



**KING'S
CHURCH** (<http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/>)
EDINBURGH

4. Trusting God under Fire

Nehemiah's enemies used three tactics to oppose him and the people with him:

1. Mockery and ridicule.
2. Causing a disturbance.
3. Threaten to kill them.

People feel threatened by God and His ways, that's why they respond to us in a similar way to this. Leaders are called to bring protection from opposition like this so that the community they're responsible for can flourish. We can do this because it's God's will that this happen.

After decades of defeat and slavery, it would be natural for the Jews to agree with the mockery and ridicule heaped on them. We're vulnerable to this too, and easily discouraged. Nehemiah is an example to us of how to respond.

Nehemiah's response:

1. *He calls out to God (4:4-5,9)* Don't pretend that it isn't happening, be honest with God - but don't stay in the "bad news". Praying must involve faith, and as faith grows we get God's perspective on the situation, which leads us on to more praying, with confidence that God will breakthrough.
2. *Brings the whole community together (4:13, 16-17, 20)* Don't be too proud to get help, small groups are there for you. We respond to pressure in different ways and we need the wisdom, encouragement, rebuke, and perspective of others.

3. *He addresses the fear (4:14)*. He doesn't hope that things will sort themselves out but brings an inspiring challenge to the people to trust in God, remembering His greatness and faithfulness.
4. *Gives a rallying call (4:19-20)*. The wall is big so a system has to be devised that can attract help wherever it's needed. "Come and help us" is a godly thing to say!

We're part of the wall God is building. Some parts are strong, some are weak, we're meant to be joined up, united. We were originally outcasts and captive to sin, but God has reconciled us and brought us into His purposes. Jesus has won the victory and allowed us to join in.

God doesn't call professionals, this wall was built by amateurs. Your past doesn't matter, God's call is what counts. Put aside your reticence and fear and sense of worthlessness, and join with God. Even Jesus faced this (John 12:27) but He won through, and will give us grace to do the same.

Questions for group discussion

Despite the Bible being full of warnings and examples of life on Earth now being hard, why does it still take us by surprise?

Is there anything in British Christian culture that could cause us to be easily downhearted, as Nehemiah feared the Jews would be?

Matthew listed three enemy tactics - which of these are you aware of in your life and how have they shown themselves?

Which of Nehemiah's responses have you done, and which seemed least likely to come naturally to you? How can we make sure that we all get all the counsel of God for difficult circumstances?



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