

Opposition to the Work Pt. 2

3.7.10

15 When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work. 16 From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, 17 who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. 18 And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. 19 And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another. 20 In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.” 21 So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out. 22 I also said to the people at that time, “Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day.” 23 So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand. Nehemiah 4:1-23 ESV

“When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work.” Nehemiah knew that there was no time to lose. They would return.

P: When God delivers us, there’s often not much time to celebrate.

Do I walk in this truth or do I allow myself to ‘let my guard down’ spiritually? How are you doing this?

“From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me.” Nehemiah had a well-thought-out plan.

P: Significant problems call for significant solutions.

Is this reflected in my planning or am I trying to take shortcuts that won’t lead to lasting change?

Practically Speaking:

1. It is likely that you didn’t get into the mess overnight, so it is likely you won’t get out overnight either.
2. The nature of our plan should reflect the nuances of our problem.

“And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another.” The difficult reality.

P: The biblical perspective assesses the situation as it is, not how we wish it were.

In the Scriptures:

1. Abraham (Rom. 4)
2. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego (Dan. 3)
3. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk. 14)

Are we addressing ‘actual reality’ or are we living in some kind of denial?

“In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”

Nehemiah drew their attention back to Ultimate Reality.

P: Ultimate Reality is that God is the Ultimate Defender of His people.

Practically Speaking:

1. Their hands built the wall drew their swords but it was God’s hand that ultimately protected them.
2. The same is true for us.. We may take action to defend ourselves, but it is ultimately God who defends us. We stand against the world, the flesh and the devil, but it is God who gives us the strength to stand. (Phil. 2:12-13)
3. This should give us great hope in our struggle against sins of all kinds and hope, for our marriages, parenting, mission, etc.

Am I viewing life from the appropriate perspective? If not, what needs to change?

“So we labored at the work...” Nehemiah was a co-laborer, not a consultant. “...and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out. I also said to the people at that time, “Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day.” The workers would work by day and then sleep at their post at night. The need was great so the need for sacrifice was also great.

P: God’s work is hard no matter when or where it is done.

Have I wrongly expected God’s work to be easy? At home? At work? In relationships? Am I pressing into Jesus so that I can do the hard work that is my responsibility?

“So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand.” Nehemiah and his team stayed the course.

P: Significant problems call for sustained solutions.

Do the solutions that I come up with reflect a ‘spiritual stick-to-it-ive-ness?’

Through Jesus, we have the strength we need to live out what we have learned.

Works Consulted: Expositor’s Bible Commentary, ESV Study Bible, Numerous Resources from the Logos Electronic Library.