

“Watch & Pray!”
Nehemiah 4:1-9

Introduction:

1. Nehemiah Is All About Rebuilding!
 - The Walls Of Jerusalem – The People Of Jerusalem!
 - This Ought To Be The Primary Focus Of Any Work For The Lord!
2. When God Does Start To Work – From The Very Beginning To The Very End – There Is Opposition & Resistance!
 - And At Times, It Is Very Difficult To Get The Work Of The Lord Done!
 - Just Like Any Building Or Remodeling Project, Things Come Up That Can Delay Or Even Destroy What Has Already Been Done! **IE:** Shows On Remodeling & Re-selling Homes! More Problems! More Time! More Money!
 - How Can The Work Of The Lord Get Done?
 - With All Of The Problems Facing It!
 - Both Inside & Out?
3. The Lord Teaches Us Throughout The Bible What To Do:
 - “Watch And Pray!”
 - Our Lord Anticipates The Difficulty We Will Face In Serving Him, And Tells Us In Ephesians 6:10-18 To: “Finally!”
 - “Watch And Pray!” This Is How The Work Of The Lord Gets Done!
 - Nehemiah Understood This As Well! Read Nehemiah 4:9!
 - “Watch And Pray!” This Is How The Work Of The Lord Gets Done!
 - No Work Of The Lord Will Succeed Without **Prayer!**
 - “Unto Our God!”
 - We Need To Pray!
 - Also, No Work Of The Lord Will Succeed Without **Watching!**
 - To Set Up A Post To Observe & Keep An Eye On The Enemy! **IE:** The Recent Commission Of The 10th & Last Nimitz Class Nuclear-Powered Aircraft Carrier: USS George H. W. Bush - Before Any Of The Crew Went On Board, The First “Watch” Was Set - And As The Former President Said: “As someone who has stood that watch and remembers the quiet solitude of that experience, I know you will find comfort and inspiration, particularly in the night sky – For it is in basking in the splendor of the stars that you will truly understand the majesty of creation and bear witness to the certain hand of God.”
4. We Need To “Watch & Pray – This Is How The Work Of The Lord Gets Done!

1. *How Can We Prepare For The Work Of The Lord?*

- “Watch & Pray!”
- 4:1-3 - “But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. / 2 And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? / 3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall!”
 - There Will Be Obstacles & Opposition To The Work Of The Lord – When He Begins To Rebuild!
- There Is **Real Danger** In The Work Of The Lord! (4:1)
 - Look At The Mood Of Nehemiah’s Enemy, Sanballat!
 - He Was An Angry & An Unstable Man! He Had Issues!
 - **IE:** A Fuse In His Heart Was Lit Till It Exploded!
 - How Can We Prepare For The Real Danger That We Will Face In The Work Of The Lord?
 - “Watch & Pray!”
- There Is **Real Dislike** In The Work Of The Lord! (4:2)
 - Look At The Motives Of Nehemiah’s Enemy!
 - Why Was Sanballat So Angry?

- Asks 5 Questions To His Comrades To Get Them As Angry As He Was! Reveals The Real Reason For His Anger!
- It Was All About Him!
 - About His Pride! “Feeble” - Withered!
 - About His Power!
 - About His Passions! “Will They Sacrifice?”
 - Real Reason! Not A Political Battle – But A Religious & A Spiritual Battle!
- How Can We Prepare For The Real Dislike That We Will Face In The Work Of The Lord?
 - “Watch & Pray!”
- There Is **Real Discouragement** In The Work Of The Lord!
 - Look At The Mocking Of Nehemiah’s Enemy! (4:3)
 - Even A Fox – Not Known For Size Or Strength – More For Speed, Stealth & Solitude!
 - Still Can Be Quite Discouraging!
 - How Can We Prepare For The Real Discouragement That We Will Face In The Work Of The Lord?
 - “Watch & Pray!”
- So: “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak!” (Mark 14:38)

2. **How Can We Perform In The Work Of The Lord?**

- “Watch & Pray!”
- 4:4-5 - “Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: / And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders!”
 - When Facing Great Obstacles & Opposition, Nehemiah Turned To The Lord In Prayer **First!**
 - Nehemiah Knew That They Needed God! So He Prayed!
- **Prayer For Compassion!** “Hear, O Our God!”
 - Nehemiah’s Instinct / Impulse Was To Pray! He Needed God! He Needed Grace!
 - Sanballat’s Instinct / Impulse Was To Get Angry! Shows What Is Inside A Man!
 - Hear Our Enemies! Hear Our Prayer!
- **Prayer For Comfort!** “For We Are Despised!”
 - God’s Project / God’s People / God Himself Was Hated!
- **Prayer For Collapse!** “Turn Their Reproach!”
 - Considered An Imprecatory Prayer – To Ask God To Judge His Own Enemies! Used Throughout Scripture – Is This Still Valid Today?
 - Nehemiah Wanted Them To Fail! And Asked God For This!
 - To Use Anything In His Vast Arsenal!
- Through **Correction!** “Give Them For A Prey!”
 - For Punishment – So That These Enemies Would No Longer Be Able To Discourage The People Or Destroy The Project!
- Through **Consequences!** “Cover Not Their Iniquity!”
 - Don’t Let Them Get Away With This!
 - For Consequences, Not Concealment! – Set Them As An Example, So Others Will Not Follow In Their Steps!
- Through **Conviction!** “Let Not Their Sin Be Blotted Out!”
 - What Sanballat & The Others Did Was A Serious Offense To God Himself!
 - *This Was No Light Matter – So This Was No Light Prayer!*
- Nehemiah’s Prayer Was That God Would Be The Just Judge!
 - On Behalf Of His People!
 - Because He Needed God!
- We Need God!
 - We Must “Watch & Pray!”
- So: “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving!” (Colossians 4:2)

3. **How Can We Prosper In The Work Of The Lord?**

- “Watch & Pray!”
- 4:6 - “So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work!”
 - See *What Happens* When We Watch & Pray!
 - God Answers The Prayers Of His People!
- A **Greater Dedication** By God’s People!
 - “So Built We The Wall!”
 - They Never Stopped “Watching & Praying!”
 - Because They Never Stopped Needing God!
 - Through His Providence / His Power / His Provision / Our Prayer – “Built We The Wall!”
 - Because They “Watched & Prayed!”
- A **Greater Defense** For God’s People!
 - “Wall Was Joined Together!”
 - There Was Now A Wall!
 - All The Way Around!
 - Half Way Up!
 - Now The Wall Could Protect – To Some Degree!
 - Now The Wall Could Provide What They Needed For Further Progress!
 - Because They “Watched & Prayed!”
- A **Greater Determination** Of God’s People!
 - “The People Had A Mind To Work!”
 - That Came As An Answer To Their Prayer: “Hear, O Our God!”
 - The Idea Came From The Lord! (2:12 - “What My God Had Put In My Heart!”)
 - The Inspiration Came From The Lord! (Philippians 2:13 - “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure!”)
 - They Had This “Mind To Work” – Because They “Watched & Prayed!”
- So: “Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is!” (Mark 13:33)

4. **How Can We Persist In The Work Of The Lord?**

- “Watch & Pray!”
- 4:7-8 - “But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, / 8 And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it!”
 - The Resistance Continues! So Must The Work!
- When The Resistance **Overwhelms** You!
 - “Watch & Pray!”
 - Overwhelming! (4:7a)
 - The Enemies Are Back Together – We’ve Already Met Some Of Them – But Look – Another One Is Added!
 - Now, They Are Really Surrounded!
 - North / East / South / West!
 - Psalm 61:2 - “From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I!”
 - “Watch & Pray!”
- When The Resistance **Overburdens** You!
 - Watch & Pray!”
 - Overburden! (4:7b)
 - “Very Wroth!”
 - **IE:** Now A Bunch Of Fuses Were Lit! Sanballat Was Probably Even More Angry Than He Had Been!
 - Now, Their Anger Would Turn Into Action!
 - “Watch & Pray!”
- When The Resistance **Overtakes** You!

- Watch & Pray!
- Overtakes! (4:8)
- “Conspire” – To Join Together For A Common Cause!
 - All Of These Different Groups Put Their Other Disagreements Aside – To Pursue After A Common Goal – To Destroy A Common Enemy!
 - The Lord & His People!
- They Needed To Continue To “Watch & Pray!”
- So, We Need To Be: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints!” (Ephesians 6:18)

Conclusion:

1. Nehemiah Understood How The Work Of The Lord Got Done!
 - He Knew How To Prepare For The Work / Perform In The Work / Prosper In The Work / Persist In The Work!
 - 4:9 - “Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them!”
 - They “Watched & Prayed!” / And “Prayed & Watched!”
2. We Need To “Watch & Pray” In The Lord’s Work As Well!
 - *Jesus Christ Has Paved The Way For Us To Pray!*
 - Prayer Is Offensive!
 - Watching Is Defensive!
 - Nehemiah Used Both – We Need Both!
 - Cannot Succeed With One & Not The Other!
 - *“Prayer Without Watchfulness Is Hypocrisy; Watchfulness Without Prayer Is Presumption!” (J. M. Randall – PHC)*
3. This Is How The Work Of The Lord Gets Done!
 - “Watch & Pray!”
 - This Is The Mortar That Holds All Of The Individual Bricks Together!
 - So: “Watch & Pray & Work!”

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