

Finishing Strong in the Face of Opposition

Distraction, Deception, and Determination (vv. 1–4)

“But they thought to do me harm... So I sent messengers to them, saying, ‘I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.’” (Nehemiah 6:2–3)

With the wall nearly complete—only the gates remained—Nehemiah’s enemies grew desperate. They had failed to stop the work with mockery, threats, and fear tactics. Now they tried a new tactic: distraction through diplomacy. They invited Nehemiah to meet in the plain of Ono under the guise of “peace talks.”

Nehemiah saw through the deception immediately. *“They intended to do me harm,”* he wrote. So he refused their invitation—not once, but four times. Each time, his response was the same: *“I’m doing a great work and cannot come down.”*

Application: The enemy loves to lure us away from God’s calling—not by outright attacks, but by subtle distractions. Your “plain of Ono” might be an opportunity that seems good, but it pulls you away from God’s best. If you’re building something for God—your character, your family, your ministry—don’t come down.

Rumors, Lies, and Character Assassination (vv. 5–9)

“It is reported... that you and the Jews plan to rebel... Now therefore, come, let us consult together.” (v. 6–7)

When the invitations failed, they switched to intimidation. Sanballat sent an unsealed letter (meant to spread rumors), accusing Nehemiah of plotting a rebellion and planning to make himself king. They hoped the fear of political reprisal from Persia would force Nehemiah to negotiate.

But Nehemiah again stood firm. He calmly dismissed the accusations as lies: *“No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart”* (v. 8). Then he prayed: *“Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.”* (v. 9)

Application: When lies are spoken about you, especially when you’re walking in obedience, let God be your defender. Nehemiah didn’t waste time chasing down rumors—he stayed focused and prayed for strength, not revenge.

A False Prophet and a Fear Tactic (vv. 10–14)

“Let us meet together in the house of God... for they are coming to kill you.” (v. 10)

The attacks escalated into spiritual manipulation. A man named Shemaiah, pretending to be a prophet, warned Nehemiah of an assassination plot and urged him to hide in the temple. But Nehemiah again discerned the truth: this was a trap meant to discredit him.

“Should such a man as I flee?” (v. 11)

“I perceived that God had not sent him at all.” (v. 12)

Nehemiah understood that fear is a faith killer. If he had run into the temple (a place forbidden for him to enter as a non-priest), it would have destroyed his credibility and disqualified his leadership.

Application: Beware of spiritual counsel that stokes fear instead of faith. Not every “word from the Lord” is from God. Test every message against God’s Word and your God-given calling.

Victory in 52 Days (vv. 15–16)

“So the wall was finished... in fifty-two days. And when all our enemies heard of it... they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.” (vv. 15–16)

Despite relentless opposition, the wall was completed in just fifty-two days—a miraculous feat given the scale and danger of the project. Even the enemies of God’s people recognized that something supernatural had taken place.

Nehemiah’s success wasn’t due to political skill or military might—it was the result of steady faith, unwavering courage, and dependence on God.

Application: What are you building for God? If you stay faithful, don’t give in to fear, and keep your eyes on the Lord, you’ll see His hand in it—and others will too. God finishes what He starts when we walk in faith.

Divided Loyalties (vv. 17–19)

“Many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah... Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him.” (vv. 18–19)

Even after the victory, Nehemiah wasn’t naïve. He recognized that not all within Jerusalem were fully loyal. Some of the nobles had political and family ties with Tobiah, one of Nehemiah’s fiercest enemies. They flattered Tobiah and acted as his informants.

Application: Not everyone around you will share your convictions or commitment to the work of God. Sometimes, the enemy has subtle influence even within the camp. Stay discerning. Stay humble. Stay focused.

Final Reflections: Faith Over Fear

- Are you being distracted from your God-given purpose? Stay on the wall.
- Are you facing false accusations? Let God defend you.
- Are you being tempted to act out of fear? Remember, fear and faith cannot coexist.
- Are you hearing counsel that doesn't sound right, even if it claims to be from God? Test it.
- Are you near the finish line in something God called you to do? Don’t let up now.

“I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.” (Nehemiah 6:3)

Let that be your battle cry when the enemy tries to derail you. God is with you. Stay faithful to the end.