

Nehemiah 6

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[0 : 00] Nehemiah chapter 6. The word of God says, And I cannot come down.

Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you? They sent messages to me four times in this manner, and I answered them in the same way. Then Samballot sent his servant to me in the same manner a fifth time with an open letter in his hand.

In it was written, It is reported among the nations, and Geshemu says that you and the Jews are planning to rebel, therefore you are rebuilding the wall, and you are to be their king according to these reports.

And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim in Jerusalem concerning you a king is in Judah. Now it will be reported to the king according to these reports. So come now, let us take counsel together.

Then I sent a message to him saying, Such things as you are saying have not been done, but you are inventing them in your own mind. For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking they will become discouraged with the work, and it will not be done.

[1 : 27] But now, O God, strengthen my hands. When I entered the house of Shemaiah, the son of Deliah, the son of Mahatabel, who was confined at home, he said, Let us meet together in the house of God within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you, and they are coming to kill you at night.

But I said, Should a man like me flee? And could one, such as I, go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. Then I perceived that surely God had not sent him, but he uttered his prophecy against me, because Tobiah and Sambalat had hired him.

He was hired for this reason, that I might become frightened and act accordingly in sin, so that they might have an evil report in order that they could reproach me. Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sambalat, according to these works of theirs, and also Nodiah, the prophetess, and the rest of the prophets who were trying to frighten me.

So the wall was completed on the 25th of the month of Elul, in 52 days. When all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations surrounding us saw it, they lost their confidence, for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

Also in those days, many letters went from the nobles of Judah to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them. For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shekaniah, the son of Ara, and his son, Johanan, had married the daughter of Meshulam, the son of Berechiah.

[3 : 02] Moreover, they were speaking about his good deeds in my presence, and reported my words to him. Then Tobiah sent letters to frighten me. Nehemiah chapter 9.

I want you to see this evening from this passage, how we can frustrate the enemy, frustrating the enemy. The attacks of the enemy are persistent.

We understand that from nothing else, from studying the book of Nehemiah. We know the enemies never really began their attacks, until Nehemiah left the comforts of the palace in Susa, and he began to make his way to Jerusalem, because he was concerned about the inhabitants of that area.

From the very beginning of his leading, and his obedience to what God was laying on his heart, the enemies began to show themselves, for they were concerned, first of all, that someone was showing concern for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And then they became concerned because someone was organizing a labor party, and a work party, and then they became concerned because work was progressing a little bit further, over and over again.

[4 : 09] We have seen the reality that the enemy does not stop the first moment we seem to resist him, or to be victorious over him. We have seen that the attacks of the enemy vary from time to time, and they go back and forth.

But to each one of them, there is this consistent theme, that as long as Nehemiah and the people around him are walking in obedience to what God has called them to do, for the rebuilding of the wall was a God-ordained, God-called event.

While it may look like a society work or a political work, it was actually a holy calling, for it was for the glory of the Lord God and his people.

And as long as they were walking in obedience and doing that work, the enemy was at work equally. The only chapter that we have that the enemy is silent while the work is going on is actually when the work stops, because there is discord and disruption internally in the nation, in which we see that there are people who are upset with one another, and a great outcry arises from among the people, because one is taking advantage of the other, and they're selling their sons and daughters into slavery, and Jew against Jew, and it's really an internal conflict.

And not only does it stop the work, but it's at that moment that we don't hear of anything of Sambalat, Tobiah, and Geshemun, and all the others. It is because the enemy is content for the work to stop, no matter how it stops.

[5 : 34] And the enemy's tactics seem to vary, but it is for a consistent purpose, to hinder the work. Here in this chapter, we find the work coming to a completion.

Now, the work of Nehemiah does not stop, but the work of the rebuilding of the wall stops. After 52 days, it is completed. But we see also that the enemy is frustrated, that they lose heart.

So how do we frustrate the enemy in our own lives? Understanding that greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world, surely. But how do we frustrate the enemy and cause the enemy to lose heart, to kind of get down?

Because that's what we want to be, is more than victorious. The first thing that we notice is that if we're going to frustrate the enemy, we must, first of all, labor with conviction.

Conviction is a good word. It's a word we don't speak of very often anymore, and it's a word that actually most people live without. And by conviction, I don't necessarily mean the feeling of guilt because we have sinned.

[6 : 41] That's the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes, as Jesus says, to convict the world of sin and unrighteousness. That type of conviction is a God-given conviction. When we have a conviction that we are doing something wrong, that something in our life needs to change, or maybe even a good thing in our life needs to be given up.

Not everything that I have given up for the sake of the gospel, nor everything that you have given up for the sake of the gospel, is quote-unquote wrong. Some of those things are just things that are pruned out of our life, that God asks us to surrender to him.

And we do that out of a matter of conviction, for we have this feeling, we would say, this nagging within us that says, God wants me to do this. And we ought to do that. We ought to know the wrong, but the conviction I'm speaking of is the conviction that is comforting to us, that we have a certainty that we are doing exactly what God has called us to do.

And that conviction is the reality that assures us there's nothing better that we could be doing at that moment. It is something that I believe very few Christians in our nation really walk with, a matter of conviction, a conviction that is connected to calling.

Because if we operate by comfort or feelings or situation, then those things can be altered, those things can be changed.

[8 : 06] But conviction is the reality that we have something holding us so tightly, it doesn't matter if it feels good or if it's comfortable. If we are convinced of something, someone used to say that if we are convinced of something, then it has taken root inside of our mind.

The problem with being convinced of a reality is that someone with more facts or someone with more personality can convince you of something completely contrary to what you once were convinced of.

A great majority of the people around the world were convinced that the world was flat. And to say that it was not was seen as being odd and strange.

It was some of the Bible scholars of those days that saw in the book of Job that God had put the world as a circle. They said, wait a minute, something is wrong. The word of God says the world is round.

And they looked at them like they were nuts because everyone around them were convinced that the world was flat. Until, with the progression of man and the greater revelation of God through scripture and through science and through all these God-ordained events, they said, wait a minute, there is something notable about this whole round world thoughts.

[9 : 22] And so people became convinced of that reality. Something we are convinced of can be changed. But a conviction, someone has said, is something that takes root of you to the very core of your being.

And you cannot change your conviction without changing who you are. You can change your mind about something you're convinced of and therefore have a change without really affecting your life.

But a conviction is something that is very deeply seeded into the very core of who you are. And to change your convictions is to change exactly everything about you.

Nehemiah is laboring and he knows that God has called him to labor on this wall so much so out of prayer and out of fasting and certainty that God's leading in the hand of God that has rested upon him.

That when all the enemies, and he says, and the rest of our enemies, began to send him a letter and said, why don't we meet in the plain of Ono? Here is an opportunity. The enemy's not saying, hey, we want to come and attack you.

[10 : 27] Hey, we want to come and we want to threaten you with your life. They're saying, let's just meet and talk this out. Now, understandably, this meeting was to take place 25 to 30 miles outside of Jerusalem, which would have removed him a significant distance away from the work and therefore the work would have stopped.

But it still is an appealing one, right? If you want us to leave you alone, let's just meet. Let's see if we can reconcile our differences and find a middle ground. And it seems like maybe a very convincing matter.

If you want to complete the work, then let's meet in the valley, let's meet in the plain, let's take care of all the things between us and then you go about your work. But I love what Nehemiah says. Nehemiah said, I am doing a great work and cannot come down.

He is a man who is laboring with conviction. He knows that the work that he is committed to is a great work. It is the work, not because it is pleasant, not because it is easy, not because anyone else would like to have it because for years the walls have set in ruins and no one else has concerned themselves with doing it.

No one in the capital city of Susa was so moved and saw such prestige in being the governor of this ransacked town in which very few people lived in to go lead them and reconstruct in the walls and the gates had been burned up and everything was in rubble piles and heaps all around.

[11 : 52] Who wants to go do that? It's better to stay the cupbearer of the king. But yet, Nehemiah says, I'm doing a great work.

Why? Because he knew that God had called him to do this work and to him, it was great. It didn't matter how anyone else perceived it.

I'm sure there were people on the wall who said, I can't wait till this is done. But the reality that this was the work God had appointed Nehemiah to do. He wasn't the priest, he wasn't Ezra.

I mean, look at this. He is holding a political office that is less than the office he used to hold and he's doing harder work than being the cupbearer to the king.

He used to literally sip wine in the palace and tell the king it was good. And now, he's among a bunch of people who, if we read later on in the chapter, not everybody's all in.

[12 : 49] Some people are conspiring with the enemy. Not everybody's for him. As a matter of fact, the majority of the people inside Jerusalem are against him and he's dealing with burnt gates and destroyed walls.

But he calls it great. Why? Because of the conviction that this is what God had called him to do. Friend, I don't, wherever you're at in life, it doesn't have to be a church-related occupation.

Not very many people find their vocation in ministry. I'm one of the few and I love the fact that God called me to vocational ministry. But before I was called into vocational ministry, he had called me into other occupations as well.

And I had conviction that that's what God called me to do. I remember when this reality set in, just to go back a little bit. Some of you know, I used to climb telephone poles.

I was a lineman with a phone company back in the old days. It was Bell South. I looked up the other day. It's like 18 years ago, right? So it was 18 years ago. I was a lineman for the phone company and all these wonderful, actually six, getting ready to, yeah, about 18 years ago is when I left.

[13 : 51] So go back further than that is when I actually started doing it. So right when I was 20, I thought, man, I'd like to have that job. I was in a church and I needed a job and I was going on.

Right before I turned 21, I came to Christ. But if I give you the full story, when I was 20, I was going to church with a guy who was getting ready to retire from the phone company, he's like, Billy Joe, you need this job to be a good job.

Bell South, old Ma Bell paid people good. He probably looked at me because we had a young son and, you know, this boy needs a good job. I said, oh, that'd be great. So he pulled some strings. You've met him.

His name's Kenneth Swan, KW. The phone world called him KW. Everybody else around here knows him as brother Kenneth. But if you went to the phone world, it was KW. But anyway, so Kenneth put a lot of strings, got me an interview and then I got to go take the test.

I failed the test miserably. Basic Electricity Test. I failed it. I had to tell you on the spot, yeah, you didn't pass, you lost, you don't have the job. Oh, great. So you have to wait six months to take it again. In that six month period is when I came to Christ.

[14 : 52] Okay? So I came to Christ, went back, took the test. I knew nothing else about electricity than I knew the first time. I didn't know anything. I didn't know anything about electricity. Test is completely different.

I go back, take the test and I pass the test and they offer me a job. I said, we're going to give you this job. Do you want to take the next test? Basic Electronics so maybe you can get a better job. I said, what are you crazy? I have no idea how I passed the first one. Just give me the one you're offering me.

Anyway, so I became a lineman and I was convinced of the reality that I wanted that job the first time. The second time, I had the conviction that God had called me to it and then I realized they told me how to go to pole climbing school.

Now, that doesn't sound like much but if you don't like ladders and you're not a big fan of heights and all of a sudden they tell you you're going to go climb telephone poles, you're kind of like, oh yeah, that's going to be interesting. And it was this newfound faith that I had that just bore this conviction God called me to be a lineman so I'm going to be the best lineman God called me to be.

And I had to learn to climb telephone poles. Their pole climbing school at that time was on Applegate Drive in Nashville which is right next to the airport and unless you've ever climbed a pole that's been set in a hole, pulled out, set in a hole, pulled out so they did the same hole set so the holes are really wallowed out and airplanes are taken off over your head all the time and there's nothing on them and you're going back and forth like this, you learn to grow in your faith really, really, really quick on telephone poles.

[16 : 08] And so anyway, I had this conviction and that was great as long as the job was going on then I lost the job because I got laid off when those planes flew into the Twin Towers but yet I had the conviction that's what God called me to do it took four more years before I went back and God brought me back to the same office, same work center, all those things still in the conviction this is what God called me to do and I was, the reality that this is what God had called me to do and about three years later I knew God was calling me to leave because God began to change his calling in my life but what I'm saying is then I left full time to go into ministry with the same conviction that I had went in to climb and pose I had to learn to be content where God had put me because I said this is the work God's called me to do now.

See, not all conviction is just ministry work. It is the reality that this is what God's called me to do so I'm doing a great work I'm not going to be distracted by anything else because look at what Nehemiah says why should the work stop when I come to meet you?

What happens is a lot of people that God has called them to do something whatever it is are willing to stop the work to go meet in a place that they should have said oh no to.

because don't stop the work that God's called you to do just to go for this convenient meeting we must labor with conviction this is what God's called me to do at this point in my life and we have that conviction it brings a lot of contentment a lot of contentment because without it we think we're doing the right thing we hope we're doing the right thing but with conviction we have contentment that we say this is what I'm supposed to do now labor with conviction and it frustrates the enemy number two we must live with consistency we must live with consistency four times they sent the same request to Nehemiah and four times he gave the same answer that's pretty consistent he was consistent in his response I'm doing the great work I'm not coming down I'm doing the great work

I'm not coming down because the enemy by the way is not content with one attack and you resist him and he goes it'd be sweet if the enemy would leave you alone after the first time but over and over and over again the same thing keeps coming back and consistency is found in being consistent in how you answer and resist that he says no I'm living in the conviction that this is a great work and he was consistent in his answer but the true consistency is he showed up in the fifth time because he says the fifth time the messengers came from them the messengers brought an open letter now an open letter was not sent so that Nehemiah would read it the open letter had all these accusations and these charges and notice the subtle change in the text because the open letter comes and says it has been said by the way let's just go ahead and say this people are always saying but the problem is is those people don't ever have names it has been said or people are saying and the deacons and the elders know this and they know this full well when we have a meeting if anybody ever says well people say

[19 : 29] I say well if the people don't have names I really don't care what they say I don't mean that in any disrespect but I do care what the people with names say because it's the people with names that matter because every one of us in here we were here earlier and it was just Carrie and myself and Braden and Nolan were here and Braden's like man there's nobody here I said I'm here and I'm somebody right I'll just pick on him but it's the reality when people have names then what they have to say matters but if people are just saying things and there's no name attached to that hey somebody is saying something all the time they just are and this text is the same thing it has been said and they are saying and it's these really vague accusations and Nehemiah says you're making these up in your mind but notice the open letter it says it has been reported that you're building a palace there so say you're re-fortifying Jerusalem so that you can become king you're going to have this revolt and by the way the accusation of this is just to be accused of this and this charge to reach the king is just certain death the Persian Empire had no time for any of this type of stuff there's really no questions being asked you're just going to die and so the accusation is not a lightweight accusation it's a heavy accusation and everybody is reading this because here's the subtle change I want you to say the first thing they were trying to do is they were going to do me harm

Nehemiah says they were going to do me harm but that fifth time they sent this so that it would say what so that they would discourage us thinking they would frighten us now it has become they're trying to frighten everyone around Nehemiah the first four questions are Nehemiah coming Nehemiah's like no I'm doing a great work Nehemiah come no I'm doing a great work Nehemiah come no I'm doing a great work Nehemiah come I'm doing a great work the fifth time they come they say hey guys do y'all know what it's being said about Nehemiah and if you ever want to discourage a leader and you ever want to disrupt a work to begin to spread this thing called gossip among the body and it takes that root of bitterness and that seed of doubt and all of a sudden it begins to destroy things well how do you combat that as an individual you have to have lived consistently before that starts you have to have been consistent in all of your living before those seeds were planted the enemy is going to plant them

I promise you I know I've shared this with you this is my 20 years of public pulpit ministry and I've had a lot of things said about me I've had all 20 years in the same community I've had a lot of things said about me I've had people leave churches not this one the former church I pastored because I failed to walk across the gym and shake their hand I've had a lot of things said about me I've had a lot of things and it's going to happen some of you have heard a lot of things about me I don't need to know all of them I know that I don't try to live and neither should you to answer every one of those Nehemiah doesn't answer that but I know this that if I'm not living consistently before anybody says anything then everything that is said is going to be easy to believe and if you're not living consistently before it's being said then everything that is said is going to be easy to be believed and so everyone around

Nehemiah now all of a sudden starts reading this letter saying that Nehemiah is going to be king but the problem is they've been living with him right and Nehemiah evidently has lived such a consistent life because notice nobody else argues nobody gets upset nobody says that's not wrong everybody just keeps going to work why because evidently Nehemiah had lived such a consistent life among them they knew that was false and Nehemiah just calls it what it is you're making these things up in your mind they're not true and then he prays that's another consistent action of Nehemiah it's a very short prayer but what does he say but now oh God strengthen my hands he doesn't say God take care of them at this time he doesn't say God he says God strengthen my hands to continue doing the work he's living consistently friend if we want to frustrate the enemy live a consistent life too often very public ministries come to a tragic end because it is eventually revealed their life was very inconsistent

I had men that I used to quote and I would tell you who their names were I don't tell you their names anymore I said one just a minute ago the quote about a conviction if you have a conviction you have to change the court I know who said that I'm not going to repeat who said that to you because while I believe the quote is good the ministry was discredited because of the inconsistency he found at the end of his life and so I won't quote the name I don't ever want that to be that way in my life I don't want it to be that way in your life maybe nobody will ever quote us and that's fine but what we don't want is an inconsistency all of a sudden revealed to such a manner that everything speculative that was once said about us well it has to be true because look here we have to live a consistent life we have to be the same in church out of church we have to be the same all the time

[25 : 32] I was sitting at Braden's basketball game yesterday and it was the junior pro basketball game and I was sitting there in the stands and it was right before Braden played a gentleman out of the corner of my eye saw someone walk up beside me it was just Carrie and I sitting there and it was Ephraim Doak Doak funeral home some of you know Ephraim I know Ephraim well Ephraim walked up to me he said man I had to look at you like four times because I didn't know I thought I know that guy who is that guy he said I've never seen you in anything but a sports coat I said well you don't look like a funeral director either but anyway!

you have to be consistent in it right? we have to because if we're not the enemy is going to send that letter and all of a sudden people will believe it and it'll ring true in their ears even if it's not so to frustrate it we must live consistently number three how do we frustrate the enemy we labor with conviction we live with consistency number three avoid temporary compromise avoid even a temporary compromise notice what it says when I entered the house of Shemaiah by the way that's a Jewish individual so this is one of his fellow countrymen this is someone that he should have been able to be relaxed around right someone that he could have kind of let down his guard we're not talking about letters coming from Sambalant and Tobai and all these people but when I entered the house of Shemaiah the son of Deliah the son of Mahatabel who was confined at home he said let us meet together in the house of God within the temple and let us close the doors of the temple and here's why for they are coming to kill you and they're going to kill you at night now this should have been this is a fellow countryman right he went into the house he said let's

I tell you what Nehemiah they're coming they're going to kill you and I know they're coming to kill you at night so what we ought to do is we ought to go into the temple remember that new temple that was rebuilt Ezra right we ought to go into the house of God let's go inside the house of God and let's shut the doors because that way you're safe they won't go in there now there's a couple red flags here the first one is this man is confined at home literally to be confined at home means he's probably because he's unclean so this man himself saying this has some uncleanness about him uncleanness something that has pronounced him and declared him to be unclean to go to the temple let us go to the temple shut the doors and that way you'll be safe so here's the compromise Nehemiah the enemy is going to come kill you at night but I know how you can save your life and you can keep doing the work you don't even have to leave Jerusalem I'll make it easy for you we go into the temple it's on the wall of the city right it's right there we'll shut the gates no one see you and the word can continue on you can compromise you don't have to leave here you don't have to go anywhere else you're right there but here's the danger

Nehemiah is not a priest he's a layman and the word of God has said that no layman should enter into the inner portions of the temple remember the one king who did he went into there and leprosy broke out on his face his forehead and God's judgment had fallen upon him so when Nehemiah says to the man such as I flee and who am I that I should go into the temple what he is saying is God says I don't need to be there no matter what you say now the man before him is saying this with some prophetic air he's declaring God has shown me you're gonna they're gonna come kill you at night but he's also shown me here's a great place the word of God never contradicts itself because the same God who said don't go into the temple is not gonna say to another person tell him to go into the temple the word of God is not gonna contradict itself so the temptation for Nehemiah is to compromise just a little bit so that he can stay in Jerusalem stay safe and kind of oversee the word from there but Nehemiah knew that he had no right being there even at the expense of his life for he said who am

I that I should enter into the temple I don't belong there if they're coming to kill me then let them come kill me but I don't belong there and I'm not going friend we can't compromise even for a moment on the standards of what God has set for us and declared to us as we do the work he's called us to do it must be done in the manner and the way that he's called us to do it whatever that work may be we dare not compromise even for our own security even for our own security I'll tell you this because it's a Sunday night I pastored you know I pastored 10 years in Normandy love the church in Normandy still do love the church in Normandy love the people there when I was pastoring the church down there when I started pastoring the church had been there 35 years big difference than coming here and you know you're like 100 or 160 years 170 something we're way on up in there now so there was not that listing of pastors there so there's just a very few of us

[31 : 10] I'm I was I'm still the second longest tenured pastor that Normandy has ever had following the gentleman that actually officiated Carrie and I's wedding so brother Larry Sanders was there for like 25 years he has the longest tenured ministry which I just say as a side note that's longer than the pastor's ever been in more trace which kind of breaks my heart a little bit when you look at the wall but anyway but still there was constantly treading water and Normandy and the community at that time would never wasn't very receptive of the church wasn't very receptive of the gospel of the church and it was it was hard it was hard work and I was constantly trying to figure out why is it so hard I mean we had there was a lot of darkness at that time and I'm not putting it down the community down there was a lot of darkness has changed since then so don't think that I'm judging it now but it was just it was difficult it was hard and I remember it came up one time in a meeting I was

I was meeting with the deacons and they were talking to me said yeah so they said Billy Joe have you ever heard how we how we were able to attain the property for the church I said no I don't they said well the community Normandy never wanted a Baptist church down there they just didn't and and the community at that time was very closed and we're trying to block the Baptist from building a church in Normandy so anytime the church showed up to buy property the town would give it to someone else or sell them but there was an auction that showed up so what the church did because there's a church plant in name there was a sponsored church that really didn't give anything but there was a group of people as a church plant so they sent someone secretly to the auction to buy the property for the church think about that and so at the auction the gentleman won the bid and then he gave it to the church and so I asked the deacons I said do you think maybe since the church wasn't honest from the beginning maybe that's why we struggle so much with the community today because we were still very we weren't very far removed from it everybody there everybody living in the community was there when that happened it's not the same now but at that time it was I said because when we sneak around and make compromises doing things then I don't think everybody's going to welcome you with loving arms when you show up but how tempting it is for each of us to do that in our own life well I'm going to make it happen this way because if I'm out and open about what I'm doing it may cost me a little bit more it may be a little bit harder it may be so so I'm going to compromise and and and see if I can make it work this way let's not make it work let's trust that the God who holds every heart in the palm of his hand not just the hearts of the kings in the palm of his hand can open the door don't compromise fourth and finally how do we frustrate the enemy we labor with conviction we live with consistency we avoid temporary compromise fourth and finally we see the work until completion simply put we just complete what God has called us to do look at what it says so the wall was completed it's amazing right so the wall was completed this is what God had called

Nehemiah to do at that time he calls him to do more the remainder of the chapter I mean the remainder of the book but here we see this first work this primary work of completing the wall so the wall was completed it just sounds so simple but really it was very much opposition he came against it in a very brief time on the 25th of the month of Iul in 52 days but it was not 52 days of roses and buttercups right we understand there was internal conflict there was external opposition over and over and over again there's all these things that are coming against him but the wall was completed he did what God called him to do but notice the very next verse when all our enemies heard of it for the enemy is always going to hear when all our enemies heard of it all the nation surrounding us saw it they lost their confidence you know the greatest way to frustrate the enemy actually do what God has called you to do just do it walk in obedience and do what God has called you to do and the enemy loses confidence now can you do it in your own strength absolutely not because we have to read the rest of the verse why did they lose their confidence for they recognize that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God when we trust in the Lord God and we we lean upon him and his provisions and his sustaining power and he uses us to accomplish and complete the work he's called us to do the reason it frustrates the enemies is not because the enemy looks at them go oh well they're more powerful than me the reason they lose their confidence is because they say wow someone greater than me is using them any work we complete for the sake of the kingdom is not because we are able but because he chooses to use us as the instruments and the tools to complete his work in the space of time and history and the enemy loses confidence because the enemy says God used that individual and God can use that one I can't combat what God is doing he may can't combat with us but he can't combat what God is doing and when we allow God to complete the work through us then the testimony is not of who we are the testimony is not of our own abilities but rather the testimony is that God used us to complete what he called us to do and now all of a sudden the enemy realizes there's something greater than man that I'm wrestling against here and they lose confidence because God has called us to do this thing and then all of a sudden he does it through us and this was a lot deeper seated enemy than we first realized because the last few verses he he highlights for us that this is so seated that there's intermarrying between

Tobiah and the leaders of Judah which is astounding when you realize that the leaders of Judah should be the inheritors of Jerusalem for the promises to the tribe of Judah that a king shall arise out of them and Jerusalem you know the city of David should have been the place where the leaders of Judah should have said yes this is who we are but they had intermarried and they had an alliance with Tobiah who by the way is a servant of Sambalat but that's okay he was a really elevated servant and so they're doing all these things and are sending letters back and forth and really what the leaders of Judah are doing are shooting themselves in their own foot because as long as the enemy has control then they can't have the fulfillment but if it hadn't been for Nehemiah completing the work God had called him to do and the enemy getting frustrated and being cast down and losing confidence then hey if he doesn't complete the work of rebuilding the wall then the remaining part of the book doesn't matter because this first completion now all of a we'll see a listing of names but we'll see as we're reading the law we'll see revival break out we'll see Nehemiah correcting the people we'll see all these things happening why because Nehemiah did the first thing now he can do the next thing and the next thing and the next thing how do we frustrate the enemy we labor with conviction we live with consistency we avoid compromise and finally we just bring that work to completion whatever God has called us to do at this season in each one of our lives we actually do what God has called us to do it's not always going to be easy I wish sometimes the work would be done in 52 days but it does not always happen that way but yet it's the same God who moves and uses us and we want to do what he's actually called us to do for his glory so that the enemy gets frustrated because as long as we delay one quote that I can't tell you the name Erwin Lutzer and I have this one written down

Erwin Lutzer is the former pastor of the Moody Bible Church he is the pastor emeritus of that church now Erwin Lutzer once said Satan is not bothered by your good intentions it doesn't matter what we thought we would do or what we intended to do Satan's really bothered by what we do do our good intentions mean little but the things we actually complete cause him to lose confidence because God is using us for his glory let's pray father thank you for the night thank you for the opportunity together with these brothers and sisters in Christ and thank you for your word we thank you for the truth that it contains but we know the calling in our life is a calling to walk in loving faithful obedience to your leading and Lord we know that that looks differently in each one of our lives each one of us are called to exhibit obedience in the area you've put us in so I pray that we would walk faithfully in it I pray that when we do so we would have the certainty that this is where you've called us and since this is where you've called us this is where you want to use us in the workplace in the home in the church wherever it may be may we have a settled conviction that you have led us to this point at this time and you be glorified how you use us Lord we thank you for your loving leading of your people and may you be glorified in our faithful obedience to you as we complete what you've called us to do and we ask it all in Jesus name amen thank you guys as you