



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

SINGLE-MINDEDNESS IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Nehemiah 4:1-23

Nehemiah was a single-minded believer who was focused and determined, especially in times of difficulty, conflict, opposition, persecution, confusion, and pressure. Nothing could dissuade, discourage or distract him. He must have taken to the path of his predecessors that made up his name. When fully spelt out, each letter of his name, NEHEMIAH, could stand for: N - Noah. Noah was a single-minded believer who was focused till he finished the project of building the Ark. Despite the opposition and frustration from scorners around him, he kept to his vision for 120 years. E - Enoch. Enoch followed the Lord faithfully in spite of challenges and oppositions. He walked with the Lord without deviation for 300 years when he was taken away. H - Hezekiah. Hezekiah was a single-minded believer who reversed the prophecy of death through prayer. He knew that he still had much to accomplish for the Lord; hence, he prayed and another 15 years were added to him. E - Elisha. Elisha was a man who coveted a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Hence, he was focused on his goal, purpose, desire and request, distractions notwithstanding. He was a man of one goal and destination. M - Moses. Nehemiah often referred to Moses in his prayer. He saw him as a model who had the opportunity of becoming a great political leader in Egypt but rejected the throne and royalty in order to be a deliverer of God's people (Acts 7:22; Hebrews 11:24-26). I - Isaiah. Through the Holy Spirit, he gave prophecies that were difficult to be believed during his time. A - Abraham. He was a single-minded believer who willingly offered Isaac, his only son, to God. H - Hannah. She was so single-minded that she wept and requested for a male child whom she would give back to the nation of Israel as a prophet. Like these Old Testament believers, when we see what others fail to see through faith, our focus will be on one goal, passion and pursuit.

Nehemiah was a single-minded man. He had set his face steadfastly in the direction of God's calling upon his life and nothing was going to deter him from it. Like Moses, Daniel, Ruth, Esther, Stephen, and Paul (Acts 20:24), he was the opposite of a double-minded man who is unstable in all his ways. There was nothing unstable about Nehemiah. He was going to rebuild the walls to restore the lost glory. There was no hesitation, indecision, excuses, fear, retreat or compromise. Everything about a single-minded man points to his whole-hearted determination to do God's will. He deliberately refused royalty; choosing rather, like Moses, to suffer affliction with the people of God. Although there was no pressure or motivation, the information he got about the state of Jerusalem made him to work for God, the challenges he faced notwithstanding. Single-mindedness does not only show in one's attitude or language, it is also revealed in comportment, character and consecration. Nehemiah was resolute and irresistible. Like him, we must be determined and resolute in giving our lives to the work and ministry the Lord has called us into.

SINGLE-MINDED COMMITMENT AMID REPROACHFUL CONTEMPT

Nehemiah 4:1-6; Isaiah 50:6,7; Psalms 57:7; 108:1; 112:7; 119:23,22,51,60-63,69,83,87,95,110;141,143,161; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

Nehemiah came from the palace with royalty, prestige, position, experience and letter of recommendation from the king; yet, the people did not recognise him. In the midst of reproach and contempt, he was single-mindedly committed to the call God gave him. The great work Nehemiah did could not have been done by an attention-seeking, praise-hungry, self-conscious, skilled and talented minister. Nehemiah was single-minded; and he was dead to self. When he knew that God had set the direction of his life, he committed himself unreservedly to following through. The enemy may want to

make us forget the promises of God, the prize of our high calling and goal. But, like the Psalmist, our hearts must be fixed on God's unchanging word and promises.

Tobiah and Sanballat were no mean or weak enemies: they were strong and powerful. They had royal authority and military might on their side. They had patriotic citizens too and noble supporters behind them. They were also well connected with influential people in the inner circle of Nehemiah. They employed some people with prophetic ministry who made him afraid by their prophecies and dreams. Without single-mindedness, Nehemiah would not have had a chance in a thousand to be successful. These enemies, Tobiah and Sanballat, were actively opposed to him from the very beginning to the end. It took a single-minded man to persevere in the face of similar opposition and persecution. Anyone with less dedication and devotedness would have lost his bearing; and the walls might never have been built. Each of us needs the mind and motivation of Nehemiah today.

SELF-SACRIFICING COURAGE DESPITE RELENTLESS CONSPIRACY

Nehemiah 4:7-11; Daniel 9:25; Psalm 2:1-8.

The goal of the enemy is to try to stop us from doing God's work through his emissaries. But with Christ on our side, we shall overcome all their tricks. No good thing has ever been done on earth without opposition. Because Satan is still in the world, he opposes the work of God. And those who wait for better times before answering God's call will never find it. Some believers, not knowing the Scripture and the purpose of God, think the persecution they suffer is too much and therefore give in. While the wicked men are waxing worse and worse, we should be waxing stronger and tougher. While the enemies engaged Nehemiah full-time, he was determined that nothing would stop the work of God he was involved with.

STRATEGIC CREATIVITY UNDER RECURRENT CONFLICTS

Nehemiah 4:16-23.

Nehemiah was always ahead of his enemies because of his strategic plans. He divided the workforce into two: those who were committed to building the walls and those who kept watch with their weapons of war. Although Nehemiah had not been a builder, captain of an army or governor before this time, he allowed God to use him to accomplish His purpose. He was a focused and single-minded man. Like Nehemiah, when we depend on the Lord in the face of oppositions and persecutions, He will give us a better strategy. And with God on our side and unity among us, the Discipling A Whole Nation (DAWN) project will be accomplished.

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