

Nehemiah 4

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[0 : 00] Let's go into the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah chapter 4. Nehemiah chapter 4. I trust that you've had a good day. I trust that things are going well.

! And we praise you that we have the opportunity to gather together again.

We praise you for this building. We praise you for all that goes on here. We thank you for the tool that it is for the sake of the kingdom. We thank you for the people that make up the church. And we praise you for the way you move.

We praise you for your word. And pray, Lord, that you help us as we study it and we read it. That we come to a greater understanding of it. And we pray that you be glorified through our learning and growing.

Lord, we do pray for those around us that are sick. Pray for those that are hurting. Pray, God, your hand would rest upon them. And, Lord, that you would lead and guide in all things. And we ask it all in Jesus' name.

[1 : 11] Amen. Be in prayer for Brother Ivan. Brother Ivan reached out to me this morning. He had hurt his back somehow yesterday. So he was down in his back today. So I know many of us know what that's like.

But be in prayer for Brother Ivan. That's why Ivan and Jan are not here today. I'm going to continue to lift him up as he just, hopefully, things ease up on him pretty soon.

So Nehemiah chapter 4. We'll read the chapter in its entirety. I was going to break it up, but it really goes well together. So let's look at it as a whole. It says, Now it came about that when Sambalat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews.

He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy men of Samaria and said, What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore it for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices?

Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble, even the burned ones? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was near him, and he said, Even what they are building, if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down.

[2 : 20] Hear, O our God, how we are despised. Return their reproach on their own heads, and give them up for plunder in a land of captivity. And do not forgive their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out before you, for they have demoralized the builders.

So we built the wall, and the whole wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. Now when Sambalat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, and that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry.

All of them conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause a disturbance in it. But we prayed to our God, and because of them, we set up a guard against them day and night.

Thus in Judah it was said, the strength of the burden bearers is failing, yet there is much rubbish, and we ourselves are unable to rebuild the wall. Our enemies said they will not know or see until we come among them, kill them, and put a stop to the work.

When the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times, they will come up against us from every place where you may turn. Then I stationed men in the lowest parts of the space, behind the wall, the exposed places, and I stationed the people and families with their swords, spears, and bows, and I saw their faces, or I saw their fear.

[3 : 38] I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people. Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

When our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had frustrated their plan, then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work. From that day on, half of my servants carried on the work, while half of them held the spears, the shields, the bowls, and the breastplates.

And the captains were behind the whole house of Judah. Those who were rebuilding the wall, those who carried burdens, took their load with one hand, doing the work, and the other holding a weapon. As for the builders, each wore his sword, girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter stood near me.

I said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another. At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet rally to us there, our God will fight for us.

So we carried on the work, with half of them holding spears from dawn until the stars appeared. And at that time I also said to the people, Let each man with his servants spend the night within Jerusalem, so that they may be a guard for us by night, and a laborer by day.

[4 : 50] So neither I, my brothers, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us removed our clothes, even took his weapon to the water. Each took his weapon to the water.

Nehemiah chapter 4. I want you to see this evening what it looks like to be committed to the work. To be committed to the work. In the third chapter we have recorded for us the names of the individuals that God uses.

At least a partial listing of them. And it is not a complete list. We have a number of them listed. Who are working at various parts around the wall to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.

We know that this is a God-ordained event. And we have to take it within context. Understanding that when the Lord put this burden on Nehemiah's heart, while he was the cupbearer to the king in the capital city.

And he eventually made his way to Jerusalem. And he made his way around the walls. And he saw the disrepair and the rubbish and all that was there. When he brought the matter before the people living in the area, he did not say, what are you doing?

[5 : 56] Look at all this mess. Let's clean up this mess. Rather, he highlighted for them that the walls were a reflection of disdain. Of bringing shame to the name of the Lord God.

And if God had at least restored the people so that they may return and rebuild the temple, and they did, and restore their worship, then the walls were to be a reflection of God's favor upon them.

And now all of a sudden the rebuilding was more than just cleaning their lives up. It was something for an intended purpose of bringing glory and honor to the name of the Lord God. It was a holy calling and a holy activity they were called to do, not just a physical work and a physical labor.

So they began to do that in the third chapter. And we've seen that God used varying people, people that were normally not labor side by side. It is an extensive listing of people, different occupations, different livelihoods, even different standings within society.

Men and women of varying degrees. Some leaders of partial regions. Some were laborers and craftsmen. Others were priests. And yet God uses each and every one of them.

[7 : 06] There is a theme. There are a number of themes to the book of Nehemiah. One of the themes that we see is a theme of prayer. When Nehemiah heard about the walls, he prayed. He fasted and prayed. When he was asked about the king, why he was sad, he prayed.

When he got to Jerusalem, he prayed. And here we see in our text two times he offers up prayer. Prayer does not have to be a long matter. Rather, it can be a very, very short matter to be powerful.

Charles Spurgeon used to say that prayer is ringing the bell. It is pulling the cord. It rings the bell in the courtroom of heaven. It is making an announcement in heaven. Hey, I have a need on earth.

And that's what we find Nehemiah doing. When something difficult or problematic arises, he pulls the rope, so to say, and he rings the bell. He announces to heaven that there's an issue on earth.

And then he just continues on doing what it was he was doing. He does not take time to stop and to ponder. He prays and he goes back to work. Or he prays and he asks the question.

[8 : 09] Another theme in the book of Nehemiah is that the enemy always shows up whenever we begin to actually do the work. When we are left alone and we are isolated, the enemy is silent.

When Nehemiah shows up in Jerusalem and the walls are in disrepair, the temple has been rebuilt for a number of years. About 13 years have passed since Ezra has come in. So temple worship has been going for at least a number of years, probably by this time nearly 80 years, temple worship.

So the decree of King Cyrus to go and rebuild the temple, we remember it came. And we read the book of Ezra. They began and then all of a sudden they stopped. And then during the reign of Darius, they finished the temple at the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, the minor prophets.

And I know I'm putting a lot of stuff together for you there. But by the time Ezra shows up and then later, 13 years later, Nehemiah shows up, it's been about 80 years since the temple has been completed.

And what we find historically and biblically is that those are relatively 80 years of silence. And I guess you would call it relative peace. The nation of Israel is still living under the reign of the Persian Empire.

[9 : 16] So they're not an independent people. But they have some freedoms. One of those freedoms is the temple worship. They're living in their land as God had declared they would. That there would be a decree issued.

He had said that in the book of Isaiah. He had said the number of their Babylonian captivity would be 70 years in the book of Jeremiah. God had brought all that about. But yet they're living among a very small remnant, among people who are not friendly towards them, among non-Jewish people.

But the enemy is silent as long as they're still. We only see the enemy showing up when they start the reconstruction of the temple.

The enemy shows up after it's done. And all that is worked out during the reigns of Darius and Artaxerxes. They leave it alone. And now we see the enemy arising again in full force, in greater force, with the rebuilding of the walls around.

So these themes of prayer and attack, spiritual attack, are themes that run through the book of Nehemiah. And so what is needed in the book of Nehemiah is a commitment to the work.

[10:23] Not just the physical work of rebuilding the walls. For the rebuilding of the walls took only a number of days. I misspoke last time we were together. I said it's 52 days. It's actually 54 days. The rebuilding of the walls takes only a number of days.

But it is so much more than just rebuilding physical walls. Nehemiah is also used to bring in the celebratory feast. And God uses him to reestablish the city of Jerusalem, which is a spiritual matter.

And there has to be a commitment to the work of the Lord that God has called us to. So what does it look like to have that? What things and what matters do we face? The first thing that we notice here when we start speaking of commitment is we see the doubt of the enemy.

The first thing we have to wrestle with is the doubt of the enemy. One of the first matters that we wrestle with as individuals and believers in Christ when we think the Lord God is calling us to do something is the matter of doubt.

For the enemy loves to work in the shadows of did God say? Or do you think you can? Or is it really possible?

[11:38] Notice it says, now it came about that when Samballot heard, again, Samballot is this man who's been showing up over and over again. That when Samballot heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry.

Understand this, that the enemy of God's people, when God's people begin to do what he's calling them to do, he becomes furious and very angry.

I tell people all the time, I've told them in conversation, if you want Satan to leave you alone, then just don't do anything for the sake of the kingdom. Because the greatest desire of the enemy of our souls is not our causing us to lose our salvation, for we can't.

So once we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are eternally secure. I believe that with all of my being. I believe in the eternal security of the saints. Those who genuinely accept Christ as our Lord and Savior are eternally secure.

And nothing can pull them out of the hand of the Savior. But the enemy's attack on the believer is not to cause them to lose their salvation. Rather, I believe the greatest attack of the enemy is to cause the believer to be complacent in their salvation.

[12:51] That is, to do nothing. And complacency is the greatest enemy of the people of God. And complacency starts with this matter called doubt.

Can God really do that? Or better said, can God use you to do that? This is why we find so many people, when we speak of wrestling with the call, wrestling with the call, whatever it may be.

Some pastors wrestled with the call to preach. I never really wrestled with it. Some say, well, you run away from it. And if God's calling you to do it, he won't let you get away from it. I don't believe that's good advice.

I used to hear that from old pastors. If you think God's calling you to preach, then run away from it. Do everything you can to see if God will let you get away. If he doesn't let you get away, then he's called you to preach. I don't want to test the Lord God, so I never have given that advice.

Because if he's calling you to preach and you start running away, then there's a good mindset that he could just strike you down. Right? I mean, if we're walking in disobedience. But there is this wrestling and there is this first thing that creeps into our mind.

[13:59] Anytime we think God is calling us to do something, he's doubt. Look at what it says. And he began to mock the Jews. The attack of the enemy starts in the world of words.

The attack of the enemy always starts in the world of words. He began to mock them. And notice what he says. And he spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy men of Samaria.

So these people of prominence, these people of importance. What are these feeble Jews doing? And notice the emphasis here. What are the feeble Jews? Are they going to restore it for themselves?

Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble? Even the burned ones. Notice the focus of the enemy. The enemy always likes to focus on who we are.

And doubt arises because of the reality of who we are. And the enemy likes to remind us of who we are.

[15:05] Can you? Do you think you could do that? Do you think you could rebuild that? Do you think you could cause this? And this is exactly what Samballad is doing.

Is he's mocking them by reminding them of who they are. And spiritual warfare is that matter. Where the enemy continuously speaks into our lives words of truth.

But they are truth before Christ. They are truth before calling. They are truth of who we are in the flesh.

Not who we are in Christ. Constantly. We find this doubt creeping in. Because the reality is.

Is we know ourselves better than anyone else. But no one reminds us of who we are more than the enemy of our souls. When doubts and fears arise. Those are not of the Lord.

[16:07] But those of our enemy causing us to doubt whether God could use us in a particular way. Oh there are moments in my life.

Even now. You know 20 years into it. Nearly 20. Actually 22 years into preaching. There are still days where I'll sit in that office back there and go. Am I really fit.

To preach the gospel. And the answer to that is no. I am not. I mean that's. That's a good answer. In my own strength.

And on the standing of who I am. But by grace and mercy. And because of the calling. Then that's his equipping.

And in Christ. Things are totally different. Because the question is. Can they. And the answer to all of these questions. Sam Ballad is asking. Is no. Because if they could have rebuilt the walls in their own strength.

[17:04] Then they would have done it before Nehemiah got there. And if they could have. Raised these walls. Out of the dust. And even the burned ones. Then they would have done it before Nehemiah got there. So on their own. They could not do it.

Never forget this reality. That God does not call us. Only to the things which are possible. God calls us to the things that are. Impossible without him. In our personal lives.

And in the church life. Because as long as we can point to. These are matters we have done. On our own strength. And they are normally not things. That have been God called.

They may be good things. But God calls us to matters. Which are beyond ourselves. Even the simple ones. True love.

Think of the fruits of the spirit. Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Goodness. Kindness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. And self-control. Do you know. Do you know. Do you know that each one of those. On your own. Are beyond your ability.

[18 : 08] Greater love has no one than this. Than he would lay down his life for another. What does it say in the scripture. Seldom. A man may lay down his life for his friend. But no one would ever lay down his life for his enemy.

Christ says. If you don't love the way I've loved. Then you do not have true love. That's beyond our ability. Joy. We don't have true joy without Christ.

We may have moments of happiness. But we don't have joy. Jesus says that. I have overcome the world. And I give this to you. Peace. We have no peace. Apart from. Relationship with Christ. And you go through the list.

Self-control. Those are spiritual. Fruits. That are only available. In Christ. And so there's this reality. That the enemy reminds us.

That no. We can't do that. But do not let doubt creep in. Because. There's the doubt. Of the enemy. Who's trying to keep us. From our commitment to the work.

[19 : 09] Constantly. Trying to reaffirm. We don't deserve to be here. So. The answer to that is. We say you're right. I don't deserve to be here.

Carrie used to remind me. All the time. She says no. What we deserve. Is death. Hell. And the grave. We don't deserve anything.

Other than that. Seems kind of morbid. Right. But when we read scripture. That's it. We deserve an eternal judgment. But by the grace. And mercy of Christ. We have none of that.

So it's not a matter. Of what we deserve. And do we deserve. To be used by him. Do these people deserve. To be used by him. To rebuild the walls. No. So the enemy's right. But notice what Nehemiah does. It gives us the second thing.

The dependence of the faithful. Nehemiah hears this. He hears it verbatim. For he quotes it for us. But we've said this before. Nehemiah. Never. Converses.

[20 : 06] With the enemy. And he didn't argue with the enemy. He didn't say. Oh you don't know us. Or you don't know. He didn't converse. He said. Oh yes we do. He didn't do any of that. He didn't argue with the enemy. He didn't say. Yes. Yes I do.

Notice what it says. Hear oh our God. Nehemiah's response. Is to pray. He doesn't doubt. The reality of what the enemy is saying is true.

He doesn't want to defend himself. He doesn't want to say. Oh well you don't know anything about me. Sam Ballot. You don't know who I am. You don't know the position. Because the reality is this. Okay. Sam Ballot is a leader in that region.

But he's a leader in that region under the king. Nehemiah is the cup bearer. Which would be a good way of saying he is a counselor to the king. So politically speaking.

Nehemiah has a higher position than Sam Ballot. Don't ever lose that. In the realm of the Persian Empire. Nehemiah has greater authority than Sam Ballot.

[21 : 05] Nehemiah never once looks at Sam Ballot and says. Do you know who I am? The king you're writing these letters to. I'm his counselor who stands beside him.

Much like Paul didn't use his Roman citizenship. To make things easier for him. He would speak of it when he was about to get flogged. And he used it for the spread and propagation of the gospel.

But he did not use it for things beyond. He didn't use it for freedoms that he didn't. That he thought he should deserve as a Roman citizen. But Nehemiah didn't play that card. Nehemiah just prayed.

And he said okay. And he began to depend. He didn't depend upon his political standing. He didn't depend upon his ability. Nehemiah don't miss this either. He has men around him.

Because when we get to this last passage. The very last verse it says. So neither I, my brothers, my servants. Nor the men of the guard who followed me. Okay.

[22:03] He's got what we call some people. He's got an entourage. And he's got a well-armed entourage. And he didn't say. Hey y'all go get Sam Ballant. And tell him be quiet. Because I got letters from the king.

He didn't do that. Why? Because we wrestle not against flesh and blood. But against the powers and principalities of the air. And the spiritual forces of darkness. Friend listen to me. Your enemy is not the one speaking the words physically.

Your enemy is the one whispering internally in you. And you don't fight that enemy the same way. Too often we argue with the people before us. When that's not the right enemy.

We're fighting the battle wrong. Nehemiah could have fought physically. And would have won. Because he had backing that Sam Ballant didn't have.

But he didn't do that. He prayed. And he was dependent upon the Lord. He says. Oh our God. How we are despised. Return their reproach on their own heads.

[22:56] And give them up for plunder. In a land of captivity. Do not forgive their iniquity. And let not their sin be blotted out before you. For they have demoralized the builders. So what he did is. He left the judgment up to God.

This is one of those judgment prayers. He didn't say. Oh Lord forgive them. No he said. Lord just judge them. And he cast that responsibility. Upon the Lord God. And said. Oh our God. These people are.

Mocking us. These people are hindering. The work you've called us to. So Lord you take care of it. And that's a beautiful thing. By the way. When you depend upon God. To fight your battles for you.

And you just let it. Leave it in his hands. And we know he left it there. Because look at the very next verse. So we built the wall. Notice what Nehemiah does. He prayed. And then he went back to work.

The enemy is still speaking. Still talking. He prayed. He lifted it up. And we know he left it there. Because he says. So we went back and started building.

[23:55] And we see the dependence. Of the faithful here. Is they depend upon God. To sustain them. And to protect them. And to fight for them. And say okay. If you're going to depend upon him.

Then that means you get back to doing. What he called you to do. That's called faith. That God has called us to walk. By faith. Realizing he is indeed in control.

No matter what the enemy is saying. And we see the dependence. That they begin to display here. And we wish it stopped there.

Because the reality is. Is that we wish. That once the enemy began to speak. And kind of try to let doubt creep in. And we said God take care of that. And then we went back to work. We would love for that to be the end.

But the enemy is never that. Complacent. We have. As it tells us in scripture. In one of the letters of Peter.

[24:51] That we have an enemy. Who prowls around. Seeking whom he may devour. That means he's active. God says to Cain.

What. That the enemy was crouching at the door. Jesus tells Peter. That the enemy had asked. To sift him. Over and over again. We are reminded of the active.

Activity of the enemy. Of our souls. The one who resists. The work that God has called us to do. And so we see this. And now we see the third thing.

The discouragement. That we must resist. Because if doubt doesn't get us. Discouragement will. If we can move beyond. The initial doubt. That comes in that I'm not worthy of this.

And then we say okay. Well God's called me to do it. That's his job right. To make me fit is his job. Then if we're not careful. We'll let the second one creep in. And that is discouragement. And discouragement is very very easy.

[25 : 46] Because once we get over doubt. We would appreciate it. If things got easier. But the reality is. Is it usually gets harder. Notice what it says. Because it was Sam Ballad. Who was upset over here. And Sam Ballad was very mad.

And then Sam Ballad had Tobiah. Talking with him too. Tobiah said something about foxes. Jumping on walls. And all this cool stuff. But now. They said well Lord. This is in your hands. And they got back to work. As soon as they get back to work.

Verse 7 says. Now when Sam Ballad. Tobiah. The Arabs. The Ammonites. And the Ashtodites. By the way. This is the first time. The Ashtodites are mentioned. And every time. They begin to be faithful. The enemies begin to increase.

Right. So. These people all heard. That the repair of the walls of Jerusalem. Went on. And the preaches. Began to be closed. Because they were very angry.

And this is where discouragement creeps in. Because that initial resisting of the enemy. Didn't cause him to go away. Really. Really. Just caused him to increase. And it caused a greater number of them to show up.

[26 : 44] And all of them began to conspire together. And to come. And to fight against Jerusalem. And to cause a disturbance in it. And he began to say. This is what we're going to do. We're going to come upon him. But we prayed. Now here it is. Stay with me.

But we prayed to our God. Okay. Great. They heard. They heard that they were conspiring against him. So Nehemiah does what he always does. But we prayed to our God. And because of them. We put up a guard against them day and night.

We say. Okay. Matter's taken care of. But it's not. Keep reading. Right. Because sometimes. Prayer is always important. Sometimes. I mean. Prayer. It needs to be masked with our activity. We don't just say pray and do nothing.

Right. We pray. And they set up a guard. So they had wisdom. Right. They were gentle as doves. Wise as serpents. And we think. Okay. That's it. Now prayer is the ultimate answer. It's pulling the bell in heaven. But sometimes.

God doesn't immediately respond to those prayers. And that's where discouragement creeps in. Because we say. Okay. God. Take care of the enemy. Nehemiah has already said. Lord. Judge them. And rather than seeing an immediate judgment.

[27 : 40] Now we see them increasing. We're going to go back to work. God. You judge them. And rather than judgment. They begin to multiply. And so he's pulling the rope. And he's saying. He's ringing the bell. God. We have a problem down here. And we're going to keep working.

But the enemy just keeps increasing. And now it seems to be a waiting game. And now this is where discouragement comes in. Because it's not happening on the timetable we would like for it to happen.

And thus in Judah it was said. The strength of the burden bearers is failing. Yet there is much rubbish. And we ourselves are unable to rebuild the wall. People keep coming in. The people who live around the enemies come and told them ten times.

If you want discouragement. Let somebody keep coming to you. And saying the same thing over and over again. Ten times they come and say. Hey they're going to come and kill you. Hey they're going to come and kill you. Hey they're going to come. And you're not going to see them.

And they're going to kill you. And you just keep hearing that refrain over. And over. And over. And over again. Pretty soon discouragement creeps in. And you just begin to stop. Because you just want it to quit.

[28 : 41] And all the enemy is trying to do by the way. Is not really get to you. The enemy just wants you to stop doing what it is God's called you to do. That's all he wants. That's all he wants. It's not about you.

It's about the work you're called to do. It's not really. And I don't mean this lightly. And I had to remind myself of this.

The adversary. My enemy doesn't care that much about me. He doesn't. All he's trying to do is stop the work.

God's called us to do. And when I stop. He leaves me alone. When I get discouraged. And throw my hands up. He leaves me alone. When I say forget it.

He leaves me alone. Why? Because it's not about me. It's about the work. And so we see this. Over and over again. To keep hearing this refrain. And Nehemiah is doing what he can.

[29 : 40] But look at what it says. Verse 14. When I saw their fear. That's discouragement. When I saw their fear. Now these people had a mind to work.

We are told. In verse 6. Now the mind. Really. In scripture. The literal reading should be. They had a heart to work. Because in scripture.

The mind is considered to be. The seat of emotions. And really. It's more what we would say. A heart. They had a heart to work. It's not just like intellectually. They said yes. We should do this. No. They had a heart. Passion to do the work.

And now all of a sudden. They become afraid. And that fear. Is on their faces. And he sees that. And I arose. And spoke to the nobles. The officials. And the rest of the people.

Do not be afraid of them. Friend. Guard yourself. Against discouragement. It is easy to say. Forget it.

[30 : 37] It's not worth it. I'm tired of hearing it. And if you just stop. The enemy will leave you alone. But you don't ever want to be in a place. Oh. I pray that God never. Let's me be in a place.

Where the enemy leaves me alone. For that's dangerous. Ground. To be on. It is. Because that means.

I'm not doing. What God has called me to do. Because Jesus says. If they have persecuted me. If they have hated me. They will hate you. And Jesus promised. We would fight battles.

That doesn't mean. We don't have. Reprisals. And seasons of peace. And we praise God. For those. Mountaintop moments. You know. When we're with him. And we see him. In all of his glory. But the mountaintop. Always means. We're going back.

Into a valley somewhere. As long as we're following. We're going back down. And this leads us. To the fourth thing. The dedication. To the task. How do we stay.

[31:31] Dedicated to that task. Whatever it is. God's called us to do. These people in particular. They needed to be dedicated. To the task. Of rebuilding the wall. For this was a spiritual exercise. And Nehemiah says.

Do not be afraid of them. We say. Well how? How can I not be afraid of them? Here's where dedication starts. Remember the Lord. Who is great. And awesome. Love that. Nehemiah doesn't say.

Remember what you're supposed to do. The first thing he calls to mind. Is remember. The Lord. Who is great. And awesome. When discouragement. Creeps in.

And it does. Don't focus on what it is. You're supposed to be doing. Rather focus on. Who it is. That called you to begin with. Spend more time. Contemplating.

Who the Lord God is. Than what he's called you to do. We spend so little time today. Really thinking on. What we call the attributes of God.

[32:25] That God is great. And awesome. And we ought to remember. Who he is. Because that's the. Motivating factor.

That's the commitment. To dedication. Is he is great. And awesome. Taking time. And thinking on. The attributes of God. And fight.

Look at this. And fight for your brothers. Your sons. Your daughters. Your wives. And your houses. He reminds them. Think on who the Lord God is. And also. Think of the consequences.

Of stopping. He doesn't tell them. And I love this. Hey if you stop. Think about what everybody's going to say about you.

Because again. It's not really about us. He says. Don't stop. You need to fight for your brothers. Your sons. Your daughters. Your wives. And your houses. He says. If you stop doing what God called you to do.

[33:23] Other people are going to be impacted. One of the greatest lies the enemy ever tells us. Is that if we stop doing what God calls us to do. Whatever that is. Maybe it's in the workplace.

Or maybe it's. Something in the church. Or maybe it's something in the community. One of the greatest lies the enemy ever tells us. That if we stop. Nobody will be affected. That is so contrary to the rest of scripture.

The people of God are a corporate people. That is. The life of the individual always affects the corporate body. The walls of Jericho fell down.

But Achan took some stuff. The next battle. Thousands of people die. Why? Because Achan took some stuff. We find that happening over and over and over again in scripture.

Paul says that we are like the body being knit and joined together. Each part depending upon the other part. So that every joint and ligament can provide Ephesians 4.

[34:17] And we see this. He says fight. Even if you don't feel like you want to do it. Remember that God is great and awesome. And remember that when you don't. Other people are impacted. It has a lasting effect upon the people around you.

And then he took good practical steps. I love this about Nehemiah. He prayed. But he also did some things. Right? And when enemies heard that it was known to us that God had frustrated their plan.

Then all of us returned to the wall. That is they went back to work. The enemy said well forget it. They know about it. So they didn't just throw a celebration. They just went back to work. All of us returned to the wall. Each one to his work.

But they didn't go back doing it the way they had always done it. Now they go back with a sword on their side. There are people carrying bricks and carrying stones. And they have a sword in one hand or a spear or a shield.

There's a trumpeter station. So they took action. And they were dedicated to do it even in light of the enemy. This is why we are told in the armor of God.

[35 : 18] In the book of Galatians. That we are to put on the full armor of God. Why? Because the enemy is there firing flaming darts at us. We don't stop doing the work. But we also don't run into the work unguarded.

We put on the full armor of God so that we can. What does Paul say? So that we can stand. So that we can do it. We prepare ourselves and say okay. I know that I'm going to have to do this work.

Even while fighting the enemy. But that's okay. Because I've got the tools. And I've got everything I need to fight the enemy while I do the work. I've got people around me.

And if the trumpet sounds. I'll go over there and help that guy fight for a minute. And then I'll come back to my part of the wall. If it gets too much for me. The trumpet will sound over here. And other people will come join me. That's the beauty of the church.

I don't have to fight alone. I may have to fight. But I won't have to fight alone. So I'm going to be dedicated to this. Because I know that if it gets too hard. And the trumpet's blown. Somebody will show up and help fight with me.

[36 : 13] But I'm going to make the same commitment to everybody else around me. And they're dedicated to the work. Why? Not because the enemy's gone. No, because now they are equipped to fight the enemy.

And they are encouraged because the Lord is great and awesome. And that's exactly what Paul tells us when we put on the four armor of God. By the way, the only offensive weapon in the armor of God you know is the sword of the spirit.

Everything else is defensive. Everything else is to absorb the impact of the fiery darts. The only offensive weapon is the sword of the spirit. We know what the sword of the spirit is.

That might have been one of our cats, brother. I don't know what that is. Something's hitting out there. Fireworks. Maybe they're shooting our cats. We've got about four or five cats living under the church.

But we know what the sword of the spirit is. That was brother Glenn. He went to go see. It's okay. If I'd have heard the bang and then somebody had walked in, I wouldn't have kept preaching. I saw it.

[37 : 15] That's also a reason why I asked to leave those foyer doors open so that I could see that door. But anyway, we're told because the sword of the spirit comes out of the mouth of Christ, which is the word of God.

And this is why it's important to be in scripture. Because the sword is the word of God. By the way, in the armor of God, the word sword there, I've said this before, but it's not just like big, long, like long sword where you're going to swing it with two hands.

The word sword that is used, Paul uses very intentional wording. It is the short daggers that the Roman soldiers would have scattered around their body. A Roman soldier would have probably about five or six of them in various places.

And the swords, they were hand-to-hand combat and they were close quarter combat. And what Paul is saying here is you pull out the dagger you need for the moment. So that is when the enemy shows up, you don't just pull out your bow and start hitting him over the head saying, see, I told you, I know.

No, you need to know what sword to pull out. And say, I've got one for that. I've got one for that. I've got one for that. It's the hand-to-hand combat saying the word of God has an answer for that.

[38:17] And I know which one to stick you with when you get that close. We need to be committed to the work that God's called us to do. Sometimes that work is a quote-unquote regular secular job.

Sometimes it is whatever it is he's committed to. Sometimes it's in the home. Sometimes it's with our family. But whatever it is God has called us to do, we need to know that doubts and discouragement arise.

But we need to be dedicated by our dependence upon the Lord God Almighty. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for this night. Thank you for your faithfulness to us.

Thank you for your word, which encourages us and challenges us and moves us. And we pray that we would be people of the word for the glory of the King. Lord, as we prepare to leave here tonight, we ask that you walk with each one of us.

That you help us to walk faithfully before you this week, being used by you as you see fit. For the sake of the kingdom. And Lord, we thank you for your mercy.

[39:16] We thank you for your grace. And we cannot love you enough. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you, guys. Really appreciate your time.