

Nehemiah 4

Week 1 - When God Gives You a Burden

Week 2 - When the Impossible Becomes a Challenge

Week 3 - When the Enemy Tries to Stop a Move of God

Today: When Opposition Arises From Within

The Way God Works Through Us

- Shows us a Need.
- Gives us a Burden
- Imparts a Vision
- Builds a Team
- Puts Us to Work.

Burden + Vision requires TeamWork

In order to accomplish something great for God, we must overcome the natural dysfunctions of the flesh.

Review how the wall was built:

- Nehemiah saw the need
- Got a burden
- Saw a Vision
- Built a Team
- Got to work

Opposition arose from the Jehovah hating enemies! They faced down their enemies and refused to come down from the wall. The real threat is found in Chapter 5 which was the opposition from within.

*Nehemiah 5:1-13 NLT About this time some of the men and their wives raised a cry of protest against their fellow Jews. **2** They were saying, "We have such large families. We need more food to survive." **3** Others said, "We have mortgaged our fields, vineyards, and homes to get food during the famine." **4** And others said, "We have had to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay our taxes. **5** We belong to the same family as those who are wealthy, and our children are just like theirs. Yet we must sell our children into slavery (indentured servants) just to get enough money to live. We have already sold some of our daughters, and we are helpless to do anything about it, for our fields and vineyards are already mortgaged to others." **6** When I heard their complaints, **I was very angry.***

- **An indentured servant** is a person who agrees to work for another person for a set period of time in exchange for something.
 - In this case it was to payoff a debt. Once the debt was paid, the servant was free to go.
 - Because of the high interest, their creditors were taking their sons and daughters to work on their huge farms.
- **Here is the Problem:** the **wall work** and **external threat** put a huge strain on the economic substructure of the community. The finishing of the wall would have been sometime around August–September. This would have been near the end of the harvest, and many of the people would typically borrow money to plant their crops and then after harvest they would repay the loans.
 - According to **4:22**, Nehemiah had asked the workers to stay in Jerusalem and not return to their villages and their fields. This caused a shortage of workers for the harvest.
 - In short, the economic situation was more critical because the completion of the wall was necessary to fulfill both the word and the will of God.

- In the midst of the building, however, **powerful rich became a threat** as the “nobles and officials” (v. 7) began to oppress the people in a variety of ways.

*7 After thinking it over, I spoke out against these nobles and officials. I told them, “**You are hurting your own relatives by charging interest when they borrow money!**” Then I called a public meeting to deal with the problem. 8 At the meeting I said to them, “We are doing all we can to **redeem our Jewish relatives** who have had to sell themselves to pagan foreigners, but **you are selling them back** into slavery again. How often must we redeem them?” And they had nothing to say in their defense.*

*9 Then I pressed further, “What you are doing is **not right!** Should you not walk in the **fear of our God** in order to avoid being mocked by enemy nations? 10 I myself, as well as my brothers and my workers, have been lending the people money and grain, but now let us stop this business of charging interest. 11 You must restore their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and homes to them this very day. And repay the interest you charged when you lent them money, grain, new wine, and olive oil.” 12 They replied, “We will give back everything and demand nothing more from the people. We will do as you say.” Then I called the priests and made the nobles and officials swear to do what they had promised. 13 I shook out the folds of my robe and said, “If you fail to keep your promise, may God shake you like this from your homes and from your property!” The whole assembly responded, “Amen,” and they praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.*

1) Exposed their Disunity

The signs of disunity were there early. 3:5 NIV The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.

2) Exposed their Greed (v.7-9)

Mt 23:4 ESV They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

3) Exposed their Absence of Fear toward God.

*v.9 Then I pressed further, “What you are **doing is not right!** Should you not walk in the fear of our God in order to avoid **being mocked** by enemy nations?”*

*Galatians 5:13b-15 NIV “... serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or **you will be destroyed by each other.**”*

The church community should be a sanctuary not a war zone!

To Do Something Great for God (for CL)

1) We must Remember We are Family.

2) We must Remember We have a Vision.

- CL Vision
 - Win the Lost
 - Make Disciples
 - Raise Up the Next Generation of Leaders

3) We must Remember People Need the Lord.

I like what Nehemiah said in chapter 5, ***“We are doing everything we can redeem our people who are enslaved to pagan gods in foreign lands”***

VISION

SECOND CAMPUS

30 years ago

- 30 years ago God **showed me a need** in Murfreesboro TN.
- When Kerri and I drove around the town God gave me a **Burden for our City**.
- **That Burden turned into a Vision** to:
 - Win the Lost
 - Make Disciples
 - Raise Up a Generation of Leaders
- I didn't have **much of a team**, but I had a wife! And we had 3 kids... our 4th was born here.
- After a difficult trip to India this last January, I found myself compelled to press into prayer about our future. Frankly the trip wore me out, I struggled with some sickness and I asked the Lord what does He want from me.

Should I slow down? Take it easy? And the Lord took me **back to the my burden from 30 years ago**.

The Burden of winning our City. When God gives you a Burden... what do you do?

Our city has grown a lot in 30 years, we have grown and many other churches have grown too. But the pace of the population growth in our city has outgrown the Kingdom of God. **Because of that, I have a holy dissatisfaction about the our present condition.**

I'm happy, but not satisfied.

I'm thankful, but I want to see God do more.

Now, as you can tell this year our church has been a year of growth.

The question is what are we going to do?

- Multiple services? Sure we can add another service,
- Expanded parking? So costly;
- Build a bigger building on this site? Very costly...

The city has expanded, and God has spoken that we must expand too!

Because of the Burden God gave me 30 years ago we are going to Expand too.

God has given us a vision to expand to a SECOND CAMPUS!

- **When:** 2026
- **Where** North Part of the City
- **Who:** (1)Landon and Tarah will become Campus Pastors (2) Launch Team

Landon said it well when sharing the vision with our staff:

We are excited to multiply our efforts to win the lost, make disciples, and raise up the next generation of leaders... excited to make space for more leaders to step into their ministry calling and reach our city for Jesus. We are thankful to be a part of it.

We can do this Together!

We must remember:

- **We are family.**
- **We have a vision.**
- **People need the Lord!**