**Studies In Nehemiah 5**

“I Am Doing A Great Work”

Neh. 6

Introduction:

1. Have you ever been working hard to complete a project only to be distracted by the demands of others?

2. Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem are busy rebuilding the city walls.

3. Their project is nearing completion.

4. Their enemies intensify their efforts to thwart their accomplishment.

5. They focus their efforts on Nehemiah himself. If they can redirect or destroy his energy the rebuilding of Jerusalem will fail.

6. Nehemiah 6 describes what they did and how he responded.

Discussion:

I. They attempted to enlist his trust and when this did not work they lied about him (6:1-9).

 A. Already their enemies had threatened the work with open violence (see chap. 4).

 B. Their plot now involved secret snares.

 1. If they could play on Nehemiah’s willingness to trust them they could kill him.

 2. They invited him to meet them in the plain of Ono.

 a. Naiveté before an enemy results in destruction.

 b. Gedaliah had been appointed by the king of Babylon as governor over Judah.

 The king of Ammon plotted his assassination. Johanan warned him about the

 plot, but Gedaliah would not believe him. Gedaliah, was eating with Ishmael,

 when he arose with ten others hired by the enemy and killed him with the sword

 (Jer. 40:13-41:3).

 c. Be careful when the enemies of God invite you into relationship with them.

 d. Nehemiah said, “Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to

 you?”

 C. There are many things that would distract you from the work of God. Do not

 compromise with the enemy.

 1. Wealth (Matt. 19:21-24; Deut. 6:10ff).

 2. Relationships (Matt. 19:29; Deut. 7:3-6).

 D. Nehemiah’s enemies were persistent. They sent messengers to him 4 times with this

 invitation. Persistent invitations may cause us to question our original decision and

 our direction. “Well, maybe I need to rethink it.” You cannot trust the enemies of God

 and accomplish God’s purpose.

 E. They came back to Nehemiah a 5th time. This time they accused him of rebellion

 against the king (5-7). They wanted him to come and talk with them about the

 situation.

 1. Be careful. Your enemies will draw you into a fight to defend yourself.

 2. They will accuse you falsely and invite you to explain.

 3. They will strike you on the cheek and you will feel like fighting. It is a trap.

 4. Nehemiah said, “You are inventing these things in your own mind.”

 5. “They were trying to frighten us thinking they could discourage the work.”

 6. Fear is a powerful thing! If God’s enemies are able to use it to frighten us it has

 the potential to stop our work for the Lord. Many of us allow fear to hamper our

 work for the Lord.

 F. Nehemiah prayed, “O God, strengthen my hands.” Cf. Acts 4:23ff. In the face of

 fear are you praying, “O God, strengthen my hands?”

II. False prophets were hired by Tobiah and Sanballat to incite fear within Nehemiah (6:10-14).

 A. Shemaiah was one of these prophets.

 1. The text says, “He was confined at home.” It is unclear as to why he was so

 confined. It may have been that it was a voluntary confinement designed to add to

 his communication that Nehemiah should seek refuge (or confine himself) in the

 temple of God.

 2. His message was, “They are coming to kill you, and they are coming at night (this

 night?).”

 3. Nehemiah determined that God had not sent him. They wanted to be able to give an

 evil report about him. Nehemiah was a man who trusted in God. “The good hand of

 my God was on me” (2:8). “The hand of my God was favorable to me” (2:18).

 B. This man was not alone in trying to frighten Nehemiah.

 1. Noadiah the prophetess was involved.

 2. The “rest of the prophets.”

 3. The combination of multiple individuals would seem to add credibility to the false

 prophecy. Oh how we are tempted to follow the voice of the majority. “Do not be

 conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you

 may prove what the will of God is” (Rom. 12:2).

 C. If we are naive and allow the influence of lies to make us afraid the work of God will be

 stalled. The work of God calls for courage. It calls for faith in God. It is revealed in

 prayer. Nehemiah prayed, “Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to

 those works of theirs, and also Noadiah, the prophetess and the rest of the prophets

 who were trying to frighten me (6:14).”

 1. Do you really believe that the work you are doing is the work of God? Your discipline

 of your personal life? Your work in your family? Your work in the body of Christ?

 Your labor to evangelize the lost? If it is God’s work does He want fear to stop it?

 2. Nehemiah trusted in the Lord and you must! It is a matter of faith!

III. The results are evident in 6:15-19. Nehemiah’s conclusion was “We accomplished the work with the help of our God.”

 A. The wall was completed.

 B. The enemies lost their confidence when they recognized that the work was

 accomplished with the help of our God.

 C. Nehemiah makes another observation in closing: “Many letters were going back and

 forth between the nobles in Judah and Tobiah.” He had married into a prominent

 family of Judah. He was the son-in-law of Shecaniah. In addition his son was married

 to the daughter of Meshullam. So there were two marital connections between the

 family of Tobiah and some prominent families in Judah. These connections formed a

 conduit for the transfer of information to Nehemiah and to Tobiah.

 1. Do not underestimate the force of relationships.

 2. Division among the Lord’s people may be over this issue or that on the surface, but

 divisions occur along relationship lines. When all is said and done are you loyal to

 the Lord or to your family???

Conclusion:

1. Nieveté, lies, relationships **and fear** can inhibit the Lord’s work.

2. Faith in God, and courage that shows itself in prayer build the walls of the city of God.