

# king's chapel

## *Community Group Discussion Guide*

Week of March 8, 2015

**This Week's Focus:** Opposition to the work of God.

**This Week's Text:** Nehemiah 4

*It is loving to desire that God would deliver someone from his or her evil by means of the revelation of His justice against them. Nehemiah's imprecatory prayer calls for God's justice against Sanballat and Tobiah's wicked opposition to the good purposes of God. God's justice against them may result in their salvation, but if they continue in unrepentant sin, God's justice will result in their damnation. Nehemiah prays that they would not continue unpunished in their unrepentant sin. **James Hamilton***

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. **Ephesians 6:10-13***

**Related Texts:** Nehemiah 2:17-20; Proverbs 12:18; Philippians 4:8-9; Micah 6:8; 1 Peter 2:21-23

### **Observations and Questions for Discussion:**

- What in the text/sermon was most illuminating or helpful? Why?
- What is the context of Nehemiah 4?
- Sanballat and Tobiah discouraged the reconstruction of Jerusalem's walls from the very beginning. Reference Nehemiah 2:10 and 19. For what personal reasons did they oppose the project?
- In verses 1-3, Sanballat intensifies his opposition. What tactics did he use in an attempt to end the reconstruction effort? Who is Israel's real enemy? Reference Ephesians 6:12.

- Why should we expect opposition in our efforts to share the Gospel?
  - When have you suffered mocking, intimidation, fatigue, and/or fear when living on mission?
- Why was it important for Israel to rebuild Jerusalem's walls? Reference Nehemiah 1:3 and 2:17.
- According to verse 12, the opposition's intimidation effectively caused fear in Israel. Fear was a part of Israel's history. Reference Numbers 13 and 32. Discuss the difference between fear that results in defeat and the fear of God that produces passionate endurance.
- Nehemiah and the people of Israel combated their enemies' attacks with prayer. Reference verses 4 and 9.
  - Discuss the nature of Nehemiah's prayers.
  - Were they born out of personal vindictiveness or out of a concern for the people of God and the fame of God's name? How do we square this prayer as well as the imprecatory prayers of David (Psalm 35 for instance) with Jesus' command to love and pray for our enemies? Reference Matthew 5:43-48 and Micah 6:8.
- The people of Israel were fueled by hearts of passionate determination. Do you rely on the strength of the "good hand of God" to empower you to work passionately for Kingdom advancement?
- God frustrated the enemies' plans while Nehemiah took practical measures to build the walls and protect the people. How does God's sovereignty and human responsibility work in tandem?
- What are your personal weaknesses and vulnerabilities and how can they be strategically and practically protected?
- The people labored on the wall together. Discuss the purpose and importance of Christian community.
- God supported his people in the work, in part, because of His covenantal love for Israel. What ultimate reason stirred the heart of God to support the rebuilding effort?
- How is Jesus the better and greater Nehemiah? Reference 1 Peter 2:21-23.

**Next Week's Text:** Nehemiah 5