

Summary

This sermon from Nehemiah 6:1-16 examines how Christians should handle enemies and opposition. Pastor Paul uses Nehemiah's example to show that enemies employ three main tactics: distraction, discrediting, and deception. Nehemiah faced multiple enemies who tried to pull him away from completing the wall around Jerusalem through false invitations, public accusations, and even deceptive advice from a supposed friend. The sermon emphasizes that Christians should neither throw punches nor run in fear when facing opposition, but instead check their emotions and motives while keeping their eyes fixed on Jesus Christ as the ultimate King.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today to study Your Word, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be receptive to Your truth and to apply it to our lives. We know that we all face opposition and challenges, and we need Your wisdom to navigate them well. Prepare our hearts to learn from Nehemiah's example and to grow in our faith. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one childhood memory you have of standing up to someone or something that was bothering you or a friend?

Key Verses

1. Nehemiah 6:1-16
2. Psalm 1:1-3
3. Matthew 10:28
4. 1 Corinthians 15:55
5. Hebrews 12:1-3

Questions

1. What are the three main tactics that enemies use according to this passage, and how do you see these playing out in modern life?
2. Nehemiah refused to meet with his enemies on the plain of Ono, saying he was doing 'a great work.' How do you determine what deserves your time and attention when facing distractions?
3. When Sanballat sent an 'unsealed letter' to publicly discredit Nehemiah, how did Nehemiah respond? What can we learn from his approach?

4. The sermon mentions that rumors are 'created by the bitter, spread by the thoughtless, and believed by the uninformed.' How can we avoid falling into any of these categories?
5. Nehemiah recognized that Shemaiah was trying to deceive him into sinning by hiding in the temple. How can we discern when someone's advice conflicts with God's will?
6. The pastor emphasized the importance of 'checking your emotions' when facing opposition. What practical steps can help us maintain emotional stability during conflict?
7. Fear was identified as a primary weapon enemies use against us. What fears do you struggle with, and how does knowing Jesus as King help address those fears?
8. The passage ends with the enemies becoming afraid when they realized God was behind the work. How does remembering God's sovereignty change how we face opposition?

Life Application

This week, identify one area where you feel distracted, discredited, or deceived by opposition in your life. Practice 'checking your emotions' by taking time to pray before responding to any challenging situation. When faced with criticism or conflict, ask yourself: 'What is the great work God has called me to do?' and stay focused on that purpose rather than getting pulled into unnecessary battles.

Key Takeaways

1. Enemies use three main tactics: distraction, discrediting, and deception - the same strategies used since biblical times
2. Christians should neither throw punches nor run in fear when facing opposition, but respond with wisdom and steadiness
3. Checking our emotions and motives is crucial when dealing with conflict - unchecked emotions blur our vision for God's will
4. Fear is a poor motivator that weakens our hands for the work God has called us to do
5. Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus as the true King gives us confidence and causes our enemies to ultimately fear God's power

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the example of Nehemiah and how he handled his enemies with wisdom and faith. Help us to remember that when we face opposition, we are not fighting alone - You are with us. Give us the strength to stay focused on the work You have called us to do, and help us to respond to our enemies with grace rather than fear or anger. When people try to distract, discredit, or deceive us, remind us to check our emotions and motives, and to keep our eyes fixed firmly on You. May we walk in the confidence that comes from knowing You are our King and that You are working all things together for our good. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.