

Standing Firm When You Feel Like Quitting Nehemiah 4

Introduction:

1. Have you ever wondered how many people quit something right before they were about to achieve greatness? **Illustration:** Abraham Lincoln's failures
2. Here in our text, Nehemiah is leading a group of people to restore and rebuild the broken down walls and gates of Jerusalem. The city of God was a disgrace to God and this group of believers decided to do something about it.
3. But they had enemies (vs. 1). These enemies tried everything in an effort to keep this group from completing their work for the Lord: ridicule, reproach, intimidation, violence.
4. Despite times of discouragement and physical weariness, this group did not quit. They stood firm and continued to abound in the work of the Lord.
5. What is our mission today? What are we endeavoring to accomplish?
Colossians 1:28 - reach and teach people. Opposition is inevitable. Satan will not give us a free pass. As we seek to proclaim the gospel, Satan attempts to blind people.
2 Corinthians 4:4
6. All of you are vital to Crossroads. You are part of this team. Paul has admonished us in **1 Corinthians 15:58** that we must stand firm and keep abounding in the work of the Lord.
7. But how do you stand firm when discouragement comes and opposition seems to come from every side? How do you stand firm when you feel like quitting? Let's look in our text and see how Nehemiah and this courageous group did it.

First, by trusting God completely in every situation.

1. This chapter lists one difficulty after another. This man, Sanballat, gets his fellow Samaritans worked up in verse 2 and Tobiah casts doubt on the entire project. vs. 3
2. How do Nehemiah and this group respond? They immediately resort to God in prayer. vs. 4-5
 - This is not a prayer that believers under grace would pray today. They were praying under the Old Testament law system.
 - But nevertheless, here is what we learn: when opposition came, they were able to stand firm because their complete trust was in God. They prayed and got right back to work. vs. 6
3. Here comes the enemy again in verses 7-8. What did this group of believers do? Verse 9 - "...we made our prayer unto our God." They realized that God was their protector and provider. They stood firm because they trusted God completely in every situation.
4. As the enemy plotted, God revealed their plot. I like what Nehemiah says to his fellow laborers in verses 14-15. They got right back to work.
5. We see their trust again in verse 20 - "...our God shall fight for us." What was the effect that their trust in God had on their lives? "*So we labored in the work.*"

6. Christian, as you labor in God's work, do not be so naïve as to think that Satan will give you a free pass. Opposition and times of discouragement are bound to come. How will you respond?
 - Will you allow it to swallow you up in fear?
 - Or will you choose to trust your God completely?
7. Do you believe that God is trustworthy? **2 Timothy 1:7-8** is a great passage to commit to memory. cf. **2 Corinthians 9:8; Galatians 6:9**

Second, by actively confronting that which would hinder you.

1. Nehemiah did not pray and then bury his head in the sand. When Nehemiah discovered that an attack could be imminent, notice what he does in verse 9.
 - He prays, but then sets a watch against them day and night. He sets up a 24-hour guard and lookout.
2. The stress of all of this, coupled with the physical demands of the job, were beginning to take their toll. vs. 10
3. Again, Nehemiah responds with complete trust in God (vs. 14-15), but also confronts the problem head on in a practical way (vs. 16-18). They have a weapon in one hand and a building tool in the other. Imagine building Walk Through Bethlehem this way!
4. The question was asked, "What if the enemy strikes and we are all working so far apart on the wall (vs. 19)?" Again, Nehemiah responds with complete trust in God, but also implements a practical solution. vs. 20
5. Here is the point: if Satan brings something in your life to discourage you in God's work, you need to pray and trust God completely, but that doesn't mean that you respond passively to the problem.
 - Peter said we need to be sober and vigilant in regards to our enemy. **1 Peter 5:8**
 - Paul said that we should not give place to the devil (**Ephesians 4:27**), but put on the whole armor of God and stand against his wiles. **Ephesians 6:11**
6. If Satan has brought a hindrance into your life, you must pray and depend on God, but then confront it head on. If not, instead of standing firm, Satan can knock the props right out from under you.
 - Maybe it means sitting down with somebody who has hurt you or sitting down with the leader in your ministry and expressing your concerns, or getting some counsel from a godly believer, or seeking help for that addiction, etc.

Third, by remaining a team player even through difficulties.

1. Were there difficulties? Were there times of discouragement? Were there problems to work through? The answer is "yes" to all of these questions, yet we do not see anybody bailing ship on Nehemiah. vs. 21-22
2. I love the team work I see displayed throughout all the various problems. They all stood firm together and kept abounding in the work of the Lord.
3. As we learned last week, the church is a body of believers who are united by their faith in Jesus Christ. There is no room for personal agendas, a preoccupation with ourselves, or a spirit of pride and arrogance.
4. If we are going to stand firm and abound in God's work, there has to be a willingness to sacrifice for the team. vs. 21, 23

- We can't bail ship when things get tough. We can't worry about who is working harder or who has the tougher job or who gets the praise. We labor unto the Lord! **Colossians 3:23-24**
5. As we labor with other members of the team, we are all doing it for God's glory, not individual accolades. **1 Corinthians 10:31, 33**

In Conclusion:

1. Let's all read **1 Corinthians 15:58** again.
2. Do you know why we can stand firm and abound in God's work? The verse before this declares, "*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"
3. We have the victorious One living inside of us. He has defeated sin, death, hell, the grave, and Satan. As we depend on Him and trust Him, His victory becomes our daily experience.
4. We can stand firm and continue abounding in God's work, even through adverse circumstances.