

The Purpose of Opposition

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[0:00] I was going to say amen to that prayer, but I'm not sure it can mold the Father's hands.

I don't know what that means. I know what it means. Why don't you turn your Bible to Nehemiah chapter 4.

Nehemiah chapter 4. Nehemiah chapter 4. Am I messing with you up now?

Nehemiah chapter 4. We're looking today at how we handle opposition when we're doing the will of God.

How do you handle opposition when you're doing the will of God? Find a place there. Now that we're sitting down and comfortable, go ahead and stand up and read this together.

[1:16] A section of this, I'll be dealing with a lot of chapters 4. Mainly up to verse 14. In Nehemiah chapter 4.

Beginning in verse 1, it says, Now when Sambalot heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly outraged.

And he jeered at the Jews. And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaritan, What are these feeble Jews doing?

Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish?

And burn ones at that? Tobiah the Hamanite was beside him. And he said, Yes, what are they building? If a fox goes up on him, he will break down their stone wall.

[2:31] Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunts on their own heads. And give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives.

Do not cover their guilt and let not their sin be blotted out from your sight. For they have provoked you to anger in the presence of the builders.

So we built the wall, and all the wall was joined together to have its height. For the people had a mind to work.

But when Samaritan and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward.

And that the breaches were beginning to be closed. They were very angry. And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in them.

[3:31] And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night. In Judah it was said, The strength of those who bear the burden is failing.

There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall. And our enemies said, They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work.

At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, You must return to us.

So in the lowest parts of the space, behind the walls, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, with their spears, and with their bows.

And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, Do not be afraid of them.

[4:28] Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome. And fight for your brothers and your sons and your daughters and your wives and your homes.

Father, we come before you this morning and we praise you for your word. Infallible, inherent, the very word of God.

We pray, Lord, even this morning as we open our hearts and our minds to you, we want to hear you speak. We want to hear what's been said.

We want to know it in its context. We want to make application of it to our life. We want to keep in mind your redemptive purpose in all of this.

Ultimate goals in all of this to be glorified. Lord, even as New Testament believers, Lord, we just come to you asking that you would guide us and direct us as only as you can.

[5:59] We pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen. I think it's very clear that opposition does have a purpose.

I heard it said. It was a missionary by the name of Lou Ninkles, who said, A certain amount of opposition is a great help to me.

Kites rise against, not with the wind. Kites rise against, not with the wind.

I think the reality is, if you're going to live for Christ, if you're going to live for Jesus in this world, you have to know that there is an enemy working against you.

We know from Scripture that we fight against the devil, and that the devil is very real. I have to go very far to see the effects. Look around the world today, you see the effects.

[7:08] Look over in the news, and it's just covered with all the things going on in Israel, and just terrible things. You see the people that have been killed.

It's terrible. Hostages have been taken. You read the details of some of those things, and it's absolutely disheartening.

Can you imagine what some of those people have gone through and are going through? Because some of the hostages, I think, that they have attempted rescuing and found already, with so many signs of torture and all kinds of things, that we can't even discuss with children.

It's just horrible. To not believe that there is an enemy that's real, is for you to be in absolute rejection of so much of what God's Word says.

Because Jesus talks about the reality of Satan, so we can't get away from that. So if you want to deny the supernatural and deny spiritual things that way, the only problem with that that you're going to run into is your Bible.

[8:23] It's going to be a problem. We fight against Satan. We fight against the world's systems that are influenced by Satan. We fight against our own flesh.

The reality is we are fighting against ourselves so often. That's why we deal with so many addictions in our lives, so many different things that are going on in our hearts and minds. We're fighting against because Satan isn't worth it.

And he tempts us, and he draws us into things, and we end up in these battles, sometimes literal battles, sometimes figurative battles, sometimes internal struggles.

You better know that you've got opposition. You're going to live for Christ. It is the teaching of Scripture. In fact, Paul taught Timothy this.

He wasn't unaware of this in 2 Timothy 3, where he said, Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

[9:23] Notice the absolutes that he speaks in terms of. Indeed, all who desire. Who's left out? Nobody. Anybody who desires to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, not might suffer.

So it's an absolute universal issue here that we need to be aware of. Even after being stoned and beaten and dragged out of the city in Antioch, Paul comes right back to the people that he was speaking to.

I mean, immediately in Acts chapter 14, comes right back to them, and the Scripture says in Acts 14, 22, and it says, Strengthening the souls of the disciples and encouraging them.

Now think about that. He was beaten and left for dead and dragged out of the city. Now, almost, I think it's the next day or maybe a couple of days later, he's right back in the same city preaching the gospel.

And it says, And he's strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

[10:39] He's not unaware of what position. Very aware. In fact, it is the expectation that if you're going to live a godly life in Christ Jesus,

you are going to suffer persecution in all kinds of different ways.

Peter understood it. In 1 Peter 4, 12, he said, For what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? Many of us are suffering for our dumb mistakes.

The rest of your life. So the reality is, we do, we suffer for our dumb mistakes, we've done things, and as part of the 17th of the ministry, you do dumb things, you make dumb prizes, right?

You get big dumb things as a result. According to the scripture, what Peter was saying here, what credit is it when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure?

You should suffer for that. You're being dumb. You suffer for it. But if when you do good and suffer for it, Peter said, and you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

[11:48] For to this, you have been called. Because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in His steps.

In other words, this idea of health and wealth in your spiritual life, that everything's going to be good and glorious every day of your spiritual life, everything's going to go your way, you're going to be financially prosperous, everything's going to happen in a fun and exciting way, everything's going to be good, you're going to be dancing through the circumstances of your life.

is not a biblical idea. Although, in the face of that suffering, you should have that attitude as you go through. What we know about God is that God is sovereign.

Because of that, based on that, we are called to be obedient, to be faithful. Right? Amen. And again, Amen. Amen. Can we say Amen in this place? Amen.

It's we. Amen. Can we say Amen? Amen. Amen. Alright. We know this about God. God is sovereign. But because God is sovereign, we're called to be obedient, faithful, in, season, and out, even if it costs us.

[13:02] And this gives us practical direction. I not only trust in the sovereignty of God, I walk in the sovereignty of God. I act on the sovereignty of God.

I believe God is sovereign, and therefore, I walk in that. I act on that. In my reading, I came to Nehemiah, and I'm thinking about prayer as being characteristic of the church.

And as I'm thinking about that, I keep looking back to these passages as I'm reading through in my daily reading, and I just keep coming across the themes over and over again. And it's just, it's interesting, as you see world events, and you're reading about things going on in Israel, all the surrounding nations, just taunting them, all these things.

And then you think about us assembling together, planting this church, and all we want to see happen here, and just the work that we're trying to do. And then you think about your own circumstances in your life.

All the things that you deal with day to day, your family, trials and challenges. It's good timing. And Nehemiah, like all of Israel, as you look at this passage, he's a slave.

[14:17] In this Persian empire, Artaxerxes is king. And Nehemiah is part of the third wave of people that's going back to Jerusalem, because God's been doing this work.

It started with Zerubbabel, he worked through Ezra, and now he's working through Nehemiah. And these waves are going back, and it's the restoration work of Israel.

God stirred his heart, awakened him to his calling, and now he's at work. But when you do the will of God, and when you do the work of God, you better expect opposition.

You better expect it. You better be ready for it. As you look around in your life right now, if you're trying to live a godly life of Christ Jesus, this is a great example of the reality that's going on in your life.

Satan hates you, he's working against you. The world system is against you. It's working against your Christian values. Your own flesh is working against you at times.

[15:21] Expect opposition. And when he comes, what are you going to do? Are you going to take hold of God and the power of the Holy Spirit? Are you going to crumble in the way of the animal? So we look here at this passage, and you look at the response of Nehemiah, and believe in Israel as they're pursuing the will of God.

And you see it in three responses to three waves of opposition. And I think it's going to be instructive for us today, encouraging for us, as we've been through trying to do the will of God.

And standing, rising, against the wind. I think we see it here. Problem number one. They're facing problems.

Problem number one is external opposition. It comes in the form of insults and criticism. And criticism. There you have been criticized. You've been insulted.

Try to live the will of God and watch Satan work. You look at this passage, and it says in chapter 4, verse 1, when Satan Ballot heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged and jeered at the Jews.

[16:45] Insults and criticism. Opposition. Satan Ballot is not new. If you read from the beginning of Nehemiah, you see this is in a context. Every time we study the scripture, we're going to study in context.

And so, there is a context here. Obviously, you're going to look at the immediate context of this chapter. And then you're going to look at the context of the whole book. And then you're going to look at it in the context of the Old Testament.

And then you're going to look at it in the context of the entire scripture so that you see the redemptive purpose of God. And here, you look at the immediate context and you start seeing what's happening with Satan Ballot because he has been criticized in front of his face.

Chapter 2, verse 19, it says, when Satan Ballot, the Horonite, and Tobiah, the Ammonite, servant of Gishem, the Arab, when they heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us. So this is not new.

This criticism is not new. It's been happening already. It happens when they hear what God's people are doing. And in that situation, you see Satan Ballot says he is a Horonite, a descendant of the tribe of Asher, the city of Horeim, means a city of caves or ravines.

[18:04] Satan Ballot here, according to this passage, is some kind of leader in Samaria. He is a leader that has the army of Samaria at his disposal, so it's assumed that he is the governor of Samaria.

He has very much reason to be concerned that Israel is rebuilding. He has a lot of concern about them rebuilding because it affects him as a leader in that region. And so the rise of Jerusalem is going to detract from his authority.

He's threatened by them. And so he has reason to be upset that they're rebuilding. Tobiah the Ammonite, he's a descendant of Lot. According to Genesis 19.38, we see Lot, there is a lot to say about it.

That's a joke, right? They're a lot like dad jokes, only words. But Lot, I mean, if you think about Lot, bad choices is the heritage of these people.

not following God, choosing the wrong land, choosing the wrong way. Tobiah may be a descendant of the Tobiah and Ezra, chapter 2, verse 60, of the same name.

[19:24] He's rejected among the Jews because it says they could not show that their families were descendants of Israel. And so, there may be reason for them to be upset with Israel and the rebuilding and maybe a source of long-standing bitterness for Tobiah.

And then you come to Geshem, who we're told in chapter 2, verse 19, is an Arab. And this isn't a stereotype, but there is some following in these groups.

Genesis 16, chapter 12, refers to Ishmael as a leader of these Arabians. It refers there to him as being a wild donkey of a man.

This is a very obstinate group. They may be hostile for no reason whatsoever. They may be hostile just because they're hostile. We don't know.

There's no reason given for their hostility. All we have is the background that this Geshem is an Arab. And there is a long-standing line of hostility for no apparent reason for them.

[20:37] There's all kinds of people that are going to oppose you when you try to live a God of your life in Christ Jesus. And how did they respond? Well, they responded with anger first.

In verse 1, he was angry, and it says, not only was he angry, but he was greatly enraged, it gives the strong word for anger to begin with, and then says, beyond that, not only was he mad, he was really mad.

He was really, really mad. As mad as he could be, he's madder. I mean, just imagine when you wake mom and dad up early, you know? I mean, they can get mad, but they're not really mad.

Right? I mean, kids, come on. They're not really mad. They're mad. They're upset. They're not really mad. But when you do something and you violate some authority, you've seen them get really mad at times. The reality is, they're angry.

They're enraged at the top level here. And they begin to insult. It says, they jeered at the Jews, just as he did in chapter 2. It means that they mocked them.

[21:49] They derided them. They scorned them. Treated them shamefully. In verse 2, they're accusing them of being feeble. These feeble Jews, they're weak.

There's nothing that can offend a man more than telling him he's weak. I mean, you go to a man and say, hey, you're weak. I'm just going to knock you out today.

And, you know, I don't like getting told I'm weak. I'm older than 40 years old. feeble.

Insultant. And it's really funny when you read through it because in verse 3, Tobiah must be the smart aleck of the group. You see him in verse 3, Tobiah, the Ammonite, was beside him and he said, yeah, what are they building?

If a fox goes up on it, he'll break down their stone wall. I mean, your wall, your stone wall is so weak. I mean, if a cat jumped on it, it's going to crumble.

[22:53] You guys are so weak and all of your work is weak. Everything you do is weak. You are weak. Insultant.

Reality is when you do the will of God, you're in face opposition. Disciples understood this. When you look at Peter, so look at Paul talking to Timothy, when you look at Peter describing this so clearly.

Why are they saying it so clearly? Because Jesus taught this so clearly. In John 15, 18, Jesus said, if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you're not of this world, but I chose you out of this world, therefore the world will hate you.

And when Jesus teaches this, he teaches this in light of the Old Testament examples. So that in Matthew 5, 11, he says, blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

[24:02] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecute the prophets who were before you.

What's he talking about? Am I? the Old Testament prophets were mocked in the same way. Every time you're insulted for walking with Christ and trying to do the will of God and walking the Christian life out and you're facing insult, you've got to know you're in good company.

And how did Nehemiah respond to this? Well, there's four. Here, O our God, we are despised.

What does he do? Praise. What is the response to the insult? Is it correction? Is it trying to defend yourself?

Is it trying to clear your faith? Is it all those things that we typically want to try to do? Or is the first response to be that I go to the Lord in prayer?

[25:13] What is my response to opposition? One commentator said, that which Ezra, that which in Ezra was a sudden impulse has become a seventh habit with Nehemiah.

And so you look at Nehemiah's response over and over and over again, you see his response to opposition and obstacles and problems. And his immediate response is, he goes to the Lord in prayer.

He goes to the Lord in prayer. At the beginning, he's praying for protection of the king because he was afraid to ask for help. He went to the Lord in prayer. Every time in chapter 5, verse 19, he goes to the Lord in prayer.

Chapter 6, verse 9, verse 14, chapter 13, verse 14, verse 22, chapter 13, verse 29, verse 31, over and over and over, asking God for wisdom, asking God for direction, asking God for protection. Every time there's an obstacle, his response is prayer. Is that your response to opposition?

[26:25] It's the primary work of the kingdom. Prayer must be something that's so characterizes us as a church. That when people think of prayer, they think of us, and when they think of us, they think of prayer.

So that when we gather together in our times of even prayer meeting, it ought to be that we go there with the anticipation that we are participants in this.

Public prayer is actually part of our faith. It's part of the Christian experience. Every time we look through the book of Acts, we're just reminded over and over again, the central work of prayer among God's people when they're gathered.

They gather together, and you find them praying. When Peter's in prison, and he comes out, what does he find God's people doing? He finds them praying. Over and over and over again.

As John Bunyan said, he said, I can do more than pray after I have prayed, but I cannot do more than pray until I have prayed.

[27:35] It's not that we're only going to pray. We are going to do more than pray, but the scripture is so clear that whenever I'm facing opposition, whenever I'm pushed against when I'm trying to pursue God, when I'm trying to do the will of God, my first response to that needs to be, prayer, not numbness, not shrinking back into my shell, which I do, I have a tendency to do.

I mean, big things happen, and man, I go into shutdown mode. I mean, it's like it's an overload of the system, and a circuit blows, and I go into shutdown.

I don't want to talk. I don't want to look at anybody. I don't want to be around anybody. I mean, we face different things in our life, and just, cancer with chamber, and when cancer came, I shut down. I mean, I just went into shutdown mode. I'm trying to respond. I want to pray. I can't pray. At least I feel like I can. Reality, that's the exact time I need to pray.

Carly goes through cancer, and you face that, and man, shutdown mode. It's my immediate response, and what God has been teaching me over and over through all these circumstances that we've faced in our own life, is that my first response cannot be to shut down.

[29:02] My first response is to get down on my knees and call on the God of heaven. I can't do more than pray after I have prayed, but I cannot do more than pray until I have prayed.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer, and after he prayed, you see the work of the Holy Spirit in his life and in the life of the people, because after they prayed, they persevered.

It's the work of God that enabled me, the power and the strength to persevere. When I'm facing opposition from outside, when the enemy is against me, working against me in my faith, I got to go in prayer, and then when I get up from prayer, I am to go on and persevere in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 6, the wall was halfway built. Why? It says, for the people had a mind to work. They were going to pray, and prayer would be the characteristic of God's people.

Their first response to the opposition is to go to the Lord, and after they pray, they persevere. They get to work. They get busy on the wall. God's people had a mind to work.

[30:18] They were bent toward, and their mind was moving them toward the goal of the work that God had called them to. Prayer will launch us into perseverance.

Think of the example of David Livingstone. He was a missionary to Africa. They say that during the time he was a missionary in Africa, he walked. They estimate, obviously, they didn't have a GPS tracker.

He had a GPS tracker, you know, back in the early 1800s, whenever he was alive. I can't think of the period now. I wonder if they tracked him, if it would be more than that.

But they estimated he walked some 29,000 miles during his missionary service in that part of the world. 29,000 miles.

His step counter probably ran out of steps. He was half blind. His wife died early in the ministry.

[31:22] And yet, as his perspective that's carrying him through to walk the 29,000 miles as he preached the gospel everywhere he goes in Africa, I want to keep in mind what he said in his diary.

He said, Lord, send me anywhere. Only go with me. Lay any burden on me. Only sustain me.

Sever me from any tie, except the tie that binds me to your service and to your heart. Persevere.

What is my response to opposition? My response to opposition to doing the will of God must be that I submit myself to God in that moment in prayer.

That I get on my knees before the Lord and I pray and I get up and I get to work and persevere. It's what we see in Philippians 4:6. It's the great verse reminding us about prayer.

[32:29] Do not be anxious about anything. All the anxieties that you're facing in your life. The things that are overwhelming you internally. Do not be anxious about anything.

This is a form of a command. Put in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known to God.

What are you to do? Faced with anxiety. Faced with opposition. Pray. Pray. Pray. Pray. And then the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Then you persevere. Get up and get to work. Get up and get busy about the things that God has told you to. It's amazing how God will get your focus off of your problems when you start getting to work for the kingdom.

When you start preaching the gospel and proclaiming the gospel and praying for your neighbors instead of focusing on all the problems in your own life. It's amazing how he'll free you from the anxieties of your heart.

[33:37] Proverbs 3, 5, and 6. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him. Pray. And then what will you do?

He will make straight your paths. Persevere. Get to work. Get busy about the things that he's called you to be and to do. Watch God work.

It doesn't matter if it's in the form of insults or if it gets worse. You see it in problem number two. It's still external, but it's not just insults and criticism.

Now it's intense escalation. Verse 7, But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Amorites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward even after their criticism, and when the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry.

Now remember, they were already angry. They were as angry as they could be, and then they were enraged on top of that, and now they're very angry, again on top of that. So are they mad is the question.

[34:57] They're mad. So what do they do? Well, they're angry, their response is angry, of course, but it goes beyond that.

Now it's plotting, scheming, it's threats of violence. It's intended to cause fear and confusion. You see this in the Palestinians with sending him terrorists into Israel in that way to do violence and cause fear and panic and all those kinds of things.

They do a pretty good job of it, right? I mean, you see that stuff and you are horrified. And you can understand the righteous indignation of the response of Israel to go and do something like they're doing not because they're targeting civilians, but because there is unbelievable, horrendous injustice that's 7,000 rockets a day hitting them and firing on their families.

I think you would have to do something, right? Escalation. The anger is still, isn't it amazing that Israel is such a small country, smaller than New Jersey, and it's got the focus of the whole world? And I don't understand all the end time stuff, and I know right now people are thinking about lots of end time stuff, and go, dude, it's happening in Israel, what's going to happen? Are we getting ready to die?

[36:26] I don't know. I don't know what God's about to do. You better be ready. Escalation.

Plotting. Plotting. Plotting. Plotting. Plotting. Plotting. Plotting. Plotting. Plotting. Plotting. Fear. Confusion. Isn't that the work of Satan? He comes to steal, to kill, to destroy.

What do you think he's going to do in your life? If Jesus is opposed by Satan, who in the world are you that you think you're not going to be opposed? The reality is all of us are going to be opposed, and sometimes it will go from bad to worse.

The opposition against them was intense. What's their response? Verse 9. And we pray to our God and set a guard as protection against them day and night.

What's the response? Prayer. Perseverance. Your initial response when it escalates is to be the same when it's just a simple insult.

[37:41] As bad as it gets, when it goes from bad to worse, your response is going to be the same in Christ Jesus. Your response is going to be to go to your knees and then get up and go to work.

It's going to be to pray and persevere. we prayed to our God and then we set a guard. We prayed and we persevered.

We got to work. I just think in that situation with Israel, it's like 7,000 rockets. You better have more than a dome of protection if you want God's favor.

This might be a good moment for Israel to repent and turn to the Messiah. this would be in their best interest. They need more than rockets. You need more than an iron dome if you're going to fight against the enemy of your life.

Isaiah said it. He said, woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong. Isaiah is saying this at a time when they are going into captivity.

[38:56] This is where they were. They were trusting in all these other things, hoping that they were going to be relieved by something else instead of turning to God. What happens when things escalate?

Are you turning to other people? Are you turning to other resources? Are you turning to something else that's going to save you and rescue you from the circumstances you're fighting against? Or are you turning to the Lord?

Are you just going to stand up against the enemy? in the public school today and hope that the administration is going to back you up? They are not going to back you up.

You can assume that the world system is going to be against you, but you better seek the Lord in these times. If you're going to stand against the city when they start bringing drag shows into the city, and you're going to stand up against it, and you're going to take a stand, you better know that you're going to be facing opposition from the enemy.

When you try to live righteously and godly in Christ Jesus, and you're sitting in a family gathering and you're talking about issues like transgenderism or homosexuality, and you're trying to defend the biblical position which condemns those things, you're going to get opposition.

[40:13] opposition. You're going to be hated by your own family at times. Amen. Nobody else is going to help you or rescue you if you don't have to worry for yourself.

What are those who go down to Egypt for helping a lot of horses and trusting chariots because there are many horses and because they're very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel and so do the Lord.

What are you doing, right? What are you doing, in the first field? What the psalmist said, David said it himself, Psalm 24, 7, some trusted chariots, some enforces, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

And when opposition comes and when hostility comes, my response is going to be what? Pray and persevere. Reading about Oliver Cromwell leading troops in the English Civil War, 17th century. And here's a guy trying to follow the Lord. He understood that God the Lord made their due. He also knew he had a responsibility to act.

[41:33] Trusting in the sovereignty of God. So before they go over the river to challenges his men in one of those phrases that I think was echoed in the Revolutionary War, trust God and keep the power around.

The reality is, we're to pray and we're to persevere. We're to pray and then we get to work. We do more than pray, but we can't do more until we pray.

And it's our calling from God to be that kind of people. You see it in the church and you see it in the prophets, you see it in the New Testament, you see it in the Old. Happens when problems are external, but problems aren't always external, sometimes they're internal.

You see it in verse 12. Verse 12, Here they are not only getting opposition from the Samaritans and all the enemies outside of God's people, but now people among the Jews from all directions, it says, from all directions are coming and opposing them in doing the work.

From all directions and they said it ten times. That sounds like something a parent could say, right? I told you ten times not to do this.

[43:11] Ten times! I've told you so many times. How many times have I told you not to do this? Here they are coming from all directions. It's not outside, it's inside. It's people that should have been with them, should have been doing the will of God, should have known the will of God, should have anticipated God's work among His people, should have

anticipated revival and a move of God's Holy Spirit to bring them to repentance.

They should have been in on that. So what's the response?

Well, He organizes them by plan, by family. Put swords in their hands, bows in their hands. And then in verse 14, He says, And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and the officials and to all the rest of the people, Do not be afraid of them.

Remember the Lord. Prayer. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome. And two, fight for your brothers and your sons and your daughters and your wives and your homes.

Perseption. You're to pray and seek the Lord. It's your first response. If you want a first response to every circumstance of trouble in your life, it ought to be to go to the Lord in prayer.

[44:42] And once you're done praying, your response then is knowing the will of God from His Word, you are to go and do the will of God. Now having the power of God's Holy Spirit at work in you, knowing the will of God as you've been informed by the prophets, by His Word, you are to go and do the will of God.

Having prayed, is that all you can do? Pray and persevere. Paul told Timothy over and over again. Preach the Word. Be prepared in season and out of season. Correct? Rebut and encourage with all patience and careful instruction. Preach the Word.

Pray. Persevute. If you decide you are going to follow the will of God, you're going to walk with God. You're going to obey what He's called you to do. In this moment, they've been called to fulfill something that was going to lead to the Messiah.

[45:52] The rebuilding of this kingdom is in anticipation that the Messiah has come. It is repentance of God's people. It's a call on them to trust and believe and do the will of God.

It is no different for you and me in that sense. That we have a work to do in building the kingdom. God has called us, raised us from the dead, called us out of our sin, called us into the kingdom. He's given us a work to do. He's given us stuff before us so that we can preach the gospel and do the will of God. And we are going to face opposition in every turn. Every addiction in your heart is going to try to keep you.

Your flesh is going to try to keep you from doing the will of God. And your response to that must be to pray, persevere. And when the world system comes against you and everything's working against you in your job or in the government or in our city or wherever it is, then you are to pray and persevere.

And when the war breaks out and things get as bad as they can possibly get, Satan is attacking on every front. You are to pray and persevere.

[47:11] And when you do, watch God's word and do things that only God can do. And the glory of God will be seen in you like the glory of God is seen in you.

What do you do when our position comes? I was reading about Hudson Taylor. He's another missionary.

He's really one of these missionaries. Sometimes you get just good inspiration from some of these guys because they can do such hard things. Hudson Taylor kind of a China in the mission is living in China in probably the most difficult time you could.

I mean, even as the Boxer rebellion rises up in those time periods, there was unbelievable, horrendous things that Christians and mourners endured during those times.

Hudson Taylor was the Lord and he's spreading the gospel, preaching the gospel in these times. But one of the things that I saw about him that in his home he had a plaque and on it just had two phrases, one, Ebenezer, and the other, Jehovah Jireh.

[48:25] The first means, Ebenezer, it means, the Lord has helped us. It means, up to now, the Lord has helped us. He's been our help.

He's been our supply. He's met our needs. Up to now, He's been our Ebenezer. And the second, Jehovah Jireh, just means, the Lord will provide.

One is saying, the Lord has provided, and the other says, the Lord will provide. And what Hudson Taylor was saying in that was, I can look at my circumstances no matter how difficult they are today, no matter what opposition I face, and I am standing on promises in Christ Jesus that say, He

is my Ebenezer.

He has provided. It was Christ Jesus who forgave me of my sins. It's Christ Jesus who raised me from the dead. It's Christ Jesus who gave me His Holy Spirit. It's Christ who gives me strength. I am crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives within me. And the life that I now live, I live in the name of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

[49:33] Amen. It is in Christ. He is my Ebenezer. And Christ is my Jehovah Jireh that one day is coming again and He will return and He will reign on the earth.

I don't know how it's going to happen in these end times. I don't know what exact role Jerusalem is going to play in that. But I do believe that God has some special purposes there.

Why? Because the Scripture says that's where He's landing. Amen. It's going to be on the Mount of Olives when Jesus returns. Amen. There's something happening there that gives significance to this place in a way that points back to the fulfillment of all that God has done from the beginning. It's His redemptive plan. It's the greater context of Scripture. Which is why Jesus says in John 5, 4, For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.

And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

[50:45] No matter what my opposition in Christ, I would overcome. For everyone who has been born for God overcomes the world, and this is the victory, our faith. Because we believe in the name of the Son of God.

Thank you, God. What do you do when you face opposition?

Well, you're going to face opposition. Following Christ is not going to be easy. There's going to be difficulties that come.

Sometimes God's going to deliver you from it. And sometimes God's going to give you strength to the interlude. You're never going to be alone in Christ.

Your first response has got to be, it's got to be, that you fall on your knees, call Him Father, and you ask Him to guide you and provide in ways that you can.

[51:58] And when you get up from prayer, then it's our obedience. it's stepping out of obedience to do the things that He's clearly said to do. Follower of Christ.

Are you a follower of Christ? And you come to the place in your life where you've surrendered your life to the King of Kings and the Lord of the Lords.

You see, God is sovereign. And I can trust in His sovereignty. But I also act on His sovereignty. I live out.

It's because Christ lives in me. He's filled me. His Holy Spirit has called me to a way. Do you have Christ? Can you surrender your life to Christ?

The Christ of the Old Testament who came, who they were looking for, the promise of the Father. John the Baptist said, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the last prophet.

[53:11] He declared who Jesus was at that moment in the future of the perfect life, the sinless life. He was alive today.

Amen. Amen. Because Christ is there. In life today, the Father will come to the cross because it's Christ Jesus who enables us to interpret all the attack.

all the word with faith the sea of God's feet. There's a shadow of that which is the home according to Hebrews.

It reminds us that it's in Christ Jesus. They're an example for us in different ways so that we can see the shadow in the shadow of the reality of Christ.

They believed you. They trusted you. They followed you. They obeyed you. Their belief was accounted to them for righteousness. They trusted you.

[54:26] They obeyed you. They did not. Father, you still don't listen because it's all in Christ. I pray for you to come here today that today will be a day of salvation for the eternal sin and Jesus.

That you illuminate your heart and mind to the reality of the gospel that Christ came and died in your spirit. I feel in terms of sin in terms of sin.

I know that from your word they will confess with our money the Lord Jesus will leave you in our hearts. God raised them from the dead they will be saved. And today will be a day of salvation. And you can never be the more forsaken. And when trouble comes they can call on you. They can pray and persevere.

Father I pray that today will be a day to encourage us as believers that no matter the opposition you face of walking in this world that our walk will be marked by prayer.

[55:37] That we will give people so characterized by prayer that people think of us in prayer. That you pray for us. That you move as your Holy Spirit to bring us all in Jesus' name.

Amen. GoshO So much. Amen. For me saber