
OVERCOMING OPPOSITION AND OBSTACLES

A large tree stands on a grassy hill. The left side of the tree is bare and brown, while the right side is lush and green. A path of falling leaves leads from the bare side to the green side. The sky is dramatic, with dark, stormy clouds on the left and bright, golden light on the right. Several birds are flying in the sky.

NEW BEGINNINGS

SERIES

NEHEMIAH 4 & 6:1-14

Nehemiah 4:1

Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, saying in front of his friends and the Samaritan army officers,

Nehemiah 4:2a

“What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they’re doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices?”

Nehemiah 4:2b

Do they actually think they can
make something of stones from a
rubbish heap—and charred ones
at that?”

Nehemiah 4:3

Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, “That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!”

Nehemiah 4:4

**Then I prayed, “Hear us, our God,
for we are being mocked. May
their scoffing fall back on their
own heads, and may they
themselves become captives in a
foreign land!”**

Nehemiah 4:5

Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders.”

Nehemiah 4:6

At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm.

Nehemiah 4:7

But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious.

Nehemiah 4:8

They all made plans to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw us into confusion.

Nehemiah 4:9

But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.

Nehemiah 4:10

Then the people of Judah began to complain, “The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves.”

Nehemiah 4:11

Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, “Before they know what’s happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work.”

Nehemiah 4:12

The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and again, “They will come from all directions and attack us!”

Nehemiah 4:13

So I placed armed guards behind the lowest parts of the wall in the exposed areas. I stationed the people to stand guard by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows.

Nehemiah 4:14a

Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, “Don’t be afraid of the enemy!”

Nehemiah 4:14b

**Remember the Lord, who is
great and glorious, and fight for
your brothers, your sons, your
daughters, your wives, and
your homes!”**

Nehemiah 4:15

When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall.

Nehemiah 4:16

But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail.

Nehemiah 4:17

The leaders stationed themselves behind the people of Judah who were building the wall. The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon.

Nehemiah 4:18

All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm.

Nehemiah 4:19

Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, “The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall.

Nehemiah 4:20

When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!”

Nehemiah 4:21

We worked early and late, from sunrise to sunset. And half the men were always on guard.

Nehemiah 4:22

I also told everyone living outside the walls to stay in Jerusalem. That way they and their servants could help with guard duty at night and work during the day.

Nehemiah 4:23

During this time, none of us—not I, nor my relatives, nor my servants, nor the guards who were with me—ever took off our clothes. We carried our weapons with us at all times, even when we went for water.

OVERCOMING OPPOSITION AND OBSTACLES

A large tree stands on a grassy hill. The left side of the tree is bare and brown, while the right side is lush and green. A path of falling leaves leads from the bare side towards the green side. The sky is filled with dramatic, golden-yellow clouds, and several birds are flying in the upper right. The overall scene suggests a transition from a difficult or desolate state to a new, vibrant beginning.

NEW BEGINNINGS

SERIES

NEHEMIAH 4 & 6:1-14

Sermon Series Recap

If we want to be sure that the new beginning we seek is truly God's will when it comes to rebuilding, restoring, and revitalizing with God; there will always be 4 criteria that must be met.

**New beginnings which require
rebuilding, restoring, and
revitalizing with God require
getting started right.**

**Rebuilding, restoring, and
revitalizing with God requires
that we get started right by
faithfully executing God honoring
first steps.**

Becoming, being, and building a Holy Spirit led team is what adds fuel to the process and keeps it moving towards a successful completion. Rebuilding, restoring, and revitalizing requires a team effort!

Rebuilding, restoring, and revitalizing with God requires that we empower God's team for victory by letting go of control, without letting go of our accountability, passion, and commitment to see the project completed right.

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NEW BEGINNINGS

SERIES

NEHEMIAH 4 & 6:1-14

Principle #1

When we dedicate ourselves to rebuilding, restoring, and revitalizing with God, we must learn early on that we cannot and we will not please everyone.

Nehemiah 2:10

But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of my arrival, they were very displeased that someone had come to help the people of Israel.

Nehemiah 2:19

But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard of our plan, they scoffed contemptuously. “What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” they asked.

Application

Rebuilding, restoring, and revitalizing with God requires that you understand who you are, who you are living for, and what you are living for.

Principle #2

The new beginnings that God offers us where He invites us to rebuild, restore, and revitalize with Him requires that we overcome malicious and persistent opposition.

Opposition at the Start

Nehemiah 4:1

Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, saying in front of his friends and the Samaritan army officers,

Nehemiah 4:2a

“What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they’re doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices?”

Nehemiah 4:2b

Do they actually think they can
make something of stones from a
rubbish heap—and charred ones
at that?”

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Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, “That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!”

Opposition in the Middle

Nehemiah 4:6

At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm.

Nehemiah 4:7

But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious.

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They all made plans to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw us into confusion.

Nehemiah 4:11

Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, “Before they know what’s happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work.”

Nehemiah 4:12

The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and again, “They will come from all directions and attack us!”

Opposition at the End

Nehemiah 6:1

Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies found out that I had finished rebuilding the wall and that no gaps remained—though we had not yet set up the doors in the gates.

Nehemiah 6:2

So Sanballat and Geshem sent a message asking me to meet them at one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But I realized they were plotting to harm me,

Nehemiah 6:3

so I replied by sending this message to them: “I am engaged in a great work, so I can’t come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?”

Nehemiah 6:4

Four times they sent the same message, and each time I gave the same reply.

Nehemiah 6:5

The fifth time, Sanballat's servant came with an open letter in his hand, and this is what it said:

Nehemiah 6:6

“There is a rumor among the surrounding nations, and Geshem tells me it is true, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel and that is why you are building the wall. According to his reports, you plan to be their king.

Nehemiah 6:7a

He also reports that you have appointed prophets in Jerusalem to proclaim about you, ‘Look! There is a king in Judah!’

Nehemiah 6:7b

“You can be very sure that this report will get back to the king, so I suggest that you come and talk it over with me.”

Nehemiah 6:8

I replied, “There is no truth in any part of your story. You are making up the whole thing.”

Nehemiah 6:9

They were just trying to intimidate us, imagining that they could discourage us and stop the work. So I continued the work with even greater determination.

Nehemiah 6:10a

Later I went to visit Shemaiah son of Delaiah and grandson of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home.

Nehemiah 6:10b

He said, “Let us meet together inside the Temple of God and bolt the doors shut. Your enemies are coming to kill you tonight.”

Nehemiah 6:11

But I replied, “Should someone in my position run from danger? Should someone in my position enter the Temple to save his life? No, I won’t do it!”

Nehemiah 6:12

I realized that God had not spoken to him, but that he had uttered this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

Nehemiah 6:13

They were hoping to intimidate me and make me sin. Then they would be able to accuse and discredit me.

There will always be those who are on the scene or who will show up on the scene who will attempt to distract us, divert us, or stop us from rebuilding, restoring, and revitalizing with God in His new beginning.

Application

Fierce and persistent opposition as well as unforeseen obstacles are more often than not a sign that you are on the right path.

Principle #3

Overcoming opposition and obstacles while we rebuild, restore, and revitalize with God requires that we be in constant communion with God.

Communion with God

Nehemiah 1:4

When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven.

Communion with God #2

Nehemiah 1:5

Then I said, “O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments,

Nehemiah 1:6a

let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel.

Nehemiah 1:6b

**I confess that we have sinned
against you. Yes, even my own
family and I have sinned!**

Nehemiah 1:7

We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

Nehemiah 1:8

Please remember what you told your servant Moses: 'If you are unfaithful to me, I will scatter you among the nations.'

Nehemiah 1:9

But if you return to me and obey my commands and live by them, then even if you are exiled to the ends of the earth, I will bring you back to the place I have chosen for my name to be honored.'

Nehemiah 1:10

The people you rescued by your
great power and strong hand are
your servants.

Communion with God #3

Nehemiah 1:11a

**O Lord, please hear my prayer!
Listen to the prayers of those of us
who delight in honoring you.**

Nehemiah 1:11b

Please grant me success today by making the king favorable to me. Put it into his heart to be kind to me. In those days I was the king's cup-bearer.

Principle #4

Overcoming opposition and obstacles while we rebuild, restore, and revitalize with God requires that we be fully dependent on the supernatural movements of God.

Depending on the
Supernatural Movements
of God

Nehemiah 2:4

The king asked, “Well, how can I help you?” With a prayer to the God of heaven, I replied,

Nehemiah 2:8b

And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.

Depending on the
Supernatural Movements
of God #2

Nehemiah 2:11

So I arrived in Jerusalem. Three days later, I slipped out during the night, taking only a few others with me.

Nehemiah 2:12

I had not told anyone about the plans God had put in my heart for Jerusalem. We took no pack animals with us except the donkey I was riding.

Depending on the
Supernatural Movements
of God #3

Nehemiah 2:17

But now I said to them, “You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!”

Nehemiah 2:18a

Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king.

Nehemiah 2:20

I replied, “The God of heaven will help us succeed. We, his servants, will start rebuilding this wall. But you have no share, legal right, or historic claim in Jerusalem.”

Principle #5

Overcoming opposition and obstacles while we rebuild, restore, and revitalize with God requires that we trust God to do what He does best.

Trusting God to Judge

Nehemiah 4:4

Then I prayed, “Hear us, our God,
for we are being mocked. May
their scoffing fall back on their
own heads, and may they
themselves become captives in a
foreign land!

Nehemiah 4:5

Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders.”

Trusting God to Protect

Nehemiah 4:9

**But we prayed to our God and
guarded the city day and night
to protect ourselves.**

Trusting God to
Fight Our Battles

Nehemiah 4:15

When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall.

Nehemiah 4:18

All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm.

Nehemiah 4:19

Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, “The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall.

Nehemiah 4:20

When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!”

Trusting God to Judge

Nehemiah 6:14

Remember, O my God, all the evil things that Tobiah and Sanballat have done. And remember Noadiah the prophet and all the prophets like her who have tried to intimidate me.

Principle #6

Overcoming opposition and obstacles while we rebuild, restore, and revitalize with God requires that we understand that victory is dependent on God.

Matthew 11:25

At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike.

Matthew 11:26

Yes, Father, it pleased you to do
it this way.

Matthew 11:27

My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Matthew 11:28

Then Jesus said, “Come to me,
all of you who are weary and
carry heavy burdens, and I will
give you rest.

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:30

For my yoke is easy to bear, and
the burden I give you is light.”

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