **Isolate** You vv. 1-4
- The Enemy Will Make **Insinuations** Against You vv. 5-9
- The Enemy Will Use **Intimidation** Against You vv. 10-16
- The Enemy Will Keep Up The **Intensity** Of Their Attack vv. 17-19

The Enemy Will Attempt To Isolate You vv. 1-4

- **First: The Purpose Of The Enemy is NEVER Good vv. 1-2**

- **1st Our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall v. 1**

Nehemiah 6:1 (NKJV)

1 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates),

- **The wall was almost finished**

- The gaps were closed
 - ALL of this in 52 days - AMAZING

- **The ONLY thing left**

- The gates were not yet hung

- **The Enemy sees their defeat is almost at hand**

- So we will see a another PUSH will be made to Distract Nehemiah from Finishing

▪ **Application**

- Simple point
 - YOU HAVE AN ENEMY

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV)

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

- NEVER forget this
- 1st YOUR enemy Does Not want you to be SAVED
- 2nd After you Get SAVED – YOUR Enemy does NOT want you to grow
 - Your enemy want to keep you stuck in your old sinful ways
 - Your enemy wants to become so busy chasing life that you forget about chasing after God
 - Your enemy will fill your life with problems that you focus on them and not God
- 3rd After Your SAVED - YOUR enemy will NEVER want you to serve God – Mature in your faith
 - So - he will do whatever it takes to stop you from serving God
 - To get you to JUST SIT and do nothing for God
- **2nd Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono v. 2a**

Nehemiah 6:2 (NKJV)

2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono.” But they thought to do me harm.

▪ **“LET’S have a Meeting”**

- Let US Isolate You
- Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem tried to arrange a meeting with Nehemiah – by all appearances, a friendly meeting, perhaps even a reconciliation or a vacation.
- Their invitation may have had the sense of a break for a few days of rest and relaxation out on the plain of Ono.

▪ **Application - He wants to Isolate you – to harm you**

- That is why the Lord in the book of Hebrews admonishes us

Hebrews 10:24–25 (NKJV)

***24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.***

○ The Word of the Lord?

▪ Don’t Isolate yourself from fellowship

- Coals in a Fire

○ **3rd But they thought to do me harm v.2b**

Nehemiah 6:2 (NKJV)

2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono.” But they thought to do me harm.

▪ **Nehemiah has Discernment**

- Discerns the real Motive and intent of their Invite

- They want to do me harm
- How Does He Know
 - Maybe because of past experiences or
 - Maybe it was the name – THE PLAIN OF ONO
 - Nehemiah says – Oh No!
 - To Ono – sounds bad
- Application –
 - What is Discernment
 - Is the ability to judge matters according to God's view
 - NOT according to their outward appearance
 - The Need for Discernment
 - *Redpath; "Whether you be a pastor or a teacher or evangelist or Sunday school leader, or whatever your position may be in Christian leadership, let me say that there will always be those who are friendly to your face, but plan your downfall behind your back. Beware of the fawning, flattering Christian who is always fluttering around you, and who behind your back will be the first to rejoice when you go down."*
 - *Guzik; "Christians today suffer a great deal because they lack discernment. They follow leaders and teachers who have a good appearance, but don't walk in the nature of Jesus. They accept something blindly because it looks*

good or sounds good, without carefully judging it against the whole counsel of God's word."

- Illustration

- Be Careful not just to look on the OUTSIDE of what is happening BUT LOOK INSIDE
- Ask God for Wisdom

- **How can we develop Discernment?**

- 1st Be in the WORD

- ALL the Time

Psalm 119:105 (NKJV)

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

- 2nd Be Growing / Maturing

Hebrews 5:12–14 (NKJV)

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

- 3rd Trust the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:10 (NKJV)

10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

- **Second: The Perseverance Of Nehemiah v. 3**

Nehemiah 6:3 (NKJV)

3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?”

- **1st Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?**
 - I LOVE THIS!
 - If the enemy can distract God’s people, then he has won
 - If we can get us to start majoring on minors, and minoring on majors, we’ve lost our effectiveness for the work of the LORD.
 - Application
 - Briefly - You’re Doing a GREAT WORK – KEEP yourself FOCUSED on THAT GREAT WORK

• **Third: The Pressure From The Enemy Will Continue v. 4**

Nehemiah 6:4 (NKJV)

4 But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.

- **1st But they sent me this message four times**
 - The ENEMY NEVERS STOPS
 - We will see even at the end of this chapter – the enemy will not stop
- **2nd Application – YOU are DOING a GREAT WORK**
 - How do you view...
 - Your Walk with God
 - What you are doing for Jesus?

- What He has called to?
- **THIS IS A GREATEST WORK**
 - NEVER FORGET THIS AND NEVER STOP
 - NEVER
 - Minimize YOUR CALL
 - Your enemy whispers in your ear – YOUR JUST a
 - Father – Leading his family
 - Wife - Mom –
 - Raising Kids / housewife – lesser thing or a great work
 - Home Schooling Parent
 - Your Profession is NOT that important
 - Whatever God has called you to... IS HIS great work for you.
 - Illustration
 - Remember Zerubbabel rebuilding the temple
 - Less in size that Solomon's
 - Nowhere close to beauty

Zechariah 4:10 (NKJV)

10 For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the LORD, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."

- **Nehemiah Knew He was involved in a great work**

- What about you?

The Enemy Will Make Insinuation Against You vv. 5-9

• First: The Enemy Will Attack Your Motives vv. 5-9

- 1st It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says v. 5-7

Nehemiah 6:5–7 (NKJV)

5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand.

6 In it was written: It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king.

7 And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, “There is a king in Judah!” Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.

▪ 1st Background

- Here is what Happens here
 - A messenger shows up to the Job site with an OPEN LETTER
 - That means that it was to be read in the hearing of everybody

▪ 2nd The Accusations

- Plan to Rebel
- Be King
 - A big deal because Nehemiah respected the KING was very sure NEVER to hurt him in any way
 - This was a pure rumor (LIES)

▪ 3rd Another Distraction of the enemy

- To get Nehemiah sidetracked by trying to defend himself against rumors (LIES)
 - Het him so busy running around putting out fires that he will get exhausted and quit the work
- Sanballat's slander began the way many verbal attacks do
 - As a report of what others have reportedly said.
 - Vague accusations often sound like
 - "Everyone is talking about"
 - "A number of people are saying."
 - Such vague words can very easily give the wrong impression.

• **A popular lie may be more dangerous, but it is not truer because it is popular. – AKA Our propaganda machine known as the media in America**

- **4th Characteristics of a Rumor**
 - 1st Never has a Source –
 - It is reported among the nations
 - Yah But where did it come from...?
 - 2nd A rumor is noted for its exaggerations and inaccuracy
 - EVERYONE feels this way!!!
 - 3rd Those who spread rumors show a lack of wisdom
 - They don't search out the facts
 - They ONLY repeat the Propaganda

- Wisdom forces a person to ask such searching questions like:
 - Is it necessary to say this?
 - Is it going to accomplish any good?
 - Is this confidential info?
 - Do I have a right to pass this on?
- 4th A rumor leads to personal hurt and misunderstanding
 - This rumor was meant to hurt Nehemiah –
 - Make them afraid & weaken their resolve
 - Listen if you are in any form of leadership:
 - TARGET ON YOUR BACK
 - People will watch you
 - Part of the price of being in the Position – life in a FISH BOWL
- **2nd You invent them in your own heart v. 8**

Nehemiah 6:8 (NKJV)

8 Then I sent to him, saying, “No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart.”

- **Nehemiah did not mount an elaborate defense!**
 - Let me prove Sanballat wrong point by point.
 - He wasn't going to waste his time.
 - Nehemiah replied

- Calmly and straightforwardly telling Sanballat that he was a liar, and by carrying on with the work.
- Important to NOTE About SANBALLAT'S
 - You don't satisfy men like Sanballat with facts, explanations, and evidence.
 - They are ONLY You satisfy them by giving in to their demands!
 - Nehemiah refused to do this.
- **Application – How to Respond To Rumors**
 - **1st Hold Fast To God**
 - Stay In His Word
 - Pray
 - Don't allow Rumors to take your eyes of Jesus
 - Fear God NOT man
 - Rumors always a certain degree of truth – People will choose to believe what the will –
 - People seek to CONTROL you with rumors
 - If people Really want truth they will contact you
 - **2nd Respond To Others**
 - 1st Assess the situation
 - Determine what part if any may be true

- Now determine is this anything that I should address
- 2nd Communicate with the slanderer (if appropriate)
 - Like Nehemiah address the lies BUT that was it
- 3rd Focus On God and YOUR Character
 - Let God Defend you
 - *Wiersbe; "If we take care of our character, we can trust God to take care of our reputation."*
 - God will let you defend yourself
 - OR you can let God be your defense
 - Let your character and good deeds speak for themselves. If people see you living a life of integrity and love, they are less likely to believe the rumors
 - Don't Retaliate
 - Instead of getting angry or trying to hurt the person who spread the rumor, focus on responding with love and forgiveness.
 - Trust in God's plan
 - Know that God is in control and that He will ultimately bring truth and justice.
 - Stay in Prayer

- Talk to God about your feelings and concerns, and ask Him to guide you in how to respond.

- Hurts BUT

- God's Work is greater

- **4th They all were trying to make us afraid v. 9**

Nehemiah 6:9 (NKJV)

9 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.

- **This is ALL ABOUT CONTROL – FEAR**

- The Enemy is seeking to get the God's Work to stop
 - FEAR is the way in which he hopes will work
- Sadly, Many people YES even Believers
 - Are paralyzed by the FEAR
 - FEAR of what MIGHT happen
 - The what "IFS" in life
 - FEAR What Others Think
 - What others are saying about them, or what they might say about them
- Look Over at Chapter 7:2

Nehemiah 7:2 (NKJV)

2 that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he was a faithful man and feared God more than many.

- IF you FEAR God – will NEVER fear ANYTHING ELSE
- Also remember

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

▪ **How did Nehemiah Handle this?**

- Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands
- Pray for God's strength, His power in our lives.
 - We cannot overcome slander and our fear of our enemies in our own strength.
 - Remember - Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God

The Enemy Will Use Intimidation vv. 10-16

• **First: Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah v. 10**

Nehemiah 6:10 (NKJV)

10 *Afterward I came to the house of She-maiah the son of Delaiah, (DUL-LAY-UH) the son of Mehetabel, (Me-HA-T-ABLE) who was a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you."*

- **1st Shemaiah**
 - Was said to be a prophet BUT he was not.
- **2nd Shemaiah Tactic**
 - Offered Nehemiah a protected place in the Temple.

- The idea was that though Nehemiah was said to be threatened
 - He could find refuge in the temple.
 - Let us meet together in the house of God...
 - Shemaiah knew how to use religious talk
 - But it was still a trap.
 - If Nehemiah had believed Shemaiah's religious talk
 - He would have sinned and given others something to find fault with and discredit him with.

• **Second: Should such a man as I flee? vv. 11-13**

Nehemiah 6:11–13 (NKJV)

11 And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!"

12 Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

13 For this reason he was hired, that ***I should be afraid*** and act that way and sin, so that they might have cause for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

○ **1st Nehemiah KNEW the WORD**

- It was contrary to the Law of Moses

- It was forbidden for a layman to go beyond the altar of burnt offering at the temple.

○ (Num. 18:7)

- "The outsider who comes near shall be put to death"

○ (2 Chron. 26:16–21)

- When King Uzziah tried to invade the holy precincts, God smote him with leprosy
- 2nd And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in:
 - Nehemiah stood bravely against this religious deception!

• **Third: My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat v. 14**

Nehemiah 6:14 (NKJV)

14 My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess No-a-diah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.

- 1st Nehemiah Gave these men over to GOD
 - God, you deal with them!
 - They are NOT my problem they are yours

• **Fourth: Celebration v. 15**

Nehemiah 6:15 (NKJV)

15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.

- 1st 52 DAYS
 - The amount of time it took to finish the job was remarkably short.
 - The walls were in ruins for more than 100 years, and then they were set right in a period of only 52 days.

• **Fifth: And all the nations around us saw these things... v. 16**

Nehemiah 6:16 (NKJV)

16 And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

- **1st They perceived that this work was done by our God**
 - **Their enemies were disheartened not just because the wall was finished,**
 - BUT especially because it was evident that God did the work.
 - **Application - It Has to be a WORK of GOD**
 - Our Enemy has no problem with your “ministry” being a work of YOUR flesh
 - BUT if you ministry is clearly seen as a work of God – Then watch out

The Enemy Will Keep Up The Intensity Of Their Attack vv. 17-19

- **First: Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah vv. 17-19**

Nehemiah 6:17–19 (NKJV)

- 17** *Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came to them.*
- 18** *For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.*
- 19** *Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.*

- **1st Tobiah – NOT a GOOD man**
 - The man who had opposed the rebuilding work with Sanballat.
 - (Nehemiah 2:10 / Nehemiah 2:19 and 4:3 / Nehemiah 4:7 / Nehemiah 6:1-2)
- **2nd Connection Through Family**
 - For many in Judah were pledged to him:

- Because he had family ties to many in the tribe of Judah.
 - In fact, they reported his good deeds...
- **3rd They reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him:**
 - Most likely they saw Nehemiah as the guilty party
 - They thought that Tobiah's deeds were good
 - The Enemy is in the CAMP
 - We could not stop the work with a direct ATTACK now let's start the work of Joining them
 - To create CONFUSION / COMPROMISE from within
 - THE ENEMY WILL NEVER STOP
 - So we must NEVER STOP

Closing

- Remember – YOU ARE DOING A GREAT WORK
 - Don't Let the Enemy WIN