

November 6, 2022
La Jolla Christian Fellowship
Rebuild // The Story of Nehemiah
Episode 7: RESPONSE-ABILITY
Pastor Adam Stadtmiller

Nehemiah 6:1-9

⁶When 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 - ²Sanballat 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; ³so 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?" ⁴Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer. ⁵Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his aide to me with the same message, and in his hand was an unsealed letter ⁶in 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 ⁷and 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."** ⁹They 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."

Context: The Return of the Rabble: In this passage we see Satan employing one of his most powerful tools. **Persistence. (Vs. 4-5)**

- 5x Nehemiah's enemies came to him in hopes to lure him into a trap.
- 10x Nehemiah's relatives came to him requesting that he stop building the wall. Neh 4:12

Satan does not care if he can't trap you on his first 8 attempts as long as he can ensnare you on the 9th or perhaps 13th.

Nehemiah overcomes the persistence of his enemies by wielding a wise response.

RESPONSE-ABILITY

"The ability to choose our response to any circumstance or condition." - Stephen Covey

- A response can be a weapon. **Prov. 25:15** *Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.*
- The thing that often destroys the work of God in our lives is not the threat, but our response to the threat.

A **SCHEME** was afoot to destroy Nehemiah and each time Nehemiah responded it was wise and measured.

- **Vs. 2b-3** *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."*

Here again we see the power of the conjunction. This time it is "so".

- **Response #1: Vs. 2b-3** *Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?*
- **Response #2 Vs. 8** *"I sent him this reply: 'Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.'"*
 - Few people understand that victory is often found in the response.
 - If we are going to have victory in our responses, we must love the wise response more than the passionate or clever retort.
 - **Prov. 15:28** *The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.*

Practical Takeaway: Nehemiah never drew a sword during the entire rebuilding of the wall. Rather, the entire victory was won through wise responses and decision making.

Small Group Questions:

1. Nehemiah found victory through just responding wisely. He never had to use his sword. How often do you use a sword when perhaps you don't have to?
2. Do often act on an impulse and react rather than respond in a right and wise way? Why do you think that is?
3. Satan is the master of persistence. He loves to wear you down and take the delayed victory. How can we prepare ourselves to overcome this type of relentless attack?
4. Prov. 25:15 **says**, *"Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone."* What does that mean?
5. How can you become more mature in your responses?