

External e internal enemies

Main passage: Ephesians 6: 10-17

Other passages: Acts 20:29-30, 1 Corinthians 1: 10 -12, 1 Corinthians 3:2-7, Revelations 2, 3, Ephesians 6:12, Nehemias 4:1-20, Matthew 18:20, 1 Timothy 3:14-15, Matthew 28:20, Psalms 118:8-9

I have been reading a book based in the life of Nehemiah. As we have said in the past Nehemiah was written the last chronologically in the Old Testament. 400 years went by where we don't have information till the next prophet, after nearly 4 centuries , one that preached in the desert of Judea, I am talking about John the Baptist.

They had to learn to depend on the word, there were no visions nor prophets giving the message, the only thing they had for that time was the word of God. During those 400 years of silence for the first time in that time the bible is translated in another language, to greek, in Alejandría, 70 wise men were put together and time was given to them to translate the Old Testament, That is the bible that was used in the times of Jesus that was read in many synagogues.

Nehemiah wasn't a prophet, he had the privilege to work for the king Artajerjes and the king had him as his man of trust. The king gave Nehemiah the responsibility of tasting the food and the wine in case somebody wanted to poison the king. Not anyone had this responsibility, the king trusted him.

There is a moment in which Nehemias, while being in a very good position, receives a notice that changes his life forever. Although he was not born in Jerusalem he asked how the city of his ancestors was and the information he gets puts him very sad because they told him Jerusalem was destroyed. There is no temple, there is no walls, there is nothing, there is danger, no food, no protection if the enemies attack, the life in Jerusalem is a disaster.

He gets very sad for these news. He is afraid the king may suspects that something is wrong and that someone wants to betray him or kill him so he tells the king what is happening, that he is very sad but has nothing to do with a plan against the king. The king asked him what he wants he replies that he needs authorization to go out and go to Jerusalem. The king provides all the paperwork work and he go to Jerusalem, he prays for God to let him see what God wants and when he gets to Jerusalem during few nights he goes around the city with lots of pain because of what he sees. The walls gave security for the merchants also and they were destroyed so the commercial routes that went through Jerusalem had disappeared, Jerusalem was razed, lots of debris. After few days he gets the elders together and tells them to start the work, that they won't get anything by crying but instead let's all work together and rebuilt the city for the Glory of God.

As with Noah that God gave him lots of security when He told him he had to build a boat, to Nehemiah also God gave lots of wisdom to be able to built a wall that would last for many centuries, it was very hard work. The walls were going to give protection to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

In the book of Nehemiah is mentioned that there are internal enemies and external enemies. What can we do spiritually to protect ourselves from the enemies at home?

When we read the Bible we usually give lots of importance to the enemy and to the devil but not to the spiritual work. Many Christians don't know how to protect themselves from the enemies that are inside of them, in their hearts, different in each one of us but they are still very dangerous.

In the book of Nehemiah there were enemies from outside and also from the inside and this worried him very much. All of us have enemies in the inside with whom we have to fight against every day.

Acts 20:29-30. This is a farewell message, it talks about grievous wolves, also of your own selves... Paul says that even from among the leaders some can arise that want to move away the disciples from the truth and attract them to themselves. There are two kinds of enemies, the ones that come from outside to attack us and the ones that we have inside, the ones we have to fight against.

When one is looking for a church wants a church that will be according to your beliefs and where you feel comfortable. There is not a perfect church but you look for one where you feel comfortable.

If we were living in the first centuries and look at the places where the Christians congregated. What church would you have chosen to congregate?

Let's start for the one that started in Jerusalem and that was created after the Pentecost, the one with the best pastors. Let's imagine we have here John, Peter and James preaching. Can you imagine? Imagine such a church, a church in which the disciples would go out in the street and people suddenly would start shouting and crying, and when they asked what happened the answer would be that somebody was healed just because their shadow touched them when passing by. Or remember what happened to that couple that lied and because of that they died (Acts 5:1-11), they died because they lied to pretend. Don't pretend to be something that you are not. Imagine that happening today? That was the primitive church, never again there has been another church like this. One may think that all was great and perfect in this church, but you see in chapter 6 that there are problems because enemies start arising and the first enemies that arise are murmuration. They said that they observed that in the church different amounts of food was given to different people. It was not that someone came from the outside to create problems, it was from inside the church that murmuration arose.

Let's go to Corinth. Today the preacher is Apollos, mighty in the scriptures, but the next day the ones that say to go to church are not there, and they are not going because at the end is preaching Paul not Apollos. Paul is informed by the family of Chloe that among them they have divisions and envy, 1 Corinthians 1:10-12, and Paul writes to them: you have to grow, you are in the flesh, we still have to give you milk. 1 Corinthians 3:2-7. So... would you like to go to a church like that?

Well, let's go to another church . Lets go to Ephesus, huge church, Timothy is the pastor, it was founded by Paul, also Priscilla and Aquila, the best preachers, a huge church, even the temple of the false gods are thinking of closing because nobody goes there. But the Lord tells them that they have worked but now they have left their first love, He tells them to go back to the origin in case I take the light out of the congregation. Revelations 2

Let's go to another church, to Laodicea, you are in the best church of Asia Minor, we have everything, we are the best, we don't have any mistakes, but the Lord says: You are poor, miserable, I am at the door knocking, if anyone opens I will go in. Revelations 3. Note that this is said to the church, that the Lord is knocking, many times we think that is only for the sinners, but it is also for the churches.

There is not a perfect church. Today we fight against enemies in the outside, principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, Ephesians 6:1, but we also have internal enemies that will try to stop the growing of the church, to stop the holiness, the order. Today is happening in the spiritual ground what happened to Nehemiah in the physical. Let's read Nehemias 4:1-2, the enemies did not want Jerusalem to recover, they said "we can not allow for them to rebuild Jerusalem again, lets go and discourage him, even kill them but we can no allow for Jerusalem to be rebuilt"

Nehemiah 4:4 . Once someone asked to a wise man if he agreed with this prayer, the answer was " you have to be very spiritual to pray like this".

Nehemiah had spiritual discernment and he knew that behind what they wanted was to attack the God of Israel. Today when politicians want to remove christians signs or festivities what they want to do is also remove God from the people. They start taking away things and at the end they will forbid to praise God, they want to remove the names of Israel and Jerusalem.

The only two tribes that came back were Benjamin and Judah, it was very important for the tribe of Judah to remain intact without contamination because through that tribe the Messiah would come. Jacob said to Judah " from you the authority won't be taken till the Messiah comes". The tribe of Judah was the one that again was in Jerusalem and are from that tribe the ones that go to Nehemiah and tell him that they can not work any more, that there is a lot work to be done, that they will never end, but they were the ones that had to have more clear the importance of rebuilding Jerusalem, the city where Jesus was doing to die, there the new covenant was going to be done, there He was going to be risen, there is where is the Lord is coming back, the New Jerusalem. The city was restored because the Messiah was going to need it. "Don't say you are tired, I know there is a lot of work that has to be done". We see here that the internal enemy is the discouragement, another enemy to fight against.

In Nehemiah 4: 14-20 it shows us the way they worked. "You come to work? Ok. You came to cause problems? Get out of here."

Paul realized that the soldier had a sword that during many years allowed the armies to obtain the victory, not only they had to be alert concerning the enemies, they also had to work.

Nehemiah 4:23. What time do I to rest? You will have time to rest when you are in the presence of the Lord. Work for the Lord all the time you can. If you are in the army you hardly rest, many times you will have to spend all the night up.

In the book of Nehemiah we read that they worked during the day and at night there were sentinels because the life of many depended on them. In the Bible says that in 52 days the walls of Jerusalem were finished for the Glory of God and when their enemies saw that they were afraid and they recognized that the work was backed up by the Lord.

The way we do things for the Lord opens doors to reach other people for God, with our life we can show that we love the Lord and we love His work, because we love Him and we want to show it with actions, not just with words.

Today the most sacred place in the word is where the church of our Lord Jesus Christ congregates, "Where there are two or three in my name together I am there" Matthew 18:20

1 Timothy 3:14-15. Instructions are given to the pastor of the congregation how he must behave in church, how different people has to behave in the house of God which is the pillar and ground of the truth.

Today we don't lift up columns but there was a costume by which when someone wanted to be remembered or did not have offsprings columns were lifted in important places and at the bottom the name of the person was put so people would know that is was lifted in the honour of that particular person. See how important the columns are in the Bible. At the entrance of the temple two columns were placed, apparently they did not have a function but they were there for something very important.

Jesus presents himself in the book of Revelations in different forms according to the church to which He talks. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" Revelations 2:11. If they live a life in victory, if they don't go into temptation and they are faithful there is a reward, a promise.

Epheso: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life. Revelations 2:7

Smirna: He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. Revelations 2:11

Pergamos: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. Revelations 2:17

Thyatira: And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations,, And I will give him the morning star. Revelations 2: 26-28

Sardis: He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. Revelations 3:5

Philadelphia: Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. Revelations 3:12. See how important were the columns

Laodiceans: To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. Revelations 3:21

In Revelations 3:20 says, Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Paul says that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. We don't fight against each other but we complement each other because we need each other and at the same time the church is a place of refuge for the one that needs restoration, the Lord is here to restore all of your life, to make a new creation of you. Let's stand up and work together and show the word that the Lord is alive and He is with us. There are two weeks left for the year to end. How has your year been? Your matrimony? The church? Your private life?. In 52 days the walls were rebuilt, all that in many years could not be done was done in 52 days. The Lord only wants you to put your will at His feet, all that you have not been able to be done in many years He can restore you life in you came to Him.

The Lord is with us, people trust in economy, but we trust in the power of God and even if you feel like an ant that can be crushed at any moment trust His word, the Bible says "I am strong in the Lord" This was a lesson that took many years to be learned by Paul till he said: If this is really true that your power manifests in my debility then from today I will change my way of thinking, praying and living and will start rejoicing in my weaknesses because the more weak I am the stronger I am in you. The more weak you feel the stronger the Lord is with you.

Jonathan said: Lets go to the mountain, there are lots of philistines, lots of enemies but if the Lord is with us it does not matter, the war is not ours, it is the Lord's.

Once a man with a dry bone and the support of the Lord defeated 1000 philistines. What makes the different is not what we have but who we are in the Lord. Don't cry, don't fear, shalom aleichem. The Lord says: Have peace because I am going to be with you all days till the end of the earth. Matthew 28:20

Where is the centre of the Bible? The exact center says: It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes. Psalms 118:8-9