

Working Together

Scripture Text: Neh. 4:6

Illustration: WORKING TOGETHER

Two boys were riding a bicycle built for two and they came to a big steep hill. It took a great deal of struggle for the boys to complete what proved to be a very stiff climb. When they got to the top the boy in front turned to the other and said, "Man, that sure was a hard climb." The boy in back replied, "Yes, and if I hadn't kept the brakes on all the way we would certainly have rolled down backwards."

1. I wonder how many of us have the brakes on with God?
2. I wonder how many of us are working against one another?

There are many things that keeps us from working together as we should, but what ever they are – they need to be resolved and/or worked through

1. The Jews in Nehemiah's day had many reasons to work against one another, but instead – they "had a mind to work"(Nehemiah 4:6)
2. Let us consider Nehemiah chapter 4 and noticed how they:
 - a. Worked despite opposition
 - b. Worked by prayer and watchfulness
 - c. Had a mind to work
 - d. Overcame discouragement in their work
 - e. Were armed and ready workers

A. The Opposition of:

1. Mockery
 - a. Nehemiah 4:1-3
 - b. Mockery of God's people has always been a problem, notice a couple of examples:
 - 1) 2 Kings 2:23-25 ... the prophet didn't take to kindly to this mockery
 - 2) Psalm 69:10-11 ... David was mocked because of his acts of humility
 - c. Sanballat and Tobiah mocked the Jews efforts by saying:
 - 1) "What are these feeble Jews?" – a personal attack, it is as though they are saying, "Poor silly people"
 - 2) "Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish?" – making fun of their desire to rebuild

3) “If a fox go up, he shall break it down” – making fun of their work – sorry work

d. We will be mocked today – made fun of or scoffed at because of our Christianity

1) This will especially be true among our young people

2) This, though, must not keep us from doing the work of the Lord

2. Conspiracy

a. Nehemiah 4:7-8

b. We have here a conspiracy which the Jews’ enemies formed against them, to stop the building by slaying the builders.

1) The conspirators were not only Sanballat and Tobiah, but other neighboring people whom they had drawn into the plot.

2) All this was done merely out of envy and malice

c. Observe

1) How unanimous they were: “They conspired all of them together,” (v. 8) though of different interests among themselves, yet one in their opposition to the work

2) How sneaky they were. Notice verse 11a. Thus they took crafty counsel, and dug deep to hide their plan.

3) How cruel they were: Again, notice verse 11b. We will come and slay them. If nothing less than the murder of the workmen will put a stop to the work, they will not stop at that.

d. Some people will stop at nothing to prevent God’s cause from moving forward and accomplishing great things

e. Many will have the attitude, “I don’t need all of this. I’ll just keep my mouth shut and do nothing.”

B. Watch and Pray

1. Nehemiah 4:4-5, 9

2. Prayer is essential in over coming opposition – we must rely on God’s help. The Bible is replete with passages discussing our need for prayer

a. 1 Samuel 12:23 ... it is a sin not to pray when we should

b. Luke 18:1

c. Philippians 4:6

3. Faithful men and women of God had always been great in their prayer life

4. But notice that they “watched and prayed” – we have to do our part ... the farmers pray at the end of hoe

a. Luke 21:36

b. Matthew 26:41

c. Colossians 4:2

5. If we are going to be successful in the Lord's word we must watch and pray

C. A Mind to Work

1. Nehemiah 4:6

2. The Jews were successful in their work for the Lord because they had a “want to” – they had their heart into it

3. We have to be a motivated people

4. Ecclesiastes 9:10

5. 1 John 3:18 ... actions speak louder than words

6. 1 Peter 1:13 ... minds prepared for action

D. Discouragement and Encouragement

1. Nehemiah 4:10-14

2. It is only human nature for us to be discouraged from time to time – especially in the face of opposition

3. Nehemiah was there to pick them up when they were down

a. Job 16:4-5 ... encourage rather than criticize

b. 1 Corinthians 16:17-18

c. Hebrews 10:24

4. Encouragement is a must in doing the work of the Lord

E. Armed and Ready Workers

1. Nehemiah 4:15-23

2. They worked and fought ... trowel in one hand a sword in the other (v. 17)

a. If there is no fighting, contending for the faith, the work is hindered

b. On the other hand, if all we do is fight, then no work will be accomplished

3. We must work ... Ephesians 4:11-16

4. We must also fight ...

a. Jude 3

b. 1 Timothy 6:12

A. If we want to be successful in working for the Lord we must remember:

1. The importance of working despite opposition
2. To work with prayer and watchfulness
3. To have a mind to work
4. To be ready to encourage
5. To be armed ready for work and battle

B. Invitation

G.E. Watkins sermon
2021 Justin D. Reed
P. O. Box 292 · Woodbury TN 37190
thejustinreedshow.com/bibleresources

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