



The Time is Now
19th February 2017
'Opposition'



Overview

Nehemiah wept over the state of Jerusalem and found favour with the King. He was allowed to go and rebuild the city of David! After they started to rebuild the wall, the Jews faced active opposition and the long hours and constant attacks started wearing them down.



Getting to Know You

Think of a time when you've personally faced opposition.

What was the most difficult part of it?

How did you deal with it?

Looking back, is there any way you think you could have handled it differently?



Digging Deeper

1) What were the challenges of God's people?

Read Nehemiah 4:1-3, 7-8, 10-12

- What external opposition found in these passages can you relate to in your own life?
- What purpose, do you think, is there in facing spiritual opposition?
- Steve spoke about the power of negative words and thinking on our emotions - Why do you think is it easier for us to hold on to the negative components rather than the positive?
- What are the ways that society opposes the Church in NZ? How do our responses help or hinder?
- *Historian Will Durant observed, "Rome remained great as long as she had enemies who forced her to unity, vision and heroism. When she had overcome all her enemies, she flourished for a moment and then began to die" (cited in "Bits & Pieces," 9/87). Opposition kept Rome strong.*
 - a. Do you think this is an accurate statement?
 - b. How does this apply to the church today?

2) What are effective ways to respond to opposition?

Read Nehemiah 4:4-6, 9, 13-23

Nehemiah employed Prayer, Unity, and Sacrifice to respond to the opposition the builders faced.

- What made Nehemiah respond with such faith?
- How can we apply these strategies to our own lives, today?
- How can we as a church apply these strategies?



Taking it home

Stay alert!

Neh. 4:23 explains how the Jews stayed alert – they knew that they could be attacked at any moment, so they were always prepared by staying dressed and armed at all times.

In the same way, Peter encourages us to live prepared - expecting an attack at any moment:

8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. 9 Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers[a] all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

1 Peter 5:8-9

Satan is constantly looking for ways to make the church less effective and unfortunately there is a risk of becoming spiritually sluggish when we are comfortable.

- a. How do we guard against being caught off guard – individually and together?
- b. If Christ has already won the victory over evil, why do we still need to deal with it?



Prayer

Some of the challenges of today's church are the things that our children and young adults are expected to navigate - bullying, self-harm, pressures of social media, pornography, and the pressure of having to look or behave a certain way to avoid ridicule.

They are in a constant battle, struggling to do the right thing in the midst of these very real pressures.

Spend some time praying for the leaders of today and tomorrow and those who are helping to guide them.