**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | A Steadfast Church |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Nehemiah 4 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #2495 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Churches will be under attack.
      1. The door to the room of opportunity swings on the hinges of opposition.
   2. When we do something in the name of the Lord, we raise up the ire of the devil.
   3. The church has an enemy; he is the devil.
      1. The Bible calls him a deceiver, a liar, a murderer, an accuser, a tempter, the destroyer, and the evil one.
         1. All of these speak of the same person.
         2. He is like any criminal; he has many aliases.
   4. The devil has one purpose, and that is to come against us, our families, and the church.
      1. The Bible speaks of his methods.
         1. Ephesians 6:11
            1. “*The wiles of the devil*.”

The Greek word here means “the methods” of the devil.

* + - 1. The devil methodically sets about to ruin our lives and to stop the work of the church.
    1. Not only does the Bible speak of the wiles of the devil, but the Bible also speaks of the devices of the devil.
       1. 2 Corinthians 2:11
    2. The Bible also speaks of the snares of the devil.
       1. 2 Timothy 2:26
  1. The book of Nehemiah can be used as a template that we can study to see how Satan would try to stop any work for God.
     1. Nehemiah was attempting to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem that had decayed.
     2. The Bible tells us how the devil tried to stop Nehemiah, but he could not stop him.
        1. What Satan has tried before, Satan will try again.
  2. The background to today’s message:
     1. The Jewish people had been carried away into captivity.
     2. During that time, the city of Jerusalem had fallen into ruins, and the walls around the city had crumbled.
     3. Nehemiah’s heart was broken, and he wanted to go back to the city of God and rebuild the walls.
     4. But Satan wanted to stop the work.
        1. Satan raised up two men: Sanballat and Tobiah.
           1. They were agents of the enemy to stop Nehemiah from building the wall.
  3. In today’s society, the walls of decency and conviction have crumbled and decayed.
     1. All of us have a job to rebuild the walls.
  4. We are wall builders.
     1. When we say, “Let’s rise up and build,” the devil says, “Let’s rise up and stop them.”
  5. Today’s message will give us seven of the devil’s devices or dirty tricks that he uses to attack the church.

1. satan will attack with derision (nehemiah 4:1-2)
   1. Satan will try to make the church a laughing stock.
   2. Nehemiah 4:1
      1. In this verse, the word “wroth” means that he was angry.
      2. Sanballat ridiculed the Jewish people.
         1. He made them a laughing stock.
   3. Today, if we stand for the old-time religion, we will be mocked.
      1. We will be laughed at
      2. There will be derision.
   4. We are not better than Jesus; Jesus was mocked.
      1. Mark 5:40
      2. Luke 22:63
      3. Luke 23:35-37
      4. When Jesus was doing miracles, they laughed at Him.
      5. When Jesus was being abused, they jeered at Him.
      6. When He was on the cross, they ridiculed Him.
      7. If we stand up for Christ, then we will be mocked and ridiculed.
      8. A church that has a high profile will be ridiculed.
   5. Not only will we be ridiculed as a church, but we will also be ridiculed as individuals.
      1. College students on secular campuses who stand up for Jesus will be mocked.
      2. An ungodly spouse may make fun of the faith of a godly spouse.
      3. A person in business who is trying to live the principles of Jesus in an ungodly society and business world will be laughed at.
   6. What did they ridicule?
      1. They ridiculed the feebleness of God’s people.
         1. Nehemiah 4:2
         2. The world puts an emphasis upon military, physical, intellectual, and societal strength, but they look at us as weaklings.
            1. They think of us as feeble.
            2. 1 Corinthians 1:26
         3. Strength can be disguised.
            1. Nehemiah was not feeble.

He was very strong; but outwardly, he looked feeble.

* + - * 1. Appearances can be deceiving.
      1. A church with God’s power on it is not feeble.
         1. We are mighty through God.
    1. They ridiculed the futility of their task.
       1. Nehemiah 4:2
          1. They said that the walls could not be rebuilt.

The walls had burned.

The stones were buried under garbage.

They were called day dreamers.

* + - 1. The world wants us to think we cannot do anything great.
      2. They want us to have an inferiority complex.
         1. They say that not only are we feeble, but our task is also futile.
    1. They ridiculed the foolishness of their faith.
       1. Nehemiah 4:2
       2. The world thinks that what we do is foolishness.
          1. They think we make a colossal waste of our time when we attend church, and we make a waste of our money when we give.
       3. 1 Corinthians 1:18
       4. Someone who mocks the Bible, the cross, and the Word of God is someone who is wicked.
       5. 2 Peter 3:3
          1. They have the devil’s initials carved in their hearts.
          2. They are covered with the fingerprints of sin.
       6. People will mock our sacrifice and our worship.
       7. Luke 6:26
          1. If you have not been laughed at for your faith, then there is something wrong with you.
  1. What should we do when we are mocked?
     1. Just remember that we are no better than Jesus.
     2. Don’t be laughed out of a work for God.
        1. To the contrary, the Bible says that when we are persecuted, great is our reward in Heaven.
           1. Matthew 5:11-12
           2. The greater the ridicule, the greater the reward.

1. satan will attack with discouragement (nehemiah 4:10)
   1. Nehemiah 4:10
      1. The sad thing is that it was Judah, the dominant tribe, who said this.
   2. God have mercy on us when there are those who discourage us and say that it cannot be done.
      1. They are doing the work of the devil.
      2. God is the God of all consolation.
         1. That means all encouragement.
         2. Romans 15:5
      3. There is a gift in the Bible called the gift of exhortation.
         1. This means to encourage.
         2. Romans 12:7-8
         3. We need to encourage, not discourage, one another.
   3. Many times, discouragement comes from within.
      1. When we try to do something great for Jesus, we are told that it cannot be done.
      2. There are people who will try to discourage us.
   4. Discouragement comes when the job is half done.
      1. Nehemiah 4:6
      2. Any of us can get excited when we begin a work.
         1. It is like trying to climb a mountain.
            1. Halfway up, we decide it wasn’t such a good idea.

We get discouraged.

* + - * 1. Halfway through life, we may get what is called a midlife crisis in our business or marriage.

We get discouraged sometimes.

* 1. They were discouraged because of their fatigue.
     1. Nehemiah 4:10
  2. They were discouraged because of the problem of frustration.
     1. All of the stones were down there.
  3. But Nehemiah encouraged them.
     1. May God help us to always encourage our children, mate, and brothers and sisters in the church.
     2. We are able to build whatever it is we are building.

1. satan will attack with dismay (nehemiah 4:11)
   1. Satan will attack with dismay and fear.
   2. Nehemiah 4:11
   3. Satan is not always dainty.
      1. Sometimes Satan will shed blood to stop the work of God.
         1. He may shed your blood or mine.
      2. In the last days, the Bible says that those who kill us will think that they are doing God a service.
         1. John 16:2
   4. We should not be intimidated by physical intimidation.
      1. Philippians 1:28
      2. If we have threats against us, then we need to carry them to the Lord.
         1. Psalm 118:17
      3. Sometimes we do die, but Satan doesn’t win; he fails.
         1. Revelation 12:11
   5. Don’t let Satan frighten us out of a work for God.
      1. What did Nehemiah say when he was threatened?
         1. Nehemiah 4:14
      2. The answer to fear and dismay is to remember the Lord.
   6. Nehemiah 4:18
      1. They were building and battling at the same time.
         1. This is what the child of God is always doing.
   7. Remember the Lord, and don’t be terrified by your adversaries.
   8. James 4:7
      1. Have you ever thought of Satan fleeing from you?
         1. Some will say that they are not afraid of the devil.
            1. But the question is, “Is the devil afraid of you?”
   9. First, there was derision.
      1. They tried to laugh them away.
   10. Second, there was discouragement.
       1. They tried to get them to quit.
   11. Next, there was dismay.
       1. They tried to stampede them, but they kept on working.
          1. Satan will try all of these things.
2. satan will attack with discord (nehemiah 5:1)
   1. Satan will try to get a division in the church.
   2. Nehemiah 5:1
      1. A furor had begun.
      2. There was a fuss among the people.
   3. Proverbs 6:16-19
   4. Never be a part of discord in a church.
      1. There are times when we have to stand for things, and points have to be made.
         1. But do it in a right purpose, in the right spirit, and at the right time.
      2. Proverbs 20:3
         1. If you are wise, then you will always be a part of the solution, never part of the problem.
   5. In this particular case in Nehemiah 5, the problem was over money.
      1. Many times in a church, family, or between friends, the problem is over money.
      2. Sometimes, those who say the most about money are the poorest stewards.
      3. There was a discord over money, but they solved the problem.
   6. There are no problems too big to solve, just people too small to solve them.
   7. Any church will have problems, but God will help us to stay together.
3. satan will attack with distraction (nehemiah 6:1-4)
   1. Nehemiah 6:1-4
      1. Nehemiah was too wise to leave the wall and go out to the plains of Ono.
      2. If Satan cannot come against the church as a roaring lion and his fear tactics do not work, then he will try to come as an angel of light.
         1. If he cannot beat them, then he will join them.
      3. They wanted Nehemiah to come down from the wall and go out and talk.
         1. But Nehemiah knew that there was mischief in the making.
            1. He would not come down from the wall.
   2. The devil wants to negotiate with us.
      1. Sometimes, this tickles our ego.
   3. The devil wants to distract us and get us to come down from the wall and get away from our purpose.
      1. The purpose of the church is the following:
         1. To magnify Jesus through worship and the Word.
         2. To move believers in Jesus toward maturity and ministry.
         3. To make Jesus known to our neighbors and the nations.
      2. We must keep serving the Lord and keep our eyes upon the Lord.
   4. It is easy to get distracted.
      1. Sometimes, pastors turn from their calling.
         1. They have to step down to step out of the high calling of God which He has put upon their lives.
      2. Some women who have little children get distracted and leave their motherhood to get a job in the world and leave the babies in the care of someone else.
         1. Our hearts go out to those mothers who have to work to put food on the table, shelter overhead, and do the things that are necessary to keep a family going.
         2. Being a mother is perhaps the highest calling on Earth.
      3. Some people who have been Sunday school teachers, deacons, or served on committees in the church, don’t do it anymore.
         1. They have gotten into something else that may be good in their own sight, but it is not what God called them to do.
         2. They join societies, clubs, and causes that are not bad in themselves, but they have come down from the wall to do something else.
         3. We need to be a part of the church with all of our hearts.
   5. Don’t let the devil distract you, and don’t let him distract the church.
4. satan will attack with defamation (nehemiah 6:5-6)
   1. Nehemiah 6:5-6
      1. An “open letter” is like a letter to the editor.
         1. You want everyone to read it.
      2. They said that Nehemiah was going to build his own kingdom.
         1. They basically claimed that Nehemiah was on an ego trip.
         2. They claimed that he didn’t care about the walls of Jerusalem or the glory of God.
   2. They will defame you and criticize your motives.
      1. For example, they will claim that you go to church for business reasons.
   3. Jesus was accused of being a winebibber and a glutton.
      1. Matthew 11:19
   4. Never listen to any defamation or slander about a child of God.
      1. Make certain that if you hear anything like this, that it is not from just one witness but more, and that it is true.
         1. Be very careful.
      2. They tried to say that Nehemiah didn’t really love God and that he was building his own kingdom.
         1. That he had another purpose for rebuilding the walls.
         2. Nehemiah 6:6
      3. Don’t listen to these untruths.
   5. There are those who will do to you just like they did to Nehemiah.
      1. They will try to defame you.
      2. They will impugn you with wrong motivation.
5. CONCLUSION
   1. These are the devil’s dirty tricks:
      1. The devil will attack with derision, discouragement, dismay, discord, distraction, and defamation.
   2. Isaiah 54:17
   3. Our churches need to be unified and steadfast.
      1. By God’s grace, we will stay on the wall and do a good work.
   4. If you don’t know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, then today is the day that you need to receive Him.
      1. You need to step from a life of darkness to a life of light.
         1. From a life of fearfulness to a life of faith.
         2. From a life of condemnation to a life of salvation.
      2. Jesus suffered, bled, and died for you.
      3. He will save you, not to make you a nicer person, but to give you a new nature.
         1. He will transform you if you will trust Him.
         2. He will help you to grow into the grace and likeness of Jesus Christ.
   5. Acts 16:31
   6. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   7. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. John 3:16