

# Nehemiah 6:1-19

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'm very thankful for being here today. If you were not aware, Sam and I went on a family vacation this past week and we were not here last Sunday. I want to say thank you to Kyle for filling in for me, preaching in Nehemiah.

I was hoping to come back to you refreshed and rested. I'm exhausted and I brought a cold with me. I'm actually going to have a seat today so I don't fall over. I'm a little bit medicated. But I really wanted to be here today and continue our work through the book of Nehemiah. We have thus far seen, beginning in chapter 1, Nehemiah is the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. They are wintering in Susa, quite a bit of a journey from Israel. But he receives word from his brother that the wall is still in shambles. This is following Babylonian exile. If you haven't been with us, Babylon as a judgment on Israel has come, has conquered, has torn down the wall, has made Israel itself, Jerusalem a shambles, and has carried away the people of God.

[ 1 : 09 ] They have now in a couple of movements, as God promised, been returning to Jerusalem. And at this time, this is some 90 years after the first exiles return.

And here we see the hand, the power, the world power has changed. And now it's Persia that's in control. And that's where we find Nehemiah still exiled, serving as the cupbearer to the king. And he hears that the wall has yet to be rebuilt. I want to remind you that the reason this troubles him, you'll see in chapter 1 that he weeps and he mourns for days, is not because he has a particular care for the wall, that it's a special wall to him by any means, but that the nature of what's happening with Israel, the condition of God's people, was the display of who God was. So the fact that Israel's in shambles meant that the view of God was not as high as it ought to be. And this is why it grieves him so.

So we see him pray to God for months before he approaches the king. And the king, by God's providence, grants him the ability to go back and to lead in the building of this wall.

[ 2 : 23 ] The king, in fact, makes him governor of the province and basically gives him his credit cards so that he can get all of the needs that he has for the rebuilding of this wall. We saw the work that has happened.

They've begun to work. They've strengthened their hands to work. And in chapter 3, they began to rebuild the wall. And we saw all the effort, the group effort that went in to this great task. And then two weeks ago in chapter 4, we talked about the opposition to the work. There were some that weren't too happy about the work that was being done, namely Sambalot and Tobiah. Last week, Kyle, and Kyle, I apologize, I have yet to listen to your sermon, but I promise that I will. Kyle talked about chapter 5 and some of the spiritual work that begins to happen as Nehemiah stops some of the oppression of the poor and he himself is incredibly generous to the servants that are living within his house.

But we see then again in chapter 6 a further expression of the opposition to this work. And so this morning I want to talk a bit about that. I want to show you specifically the opposition that came up against Nehemiah.

[ 3 : 32 ] A man that was called to lead God's people. A man that was given a very special task to accomplish and offer leadership to.

Before we do that, let's pray together. Father God, I thank you for your goodness to us. I thank you that an aspect of your character is that you are good.

You are loving. And your loving kindness towards us never fails. You have shown us that in the greatest way in Christ. I pray, Father, that all of us this morning can say with confidence that we have placed our faith in Him.

That we know that our souls have been redeemed because of the work that He has done on our behalf. Thank you for the blessing, the grace to us of your Word. That it is the guide and rule of our lives. That it ultimately speaks of Christ. That it is the grace of God. Drawing us to Him. Drawing us into holiness in Him. And I pray, Father, this day it will have its way with us.

[ 4 : 38 ] It will work in our hearts the way you see fit. That we might look more like your Son as a result of our work here together today. And I pray this in Christ's precious and holy name.

Amen. Amen. So, as we've worked before, typically I read the passage to you. We're going to be looking at all of chapter 6. Today I'm going to bring it to you in pieces. So I just want to make you aware of that so you're not wondering, why has Nathan not read the text?

I'm so confused. What's going on right now? It's coming. I'm going to read it to you in little pieces. But I just first wanted to say to you that any time that God calls us into leadership with a holy ambition, there will be opposition to that work.

I was surprised as I began to pastor this church of what that opposition ended up looking like. I came to realize that working in this setting is not simply work, it's warfare.

It's a great task that is ahead of us when we get called to a holy ambition for our Lord. Now I want you to know at the outset this morning that I am an exceedingly happy pastor.

[ 5 : 51 ] Nothing I'm going to talk about today has anything to do with any of you specifically. Praise God for that, that as I was studying through this, I was seeing the way in which these men were working to oppose the work, that I couldn't think of a single example of anybody that I knew would be sitting here this morning having done this to me.

That's a blessing. That's an incredible blessing, and I thank you for that. It has happened, though, and I was surprised by that, by people who have come here and sat and said they were people of God and opposed the very work of God.

The kind of opposition that came, the personal criticism, calling into question things like my age. And if you don't know, I'm 33, just in case you're wondering, which is young.

Calling into question my motivations. Calling into question my training. Also, very surprised by the source of that opposition.

I was ready to take on the world, not oblivious to that, that the world hates us as it hates Christ. Not at all. I'm ready to contend for those types of things, but I was so surprised that much of that opposition came from those professing to be the people of God.

[ 7 : 09 ] A holy ambition for the glory of God will be met with unceasing opposition. It's part of the game, both from without and from within.

And the reason for this is that God's enemy and ours, the devil, does not want to see the work accomplished. He's a rather delusional character, right?

We all know the work is going to be accomplished. We know that God is the sovereign that reigns over all things. And yet, the devil, Satan, bucks against it with all of his might. His name, devil, means slander.

In the book of Revelation, he's called Apollyon in Greek, the destroyer, right? The scriptures refer to him as a murderer, a liar, a deceiver, the evil one, a roaring, devouring lion, and a great red dragon. And he works most divisively in the church by doing everything that he can to impede God's ends, knowing full well that he can't, but he does everything that he can to impede God's ends by doing everything he can to impede God's means.

[ 8 : 21 ] And that is us, the church. He roots his way in to our meetings, into our relationships, and causes division with this type of opposition.

We see that here with Nehemiah. Not that Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab are people of God, but we see the way the enemy works with them and manipulates them to try to stop the work that Nehemiah is doing.

Some of you may ask the question, wasn't Nehemiah doing the will of God? Right? Had God's blessing? We saw that. The good hand of God was upon me is the record we see in Nehemiah. And certainly he was. In fact, the opposition is the proof of this. We're trying to help you see that the book of Nehemiah is not this far-removed historical account that we read about and say, isn't that interesting the way God and Nehemiah and the people of Israel worked then, but it has real implications for us now.

As God has set us to the task of building the church. As that is now the visible display of his glory. The condition of our church has something to say about who our God is.

[ 9 : 36 ] And if we want proper praise to be ascribed to him the way it ought to be ascribed to him we'll be about the work of building the church. And I've said to you that all of us are called into that. Right?

We're all called to be holy and to see holiness come about in other people's lives. To be disciples that make disciples. To put it as simply as I possibly can for you.

And there will be opposition to that work. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3.12 All who desire to live a godly, holy, be a disciple, life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

It's a promise given to us if we're to live in this way. And we ought not be surprised by it. Now, some of you may be saying, okay, this is great. The record here, chapter 6 of Nehemiah, the opposition that came to him as a leader with this holy ambition for the glory of God is great, but it doesn't really apply to me.

But it does. Hear what I'm saying to you. We've all been called to lead in some regard. And, we've all been called to follow in some regard.

[ 10 : 46 ] So there's many lessons for us to learn here. Both about how we ought to respond to opposition and also about how we ought to not be that opposition. We ought not let the enemy come in and have us be the very ones that are opposing the leadership of God.

Some of you, I think many of you, desire to spend your lives in vocational ministry. Really believe that God is leading you into a life spent 24-7.

My vocation is to lead the people of God. And you ought to be aware of the opposition that's going to come against you and how to deal with it. We all need to know what our leaders deal with so that we can best know how to pray for them.

I covet your prayers. I need your prayers. I try to be up here so openly honest with you. Some people even say to a fault that I'm too self-abasing.

But I want you to know that I need grace as much as you do. I battle with my flesh as much as you do. And I need your prayers.

[ 12 : 00 ] Much, much opposition will come against us. Let me give you just a small example. This is, again, no one in the room. So don't cut eyes at anybody in here. There's nobody in this room.

But my preaching has been criticized. The internet is a really, really fantastic tool. How amazing. All the things we have at our fingertips. You can spend your week listening to wonderful, wonderful preaching.

We record these sermons. That's the primary reason I wear this little mic. We put them up on our website so if you missed one, you can catch up. That's the idea behind that. Not so everyone can hear really great preaching which I'm not claiming to do.

So you can catch up if you normally meet with us and can do that. You can hop on Desiring God the app on your phone. Get it. It's fantastic. Right? You can hear John Piper preach any time you want to.

But guess what? It's also been really damaging to the local church. Because now everyone expects their pastor to be John Piper or Tim Keller or Mark Driscoll.

[ 13 : 00 ] Right? I'm not ever going to be those men. Right? I really, really labor to be the best possible preacher I can be. I am not going to be Charles Spurgeon.

Right? Get it out of your head. I'm not going to do it. Right? He was a master with words. I sometimes make up words on the spot. Right? Right? So everyone wants entertainment. Everybody wants celebrity. Right? Over content. Right? What did Paul say to the Corinthians? I came to you speaking simply to you. Right? I didn't want you to praise me like you did all the Greek orators which was what was going on in Corinth.

These wonderful deliverers of speech. Paul, Taman said, I spoke simply to you. I simply told you about Christ crucified. Right? We need to elevate truth over entertainment.

I hope to engage you with the truth. Right? That's the good labor is to give you the truth and give it to you in an engaging way that goes through your head and right to your heart so that you change the way you live. Right?

[ 14 : 04 ] I will not be John Piper or Tim Keller or Charles Spurgeon. Right? So let's look at the opposition. Let's see who we have coming up against him.

And it's an ever increasing group of people. Right? People who are critics love to gather other critics to themselves. So we see initially in chapter 1 right at the very end we see Sambalat and we see Tobiah.

They add to their number Geshem and later we see a widening group that doesn't even get named. But understand what was going on with Sambalat and Tobiah and why they were so set against what was going on.

It's not that they praised King Artaxerxes they wanted all glory to King Artaxerxes no it's that they ultimately worshipped themselves. We see Sambalat is the Horonite right? Which just means he was born in Beth Haran and he was Samaritan that's what that means.

Right? And there was an intense racial tension between the Samaritans and the Jews just from the outset they didn't like one another. Right? But beyond that he was the governor of the Samaritan province just north of Judea.

[15:11] Right? And more than likely most scholars say that it was probably under his control as well. So when King Artaxerxes puts Nehemiah over Judea the town of Judah the province of Judah he was cutting out some of Sambalat's property.

Right? He was cutting it out some of his control. Right? So Sambalat hated him. Right? We see Tobiah the governor of Ammon. Now recognize if you're looking at a map you're seeing that little strip of land just to the east of the Mediterranean.

Right? Picture above just north of that you've got Sambalat's property and just to the west of that to the coast you've got Tobiah's property. This is where they reign.

Now throughout history Jerusalem was a major major trade route. Right? All the trade routes of the region crossed through Jerusalem.

But when Babylon came in and overthrew the Israelites that ceased to be the case. The city was in ruins. There was no reason to go there and trade so guess where the trade shifted? Right?

[16:15] To the west and to the north. So Sambalat and Tobiah were profiting greatly as the governors of these regions. So what would happen if they rebuilt the wall and restored the city?

The trade routes would shift back and they would lose out. Right? They would become poorer regions as a result of that very thing. So recognize that the opposition here is ultimately because they worship themselves and what they could gain by keeping the wall from being built.

Right? Now look as you see the first little example here. We know that at the end of chapter 1 Sambalat and Tobiah are not happy with what's going on but they approach him for the first time at the end of chapter 2 verse 19.

But when Sambalat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem here comes Geshem the Arab heard of it they jeered at us and despised us and said what is this thing that you are doing?

Are you rebelling against the king? Then I replied to them the God of heaven will make us prosper and we his servants will arise and build but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem.

[17:24] I love his response here. Okay? So recognize that these are not people who simply need their perspective adjusted a little bit. It can be a very healthy thing to be constructively critical of things that are going on in your churches.

I need feedback. That's what I'm trying to say to you. Come and talk to me. And there will be times that I will be wrong and I hope that I have been given the grace to be humble to accept that and to make adjustments.

There will be times that you're wrong and you simply need your perspective adjusted a little bit.

Right? That's going to happen. That's a good healthy process to take place here. But these are not men who just need a little nuancing of their perspective.

Right? These are men that need to be told to be quiet. Right? And to get out of the way. That's a painful thing to do. I've had to do that in the life of this church already. Right?

With grace and love to tell somebody be quiet and get out of our way. Right? So this is his response to him. The God of heaven will make us prosper and we as servants will rise and build but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem.

[18:27] So these are the people that we're talking about. And what I hope you're hearing from me is that I don't want you to be one of these people. Right? Have any character quality of a person that really what I would respond to you is be quiet and just get out of the way.

Right? I want to have a bunch of people who need just a little perspective adjustment occasionally and not ones that need to be shown the door. Right? So let's look now at our text. Nehemiah was tempted in four common ways.

Right? And I want to show you those and I want to see I want you to see how he responded appropriately to these temptations. Right? Number one the temptation to be distracted by the daunting nature of the work.

Right? And we've got to look a little bit before chapter 6 to see that. Beginning of chapter 6 we see that he has completed the wall the breaches the gaps in the wall have been filled in except that the doors the huge gate doors which is a huge task in and of itself they have yet to be set so it's not quite done we're almost there.

But let's back up just a little bit in chapter 4 to see the temptation verse 10. Right? The temptation to be distracted by the daunting nature of the work. Chapter 4 verse 10 we have record of what was happening in Judah what was being said.

[ 19 : 43 ] they've half completed the wall at this point. It says in Judah it was said the strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall.

And our English doesn't quite capture here what this phrase would have looked like to the Hebrew people. It was actually a Hebrew couplet. It was a little song a little ditty that had been written.

It took them 52 days to build the wall. And at this point it's half built and somebody has come up with a song and been passing it around Jerusalem about how they're going to fail.

Right? A little sing song thing. The strength of those who bear the burden is failing. There's too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall. Right? Look carefully at who was saying it.

Right? So here's we've got opposition coming from without Sambalat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab. But from within it was in Judah that this was being said. Right? The people of Judah had become whiners.

[ 20 : 47 ] My father who's sitting in the room is really famous at least most of you may not have ever heard him say this but for me he's really famous for always saying we want winners not whiners. Right? I just had to interject that at this point.

Right? The people of Judah were being whiners. How is it that in the face of this kind of sing song opposition to the work?

Right? People are walking around saying it's never going to be accomplished. Right? We've written a little lyrical poem that we're singing about that very thing that Nehemiah who's trying to lead this great work doesn't become just absolutely distracted by the daunting nature of it.

Just crushed by how much is ahead of him when it seems that the people of Judah are not for the work. He did so by resting in the fact that God will accomplish his purposes.

We've been talking a lot about the providence of God and what God sets out to do he does in fact accomplish and this is a very great motivation for us to see the work get done. Verse 14 of chapter 4 He says that I looked and arose and I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people do not be afraid of them in light of this physical opposition that could be coming from without do not be afraid of them remember the Lord who is great and awesome and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your homes and then in verse 20 he says our God will fight for us.

[ 22 : 19 ] So Nehemiah rested in the fact that God was providentially in control he knew that it was God's will that the wall be built and therefore he wasn't distracted by the daunting nature of the work.

Secondly Nehemiah was tempted to be distracted by prestige or position look now in chapter 6 finally here we go chapter 6 beginning in verse 2 Sanbalat and Geshem sent to me saying come and let us meet together at Hakafurim in the plain of Ono but they intended to do me harm and I sent messengers to them saying I am doing a great work and I cannot come down why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you and they sent to me four times in this way and I answered them in the same manner.

So two of these leaders we've already talked about Sambalite and Geshem they send to him and they say let's go and meet in a place that's only recorded here in the scriptures so I tried to do some research on it don't really know a lot about Hecathurim however it's likely that this was a place in the plain of Ono that was a lush place a nice place to meet and these other governors were saying to

him hey as a governor let's come together and meet let's talk about this work that you're setting out to do now he perceives that they intended to do him harm but he was not distracted by a meeting a day's journey away to go and meet in this nice place with the other governors of the provinces surrounding but instead what does he say to them I'm doing a great work and I cannot come down why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you so he battled against this temptation to be distracted by position by possessing a focused understanding of his God-given task Nehemiah knew exactly what it was he was there to do Nehemiah knew that his position any prestige that belonged to him was not for him it was for the work that was to be done he was made governor of the province so he could lead the people in that very work there is a great difference between being a man or woman of God and a puppet of people God has given us a task he's given you tasks laid them out before you prepared them beforehand that you might walk in them have a single-mindedness towards accomplishing those tasks be a man or woman of God and not a puppet of people on our vacation Sam and I got away from the beach which was a blessing to me for an afternoon with the kids and we went to a place called Brook Green Gardens have you ever been to Brook

Green Myrtle Beach nobody okay beautiful place just just south of Myrtle Beach that was built by in the early late property bought in 29 built into the early 30s by Archer and Anna Huntington and it's just a beautiful garden to walk around Anna was a sculptor so there's all these huge bronze sculptures all over the gardens and as I was thinking about this text and thinking about the work that was ahead of them in doing this task of rebuilding the wall I saw a comparison here because Archer and Anna had to have vision for this place because this place has these huge live oak trees you know they're kind of split off from the bottom of the ground and grow up they're massive massive oak trees and the property's been planned around them the pathways these types of things there are hedges everywhere there's a hedge maze you don't just go build a hedge maze you've got to plant it and plant the hedges and wait for them to grow and trim them back and shape them and keep doing this type of thing this was a work that they knew they would never see the completion of when they set out to build this magnificent garden they knew that it wouldn't reach its full glory until

[ 26 : 39 ] I don't even know is it in its full glory I don't know it's beautiful right these hedges are you know ten feet tall now blocking off these things with these sculptures and all this stuff and they must have had a single mindedness to accomplishing this work draws my mind also to Noah and the work that was set before him God told Noah to build a boat in the middle of a desert and his friends thought he was insane and yet he built it right and praise God for his grace to Noah to have such single mindedness that we live today because the human race was preserved in Noah's family right we should not be distracted by the place that God has put us I think a lot of Christians are because we're the children of God right we want to have our special meetings we get together and we feel good about ourselves because God has picked us out of the muck and the mire right and we sit and we revel in that rather than recognizing that he's done so for a very important work thirdly

Nehemiah was tempted to be distracted by fear let's look at chapter 6 verse 5 through 9 in the same way Sambalot for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand in it was written it is reported among the nations and Geshem also says it that you and the Jews intend to rebel that is why you are building the wall and according to these reports you wish to become their king and you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem there is a king in Judah and now the king will hear of these reports so now come and let us take counsel together so after four requests have gone the fifth comes Sambalot writes with an open letter and letters in these days were sealed which meant that the letter was intended for a particular person and it was only that person that broke the seal and read it if a letter was sent open without a seal it was intended to be read by everybody the messenger would say

I've got an open letter and he'd open it up and he'd read it and walking along the way he'd share it with others hey the open letter so what Sambalot's doing here is he's spreading the rumor far and wide about what Nehemiah is supposedly doing he makes this accusation to him that the reason he's there to build the wall is so that the Israelites will rebel he will be their king they will overthrow the king of Persia listen to his response then I sent to him saying no such thing as you say have been done for you are inventing them out of your own mind for they all wanted to frighten us thinking their hands will drop from the work and it will not be done but now oh God strengthen my hands his response to him is liar and that's it right he simply says the things you're saying of me are

not true I will not allow your false accusations to cause me to fear I will continue to work another example here another instance of it beginning in verse 10 now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Deliah son of Mehedabel who was confined to his home he said let us meet together in the house of God within the temple let us close the doors of the temple for they are coming to kill you they are coming to kill you by night so notice here he now goes to visit a friend someone that he knows he's in his house he's confined to his home and he goes to visit this man who has been bought out by Tobiah and Sambalot his response is but I said should such a man as I run away and what man such as I could go into the so what Shemaiah had suggested to him is that out of fear he go into the holy place the holy of holies in the temple a place that the Israelites were clearly instructed not to go unless they were the high priest it was off limits place to go and he would have either been killed which is what the law prescribed probably would have taken place God would have struck him dead his reputation the Israelites would not have followed him any longer because of the travesty that would have been committed here so he said should such a man as I run away and what man such as I could go into the temple and live I will not go in verse 12 and I understood and saw that God had not sent him but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sambalot had hired him speaking of Shemaiah there for this purpose he was hired that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin and so they could give me a bad name in order to taunt me so he was tempted to be distracted by fear to lose the point of the work that he was to be doing So what is!

[ 31 : 47 ] his! how does he properly deal with it? He prays and then he acts simple he prays and then he acts so we see in verse 9 so the wall was finished nope nope that's verse 15 I'm sorry I didn't write down verse 9 for myself so verse 9 for they wanted us frightened thinking and he prays but now oh God strengthen my hands right so there's the prayer right I'm I've been made to feel afraid my reputation is out there being slandered with this open letter I could stop and be worried about that but he prays instead but now oh God strengthen my hands and then he acts and how do we know that he acts because in verse 15 we see so the wall was finished on the 25th day of the month Elul in 52 days right the work continued on because it was completed right in verse 12 we see the record and I understood and saw that

God had not sent him now the Hebrew word here for understood is the same word that would have been used of wisdom right so you could read it and I was wise and I saw that God had not sent him right how was it that it!

was possible for him to be wise in this way unless he was tarrying with God Leonard Ravenhill in his book Why Revival Tarries which Chris McKean gave me here recently wrote to be much for God we must be much with God as a result of the way in which Nehemiah spent time with God he was wise unto these things heard a great little analogy which I've made some slight alterations to speaking of wisdom and here you go knowledge is valuable we want to gain knowledge it's a good thing for us to have knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit that's knowledge it's a fact right a tomato is a fruit if you didn't know that a tomato is a fruit okay understanding would be like knowing what a tomato tastes like and how to properly cut it for eating right getting the tomato like we understand what the tomato is right we've experienced the tomato when you combine those two things you have wisdom and wisdom is knowing that a tomato does not belong in a fruit salad right and this is what

Nehemiah had right Nehemiah had wisdom right he knew that God had given him a work he knew that God had purposes! Israel right there were promises made in the scriptures for what ought to be done right he knew that God had said him about the task right he knew that he ought not go into the temple right he knew that what San Blot was saying was a lie right and he combined this with his understanding wisdom to make the right choices in this case so Nehemiah was not distracted by fear because he prayed and he acted fourthly and finally Nehemiah was tempted to be distracted by exacting justice so note these men are conniving right obnoxious men San Blot and Tobiah they show up beginning in chapter one we begin to see their appearances right they send him four requests right and he answers them the same way they continue to send him these requests to stop the word then they spread obnoxious rumors about him right

Nehemiah had every reason to despise them right Nehemiah had every reason I'm speaking in human terms to be distracted to be plotting his vengeance to be figuring out he could shame the name of Sam who's spreading rumors and lies about him but what does Nehemiah do he turns his enemies over to the justice of the ultimate judge verse 14 he prays to God remember Tobiah and

Sanballat oh my God according to these things that they did and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who want to make me afraid right Nehemiah is so singularly focused on the work ahead of him that he simply says God remember those who are opposing the work right you deal with them the way you see fit I got work to do I'm getting back to the work and I will not be distracted by exacting justice now I hope that you're about the work of God already and you can relate to some of these things that you've experienced some of this type of opposition to the work that God laid before you

[ 36 : 54 ] I hope you get it if you don't it's coming I promise it's on its way you are going to experience opposition and I hope that you will deal with it appropriately now we have our greatest example of this in Christ the perfect model for this type of thing we are to grow up into him or to be like Christ in dealing with opposition remember that Nehemiah is a type of Christ Christ is the anti-type the greater Nehemiah Jesus was tempted in many of the same ways and yet he did not sin recall that the world will hate us because it first hated Jesus Christ is John 15 18 turn with me to Hebrews chapter 13 13 try to wrap this all up for us here beginning in verse 12

So Jesus also suffered had opposition outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

Therefore, let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. And that's simply what I want you to see. Right? Jesus bore reproach we ought to bear reproach as well.

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will give an account.

[ 39 : 03 ] Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Isn't that a beautiful wrap-up here? As if the author of Hebrews knew that someone was going to need a way to close a sermon on Nehemiah chapter 6.

Right? What are we to do? We're supposed to suffer as Christ suffered. Why? Because here we have no lasting city. Right? We're sojourners in this place. We're seeking the city that is to come, that is the kingdom of God.

We're about that work. Building the kingdom. Right? That's founded on Christ. The chief cornerstone. We've been looking at Peter in the last couple of weeks. Right? Through Him then, let us offer up sacrifices of praise.

The fruit of lips that acknowledge His name. Right? Being disciple-making disciples. That's what I've been saying to you. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have.

For these sacrifices are pleasing to God. And then 17. Obey your leaders and submit to them. For they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will give an account.

[ 40 : 14 ] Right? Do not be the Sambalots and the Tobias and the Geshams of the church. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning. For that would be of no advantage to you.

You want your leaders to be joyful. And I'm thankful as I said before again that you do this for me. And I really appreciate it. I hope that will continue to be the case as we consider this.

Now as we think about Christ and what He has done the suffering that He did on our behalf as we take the Lord's Supper together my mind was drawn to Hebrews 12.3 It says consider Jesus who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself so that you may not grow weary or faint hearted.

That we may not grow weary as we suffer in the work that's put before us. And it goes on to say that none of us have suffered none of us have fought against sin to be holy to the point of death the way Jesus has.

Right? All of us live on. So let's be encouraged by the way that Jesus endured from sinners such hostility. We ought not grow weary or faint hearted.

[ 41 : 28 ] It is because of the personal work of Christ what He has done for us that we can have the encouragement the motivation He is the channel by which grace comes to us to live in this way and that's why we celebrate the Lord's Supper together.

This is an invitation to you. Recognize that the Lord's Supper when we give it to you is a chance for you to respond to the work that God's doing in your life. In fact, we plead with you to do that.

To not take the Lord's Supper with sin in your life. Not to dismiss things and go through the motion and sit back down. But recognize that these are symbols of what Christ has done for you and what He's promised to do for you.

That should be working down in you. That should be a truth that's rolling around in your heart and having some effect and some change. I've said to you before this should be joyful and solemn. The gospel all at once both gladdens and abases. We should be humbled by who we are. How sinful we can be. But so joyful for what Christ has done for us that simply by believing we have become righteous.

[ 42 : 39 ] And that's what we celebrate together in the Lord's Supper. I'm going to pray for us to close our time and I'm going to ask men that I ask to come hold the elements. If you'll come up while I'm praying that way we can get the elements out.

Just as you feel prepared feel free to go and partake of the elements and then come back to your seat. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.