

Rebuilding Broken Walls: "The Enemy Within" Nehemiah 5

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The year is 446 B.C. Under Nehemiah's leadership the Jews were rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. But wherever God is building the enemy is opposing. ***In Nehemiah 4 the enemy had surrounded Jerusalem to attack them from the outside, but...***

*Nehemiah 5 teaches us that when the enemy's attack fails from the outside...

...He will begin attacking from the _____.

Sometimes the most dangerous enemy is the one that is within! The real threat to the Jews was not outside the walls, it was inside the walls.

As someone once said "We have seen the enemy and he is us!"

Satan wants to destroy the Church because a strong Church expands God's influence!

*Where Satan has failed to destroy the Church through outside persecution...

...He has often succeeded through bringing inner _____.

While outside persecution has proven incapable of destroying the Church, Satan has succeeded in the destruction of many churches through bringing inner division and dissension. ***He is on a divide and conquer mission!***

Two ways the enemy lurks within:

1) The Danger of _____ (v. 1-5)

The Jews were struggling against impossible odds to do a great work for God when a great cry went up! The work came to a screeching halt!

There was a great division and schism among the people of God. Because of a food shortage, the wealthy Jews had taken advantage of the poor Jews. They were lending, but at exorbitant interest rates causing the poor to sell everything they had to pay their debts, even their own children!

Satan was doing in Nehemiah's day what he continues to do in our day!

*The #1 method he has of destroying the _____ of God is to divide the _____ of God!

A divided people are a conquered people! That's why the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 4, "...endeavor to keep the unity and bond of peace..." ***We must guard our unity as the body of Christ!***

The weapons in Satan's "divide and conquer" arsenal:

*Sewing dissension with a _____ mouth.

Spreading gossip, rumors, backbiting, and criticism are ways Satan uses our mouths to sew dissension and division. James 3:6 says "...the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body...and is set on fire by hell."

People's tongues have the power to _____ down a church!

*Dividing over _____ doctrines and personal opinions.

Unlike the first century church the 21st century church is all too often full of factions and fractures, fragmented and divided, full of disunity and dissension! But Ephesians 4:4 says

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you are called in one hope...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..." ***God desires us to be united as one!***

In essential beliefs we have _____...In non-essential beliefs we have _____...

Any attitude that causes disunity is _____!

. *Dividing into _____ and other closed groups.

1 Corinthians 12:12 says "For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body, so also is Christ..." ***Not one member of this body at ALBC is more important than any other member!***

2) The Danger of _____ (v. 6-10)

When Satan creates division, diversion from the task is imminent. ***The people were distracted from the vision because of the division!*** The great work they'd begun for God suddenly stopped!

*Satan's purpose is to keep people _____ with each other...

...So they fail to focus on _____ him!

How Did Nehemiah Restore Unity? (v. 6-9)

1) He talked _____ people...Not _____ people!

If Christians would begin making a simple practice of this Biblical principle it would revolutionize the body of Christ! Matthew 5:23-24 says "If you bring your gift to the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother..."

*You cannot have a right relationship with _____...

If you do not have a right relationship with _____!

*Matthew 18:15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother." Do you want to protect our unity? **Let's talk to each other and not about each other!**

2) He offered a _____. (v. 10-11)

He didn't simply complain about the problem. He offered a solution! Problems are normal...**will you be a part of the solution?**

3) He gave up his _____. (v. 14-19)

For 12 years as governor, Nehemiah fed hundreds of people a week out of his own pocket! Additionally, he willingly gave up his own salary for the good of the people! **Instead of demanding his rights he gave up his rights for the glory of God and the good of others!**

*It's always better just to _____ what's right than always have to _____ you're right.