

SUNDAY 9.06.2024

**REMAINING FOCUSED AMID
DISTRACTIONS**

NEHEMIAH 6:1-10 NIV.

► When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates 2 Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message:

▶ “Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono.” But they were scheming to harm me; 3 so I sent messengers to them with this reply: “I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?”

► 4 Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer. 5 Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his aide to me with the same message, and in his hand was an unsealed letter 6 in which was written:

▶ “It is reported among the nations and Geshem says it is true that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt, and therefore you are building the wall. Moreover, according to these reports you are about to become their king

▶ 7 and have even appointed prophets to make this proclamation about you in Jerusalem: ‘There is a king in Judah!’ Now this report will get back to the king; so come, let us meet together.” 8 I sent him this reply: “Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.”

▶ 9 They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed.” But I prayed, “Now strengthen my hands.”

▶ 10 One day I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was shut in at his home. He said, “Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors because men are coming to kill you by night, they are coming to kill you.”

▶ **INTRODUCTION:**

- ▶ Nehemiah 6 presents a timeless message on perseverance, integrity, and reliance on God in times of adversity and distractions. The enemies' craftiness could not deter Nehemiah from the task at hand of rebuilding the protective walls of Jerusalem.

▶ The wall had been reduced to rubble and left the Israelites vulnerable to attacks by their enemies. Nehemiah's unwavering faith and courage in the face of opposition serve as an inspiration for all believers to trust in God's leading amid distractions.

1. Devils Tricks and Temptations

- ▶ Nehemiah's enemies (*Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem*) seeing that Nehemiah had made significant progress in rebuilding the wall, attempted to trick him into leaving his focus under the pretext of a meeting. **Verse 2.** *“Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono.”*

▶ However, Nehemiah perceived their ill intent and refused to leave his work, not once but four times.

▶ **Verse 3.** *“I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?”*

2. His False Accusations (Verses 5-9)

- ▶ Frustrated, Sanballat resorts to slander, sending a letter accusing Nehemiah of plotting rebellion against the king.
- ▶ **Verse 6.** says it is true that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt, and therefore you are building the wall. Moreover, according to these reports you are about to become their king.”

▶ Nehemiah denies the accusation, recognizing it as an attempt to discourage him and his fellow builders. by saying,

▶ **Verse 8.** *“Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.”*

▶ Are false accusations stealing your focus and providing distraction?

3. Devil's Deception

- ▶ Nehemiah faces deception from within when Shemaiah, a supposed ally, tries to manipulate him into hiding in the temple to save his life.
- ▶ **Verse 10.** *“Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors because men are coming to kill you—by night they are coming to kill you.”*

- ▶ Nehemiah, realizing that this was another ploy to discredit him and noting that as a layman he is forbidden from entering the temple's inner areas, rejects the advice.
- ▶ He prays for strength and guidance, mentioning the names of those who sought to intimidate him, including the prophetess Noadiah.

▶ **CONCLUSION**

- ▶ Distractions can be a temptation to give the focus and energy needed for your goal to something insignificant. In Genesis 1. Satan distracted Adam and Eve's focus on fulfilling God's mission in the garden, Adam lost his focus and went into hiding.
- ▶ Some people in our society today have lost focus and gotten into isolation.

- ▶ If Jesus was distracted in Matthew 4, what about us?
- ▶ When distractions present themselves (*as they often do daily*), are we tempted to respond?
- ▶ Nehemiah had a conventional focus that refused distraction and compromise.
- ▶ What are some of the common voices of distraction we hear and face today?