

**READ Nehemiah 4:9** Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

Today we look at Nehemiah way of dealing with opposition. Well really Gods Way. Looking always to the Lord and seeking His strength, and His face and remembering the wonders He has done.

Nehemiah was building the wall, there was tremendous opposition. When Sanballat head news that progress was being made and was very angry. There was Opposition by ridicule, anger and discouragement. Tobiah said, "Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!" Now the ridicule turns to physical violence. And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it.

**What did the remnant of Jews do?** They made their prayer unto God and set watch against them day and night.

**In the very same way Attacks come to Gods people.** We live in a fallen world Sorrows come to all men whether you live in the palace or on the street. Whether rich or poor. It's true some have greater sorrows than others. But there are none who live on this earth who face no sorrow or no care of one kind or another. Our bodies, our property, our families, our children, our relations, our servants, our friends, our neighbours, our worldly jobs, each and all of these are reasons for much care and anxiety and worry. *We are "born to trouble as the sparks fly upward."* (Job 5:7.) We cannot avoid it.

**What do we do? And what is the best means of being encouraged and strengthened in such a world as this?** How can we get through this valley of tears with least pain? I know no better way than the regular, habitual practice of taking everything to God in prayer. The first person we must turn to for help, must be our God.

These people in Nehemiah's day had not only to build the wall of Jerusalem, but to watch against their enemies at the same time. It is exactly the same with us today. We must work for Christ. I hope that all of us who love Him are trying to do what we can to build up His Kingdom—but we also need to watch against deadly enemies. If they can destroy us, of course they will also destroy our work. They will do both if they can. The powers of evil are furious against the people of God. If they can in any way injure or annoy us, you may be sure that they will do so. They will leave no stone unturned if it can serve their purpose. No arrows will be left in the quivers of Hell while there are godly men and women at whom they can be aimed. Satan and his allies aim at our hearts every poisoned dart they have!

when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and all these men heard that the gaps in the wall were being closed they were angry. And planned to come and fight against all those busy building the wall. Nehemiah heard and they prayed and prepared.

**Believer have you understood?** Nehemiah's opposition was very real and very dangerous, Sanballat was furious and given any opportunity would have stopped them, **we need to realise our spiritual battle is just as serious** and there is a very real opposition. Our enemy satan hates the Lord's work in which we are involved. He is angered when he sees us progress. Satan wants to stop the work just like Sanballat wanted to. **Using very similar tactics.** Evil speaking against our work, mockery, discouragement, fear and every possible attack you can imagine. Even physical harm and Kill us if he can. Neh 4 11&12 give us some insight into how bad the attack was. And our enemies said, "They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work." The jews who were their neighbours told them 10 times you are surrounded, wherever you turn the enemy will be there.

**while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.** Nehemiah saw it and we see it. Scoffers will increase in the last days. Nehemiah was warned, **we also have been warned.** As The Lord said to Peter, "*Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat,*" so has He, in His Word, told us that there is a great and terrible evil power which is seeking our destruction. If Satan can do it, he will not only sift us as wheat, but he will cast us into the fire that we may be destroyed! Brothers and Sisters, "*we are not ignorant of his devices.*"

**Never the less they did two vital things** They made "their prayer unto God" and "We set a watch." Both watching and praying are needed if we are to defeat the enemy. **Matthew 26:41** Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

**THE FIRST GUARD—"We made our prayer unto our God."** It was *a prayer that meant business.* It was a definite request and petition it certainly was not vague. **It was a real cry from the heart.** The prayers of Nehemiah and the Jews were petitions for Divine protection. They knew what they needed, and they asked for it very definitely. I like the way C.H.Spurgeon puts it, *Oh, for more definiteness in prayer! I am afraid that our prayers are often clouds and we get mists for answers.*

**Plead the promise**, believe them, receive the blessing God is ready to give and then go about your business. The prayer of Nehemiah and his companions meant business. It wasn't vague, they were asking definitely for divine keeping and protection. It was from their heart.

We must pray.— Like Job, **we must fall down and worship**. (Job 1:20.) don't forget to give thanks for past victories, past encouragement, past guidance and help. We can even give thanks for the beautiful sunrise or the good rain, But a higher form of giving of thanks is for what the Lord has done for us, His faithfulness, His mercies which are new every morning, His loving kindness which saved us not according to our own works but according to His Grace and mercy. Nothing can deserve more praise and thanksgiving than what Jesus Christ did for us. Nothing is esteemed higher and more important. Let us praise Him, adore Him for the unsearchable riches of Christ. Let us thank God he has enabled us to receive the glorious gospel.

Like Hezekiah, **we must spread our matters before the LORD**. (2Ki 19:14.). When our situation is so bad when we feel alone, when we feel like a pilgrim in the wilderness Remember the Lords promises, remember His covenant with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you, remember Jesus said Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood I will raise up again on the last day. I will bring you home, I will watch over you until it is performed. No matter your circumstance trust and rely upon His eternal word. His word that is firmer than the earth and the heavens. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away " What more could we desire, a sure promise from God, He himself that watches over it until it is performed. What more could God do?

**Nevertheless**, They prayed...But they prayed or still they prayed. Whenever Sanballat brings his sneering's and belittling's. Don't pray, less; "never the less," But pray "all the more!" If men make cutting remarks, If men are cruel toward you, never the Less, never pray less, Always pray the more. not a word less, not a syllable less, not a desire less and not any faith less! Nehemiah's prayer meant business and overcame difficulties.

**prayer came before anything else**. It does not say that Nehemiah set a watch and *then* prayed, but "nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch." **Prayer must always be first**. Do whatever else is wise, but not until you have prayed! Go to the doctor if you are sick, but first pray. Take the medicine if you know it will help, but first pray. Go and talk to the man who has slandered you, if you think you should do so, but first pray.

Some say I'm going to do this business and that business, if it succeeds Ill pray and give thanks to God. No don't begin it until you have prayed! Begin, continue and end

everything with prayer, but especially *begin* with prayer. Nehemiah first prayed then He set a watch.

**THE SECOND GUARD**—"We set a watch against them day and night, because of them." They, "set a watch." A certain number of men had to go on duty at a certain place, at a certain hour, remain for a certain length of time and be on guard against the adversary. "We set a watch."

In the military to go on watch duty is very serious business. you are told exactly where you are to watch and the time you are to watch. You cannot say I'm tired I don't feel like watching. I'll try to do my watch duty tonight but I'm not sure....

Fellow believers, if we are to watch over ourselves—and we must do so—we must do it with a definite, and serious purpose. We cannot say, "I must try to be watchful." **Where there was an enemy they had to set a watch.** They were diligent in their thinking. They may try this way, well then set a watch. They may climb over the wall, well then set a watch. Wherever the enemy tries to come in set a watch.

Say a person has a **very bad and hot temper**, well then **set a watch**. Another is always **criticizing and finding fault**, well then **set a watch**. They knew that Sanballat would come if he could, so they set a watch. The more you know of the depravity of your own heart, the more you will set a watch against it. The more you know of the temptations that are in the world through lust, the more you should set a watch.

**How do you set a watch-** How do we keep a check on our weaknesses? What does it mean to watch? To be alert and to be awake. **Mat 24:42** "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

Suppose a woman comes to church and then goes home to a drunken husband. How will she reach Him, by shouting at Him? Telling Him he is useless. No she must set a watch over her temper, set a watch over her lips and tongue, set a watch over her actions. She must be patient, be gentle, be loving She must be Godly. This is how she will win her husband.

**Set a watch**, also, dear Friend, whenever you feel quite secure. Whenever you feel certain that you cannot be tempted in a particular direction.

**Watch against the beginnings of sin.** Satan tempts little by little draws us aside little by little, He doesn't start with a huge sin.. no he knows you will refuse it. We dare not go the way he suggests, we set watch and refuse it.

Jesus said **watch and beware of the leaven of the pharisees.** Meaning watch against their false doctrines. Even today there are pharisees with destructive doctrines Watch against

them. . If it isn't bible based by more than one isolated scripture something is wrong. It must agree with the whole of scripture. Their wrong doctrines were inventions of men not what scripture said.

Watch, be on guard. watch against **"Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness,** for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Take care and watch you build on no other foundation but Christ.

We start seeing that there is a lot for the Christian to watch over. Watch over your heart, for out of it flows the issues of Life.

**But we must remember it is not one or the other.** Rather prayer and watchfulness. Together will always grant victory against the enemy. How could we say we are watching without Praying. The strength to watch comes from praying. Faith to persevere comes from Prayer. It is faith in our God which enables us to continue forward, He grants courage, He gives strength and hope. We watch by prayer. Watching leads us to pray more and more earnestly. The two blend together the one into the other.

Let me begin to draw to a close and let you go with this scripture written upon your mind and heart. **"We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night."**

**But before I close let me remind you that it all begins with prayer.**

We must ask ourselves this question. **DO I PRAY?** This is a question no man can answer only I can answer. The preacher knows if I come to church, He knows if I miss Church. But only I know if I pray. Do not sidestep the question by saying I say my prayers. It's one thing to say your prayers it's another thing to pray.

Let me first speak of those who call themselves Christian. They Live in a Christian land and consider themselves to be Christian.

**But how did they become a Christian?** Did they ever pray and ask the Lord to forgive them of their sin. Did they ever Ask the Lord to save them. While Prayer is not what saves a man A man is not saved unless he prays.

We must ask if we are to receive. We must come to Him if we are to find rest for our soul.

It's not absolutely needed to read your bible in order to be saved, what if he can't read, or what if he is blind, can he not still have Christ in his heart? It's not absolutely needed to hear a Gospel message, what if he is deaf and what if there is no one preaching where he lives.

But what is absolutely needful is a person to lift up their heart in surrender and in prayer. No matter who you are if you are hungry you must eat, it's impossible for someone to eat for you and you feel satisfied. Each person at one time in their life had to learn the alphabet. Their parents couldn't do it for them they had to do it them self. It's the very same with Prayer, everyone has to do their own praying. **There are Things we have to do ourselves that no one else can do for us.** We have to repent, we have to ask for salvation we ask for forgiveness, No one else can do this for us.

This is the way for every sinner no matter how much wrong they may have done, no matter how little wrong they may have done. The way is what Jesus has done on the cross of us. The way we receive what He has done on the cross is by asking in Prayer. Do you pray? Have you asked?

Oh seek the Lord while He may be found, Seek the Lord while He is near. May you pray today. May you ask from the bottom of your heart. and may many call upon Him in truth! "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

It is foolish to say you do not know how to pray. Prayer is the simplest act. It is simply speaking to God. It needs neither learning nor wisdom nor book to begin it. **It needs nothing but heart and will. The weakest baby can cry when he is hungry.**

**Will you not ask anything of God?** Have you made a covenant with death and hell? Are you at peace with the worm and the fire? Have you no sins to be pardoned? Have you no fear of eternal torment? Have you no desire to go to heaven?

No rather say I've heard that you say "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." I come to you now asking for salvation, asking for forgiveness. Crying out to you Lord Have mercy upon me.

For those who have Called upon the Lord. "We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night." Against all the odds against all that fought against Nehemiah He was strengthen to go forward in Faith. He finished the Wall . What a great victory he had, and what a great victory we shall have...