

- **Intro**
 - Built the wall in 52 days!!—5 miles long, 15-20 ft high, 9-10 ft wide at base, 2-3 ft wide at top
 - Nehemiah inspects the work, develops a plan, communicates it to the people and then they **ARISE** to work (2:18)!
 - Again, we may not be building physical walls but what we are saying is that God is still calling his people into the work of building and advancing his Kingdom!
- **Nehemiah 3—Kingdom Builders are Anonymous but not Unimportant**
 - Ultimately a big list of all the names of the normal people who rose to work!
 - This is like Jim, Kay, Mark, Shauna, CaraLee, Carlene, Josh, Chris, Dan, etc.
 - In Kingdom building, **EVERY PERSON** matters
 - v.1—high priest...v.8—goldsmiths...v.8—**PERFUMERS**...v.12—daughters (mission is not a man's game!)
 - Repeated us of “next to them” and “after them”
 - In Kingdom building, **COLLABORATION** is critical
 - In Kingdom building, **UNITY** is essential
- **Nehemiah 4—Opposition to Kingdom Building does not Equal Defeat**
 - **Opposition begins VERBALLY—Public scorn, mockery and persecution (v.1-3)**
 - This is where the opposition usually begins—slander, gossip, lies, accusations
 - **A Wise Kingdom Response = prayer AND action (v.7-9)**
 - They **PRAYED** (v.4,9) and then they set their guards and protection (v.9)
 - **Oliver Cromwell—trust in God and keep your powder dry (English invasion of Ireland)**
 - Nehemiah does **NOT** repay evil with evil, reviling with reviling, but is to **PRAY**(v.4)
 - **1 Peter 2:23—When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.**
 - Nehemiah is **RETALIATING** to opposition/reviling with **PRAYER**—this is the invitation to God to be a lead actor in the story!
 - **Opposition to Kingdom Building Often Looks Like Distraction and Confusion**
 - Yes, the threat appears to be **PHYSICAL**, but their ultimate aim is to **DISTRACT/CONFUSE** (v.8).
 - Recognize that the enemy's plot is to **PARALYZE** us in fear! (v.14)
 - With his taunts and threats of harm, the enemies ambition is to create **FEAR** in our hearts such that our eyes are turned **AWAY** from the Lord and his work and **TOWARD** the threats, persecution, etc.!
 - **Our engagement in Kingdom Building is a life and death situation (v.11-14)**
 - The work was very tangible and the threat to them very physical and Nehemiah calls the men to stand to defend their families **PHYSICALLY**.
 - This was **REAL** danger—v.15-18 = they are working with swords and spears in hand
 - **v.23—nobody is taking showers or breaks...they are on guard and are WORKING!**
 - Our work is spiritual and the threats to Kingdom mission is often spiritual and sometimes physical, yet the call to **NOT GIVE UP** is just as much a life or death situation!
 - **Ephesians 6:12—For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**
 - **“Fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, our wives and your homes”—how much more so the fight of discipleship, evangelism, etc!**
 - **Respond with faith-filled obedience to God's call (v.15-23)**
 - In the face of threat and persecution, the people of God press on more committed and devoted than ever!

- v.16 = half worked on construction and half stood ready for war.
- v.17 = everyone labored with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other.
- v.21—we labored from the break of dawn until the stars came out
- v.23—none of us took off our clothes
- God’s people respond to these threats by regularly RETURNING TO THE WORK (v. 6,9,13,15,21).
 - The enemies of God sought to deliver a blow to the people of God and all they did was come back stronger.
 - Acts 14:19-21—But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch.
 - Paul stoned at Lystra and goes next day to preach in Derbe and then Lystra again, Antioch and Syria!
- **Nehemiah 6:1-14—Kingdom Builders Confront Opposition with Gospel Courage**
 - Notice that the INTENSITY AND SIZE of opposition is increasing as they get closer to completion.
 - Isn’t this how it goes—the closer you get to completing the work God has called you to, the more intense the pressure is to give up, compromise, etc.
 - Enemies on the outside (v.1) = Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, Arabs, Ashdodites
 - Enemies on the inside (v.10) = Shemaiah (looks a lot like Judas)
 - Gospel Courage knows when to Say No (v.2-7)
 - v.1-3—Now when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono.” But they intended to do me harm. And I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?”
 - So often, our ability to thrive in and see fruit in what God has called us to do depends on our ability to say NO to what God has not called us to do.
 - The enemies call Nehemiah to the plain of Ono
 - Ono = lush green plains much more desirable than the dusty rubble of Jerusalem
 - Nehemiah says OH NO to Ono
 - Nehemiah’s amazingly undistracted reason (v.3)—“I am doing a great work and I cannot come down”—THIS IS A GREAT VOICEMAIL MESSAGE!!
 - 6:9—the linchpin verse—in the face of a plot meant to frighten, Nehemiah responds with a prayer for strength and a resolve to finish the work!
 - 6:10-14—When the opposition comes from the inside, gospel courage becomes even more difficult!
 - Example of Jesus—from the cross, the apex of opposition to the glory of God, Jesus responds not with reviling or curses but with, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.”
 - v.12—This guy (Shemaiah) sounds a lot like Judas!

- Nehemiah 6:15- Nehemiah 7—Kingdom Builders Seek God's Glory in their Labor
- 6:15—the wall was finished in fifty two days
- 6:16—all the nations fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.
 - This is the banner that flies over the work done so far in Nehemiah. In the face of every conceivable threat and persecution, God's people forged ahead in unity, courage and perseverance to complete the work that God had called them to!
- May we labor in love and service to our city and our neighbors in such a way that they would watch and attribute it ALL to God.
- May we laboring love and service to our families and one another that we would attribute it all to God!
- This requires that we have a perspective shift and see ALL our labor in life as labor for the Kingdom—everyday on the job, every evening with your family....it's all about the Kingdom!
 - Romans 11:36—for from him and through him and to him are ALL things. To him be glory forever. Amen.
- There is a way to labor that makes you look awesome and there is a way to labor that makes God look awesome! Let's pick option 2!