

Uncertainty

"Facing Opposition"

Nehemiah 2: 9-20

Theme: "Pushing on in the midst of discouragement"

This week in our study we will see how Nehemiah pressed on in the face of opposition. We have all experienced opposition and discouragement. Take a few minutes in your group and invite a few to share about how they have been able to push through challenging times?

Read Together

Nehemiah 2:9-20

Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem's Walls

⁹Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. ¹⁰But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel.

¹¹So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days. ¹²Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no animal with me but the one on which I rode. ¹³I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. ¹⁴Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass. ¹⁵Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. ¹⁶And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work.

¹⁷Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision." ¹⁸And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. ¹⁹But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" ²⁰Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim^[a] in Jerusalem."

Some Questions for discussion: (Do only what you have time for in your discussion tonight)

#1 In Sunday's message Mike talked about the various faces of Opposition. These faces always bring with them the potential for major league discouragement. **Discuss the emotions that hit us** when we encounter any of the following listed below? Some of you will be able to share first hand – if you have encountered any of this list.

The three faces of Opposition;

Tragedies

- Natural disaster – flood, fire storm
- War
- Pandemic

Circumstances

- When the unexpected happens
- The report does not come back the way we had hoped – loss of health
- The door remains closed

People

- They don't live up to our expectations of what they should be doing.
- Sometimes they just say nasty things.
- Sometimes they do nasty things.

#2 People often cause us emotional pain in our lives that can be 'crippling.' Discuss what Nehemiah must have went through with Sanballat and Tobiah? Look at verses 10 and 19.

#3 Why do you think Nehemiah didn't share his plans to rebuild Jerusalem with the people around him? "*I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem*" (Vs.12) Is there a lesson that we need to learn from this?

#4 Nehemiah encouraged the people by reminding them of how God had been going before him. When he did this the scriptures says that they strengthened their hands for the good work."(Vs. 17-18) Talk in your group about the importance of encouragement and how you have experienced it or effective things you have done to encourage others. Is there a scripture or promise from God that you have found to be especially encouraging in your faith journey?