

## Watchman's Strengths and Weaknesses

### A Watchman's Weakness

Nehemiah the prophet was a king's servant, then a bold negotiator, then a wall-builder, and last a prophet. He assembled a group of scared men and women who were untrained at soldiering, wall-building, and didn't sign up to be Watchman or warriors. But as often happens, war found them. Anytime God's people take part of the enemy's territory, the enemy is likely to show up. He will stomp and hiss and threaten, but his steps have boundaries, his voice is quenchable, and his threats must yield to God's Word.

Sanballat and Tobiah, the enemies of God, plotted disaster. They boldly threatened Nehemiah – openly and in person but planned to attack secretly.

Nehemiah, undeterred, set about the task at hand because the only way to be completely secure is to be protected on all sides. The wall must be finished. Scope out the enemy. Understand they are dangerous, and their threats are real. Yet, continue the work.

Good plan.

*"And our enemies said, "They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work." (Neh. 4:11)*

New plan.

*"From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me." (Nehemiah 4:16-18)*

Nehemiah saw the immensity of the work. He knew the enemy was real, and dangerous, and determined to keep what had been theirs. Nehemiah also had a promise from God that He would defend His people while they rebuilt the city.

Compare threats to promises. Choose the promises.

Nehemiah did what any great general would do. He rallied the only "troops" he had, described the enemy's strengths, explained the battle plan, and assured his troops they could win.

New plan. New problem.

*"The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another. In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us." (Nehemiah 4:19-20)*

## **A Watchman Knows His Strengths and His Weaknesses.**

To condense the story; the Watchmen and Watchwomen protect and build at the same time, the wall is finished, the city is safe, Israel wins. Why? Because Watchmen understand their capabilities are never sufficient, they must rely upon God to make them someone they are not, to accomplish something they cannot. No experience, no chance of success—no problem. *Our God shall fight for us!*

Nehemiah was able to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem with a handful of rag-tag farmers, and herdsmen, and women, and a few newly appointed and equally inexperienced city officials. Nehemiah knew what every Watchman or every Christian, needs to know. They must know the task they've been given is a massive undertaking. As Dr. Henry Blackaby writes in *Experiencing God*, "We have been given a God-sized task." God stretches us and grows us by assigning tasks we cannot possibly do alone. We must rely on Him for the work to ever be completed.

Will we encounter hardship? Yes. Nehemiah's and ours will be exhausting work. Consider their task. The climate was arid. The sun was scorching, and the stores ran out of sunscreen. Due to the crumbled walls, the electricity was out, so the air conditioning wasn't working. They were using tools with which they were unfamiliar and doing work they had never done.

Their cell phones had no signal in the desert, so they had to communicate by trumpet sounds. And last, but certainly not least, their enemy was strong, motivated, and angry.

This is making light of a difficult situation to make a point. The work was not hard, it was impossible. The conditions were not severe, they were unbearable. The opposition was not just angry and strong and motivated, they were armed, with actual weapons (and their camels had AC). And both the numbers and experience were definitely on their side. But none of that mattered to Nehemiah's wall-builders, nor does it matter to us.

The reason none of those things mattered was that one little phrase tacked on the very end of the very stirring motivational speech Nehemiah gave.

***"...our God will fight for us."***

Yes, Nehemiah's "army" was no army, and yes, they were working and ready to fight at all times – working and soldiering. The work was not a problem, these were workers. Soldiering, however, was not on the job description.

There was a solution to that problem – don't do the fighting. What? Isn't that kind of important to the whole take the city for God part? Won't the enemy attack if they know we cannot defend ourselves? Does it make any sense to put laborers up on the wall where soldiers should be?

All of those were legitimate concerns and real fears. They were indeed under-armored and overworked. The answers to all those questions made the solution sound even more impossible, which is precisely where it needed to be for victory. God's victory. Complete victory.

Bring the story to modern times and End Times. Many Watchmen are not in full-time ministry. Many have no experience at this work. The majority are misunderstood for their stand. And worst of all, we are divided far apart from each other. Unpaid, misunderstood, inexperienced, and alone: not the best set of circumstances. Definitely not a recipe for success.

God says, "Perfect. Exactly as planned."

We all face a literal, spiritual, powerful enemy with experience that goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. He's invisible, accompanied by thousands or millions or billions of evil soldiers who are also invisible and don't fight fair. Why would God see all those same conditions and weaknesses, and yet send ill-equipped and over-matched humans to do the job He could do Himself with one wave of His hand? Two reasons; and these two are the core and foundation and the very definition of the battles and work Watchmen face in this century.

**First, our strength is made perfect in weakness.**

*"And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." (2 Cor. 12:9)*

We fully comprehend our weakness after we've won a battle everyone knew was impossible, but God rose to our rescue. Compared to some enemies, we are completely over-matched. We are genuinely outnumbered, and the enemy doesn't fight by the same rules as the rest of us. Note the verse does not say God increases our strength, or sends us reinforcements, or magically multiplies our number of soldiers.

It says we have weaknesses, but our strength can be perfected even in our weakness because God is our strength.

**Second, the favor of God rests upon us when we do His work.**

"May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands." (Psa. 90:17).

We can do the work because God gives us strength and inexplicable wisdom to see the answers others do not understand and do the work others would not even attempt. Nehemiah's work seemed insurmountable, yet with two words, the problem was solved,

"...God...us."

Those with Nehemiah did not come to the city with the skills to rebuild a city wall. He needed stone masons, he had shepherds. His work required architects. He had handmaids. He needed armed and trained warriors; and he had tentmakers. He needed Watchmen, he had mothers. That is how they arrived, but that was not who they remained.

Nehemiah's shepherds became builders. Nehemiah's mothers became watchers. Nehemiah's elders became swordsmen. As far as Scripture tells us, there was not a military man among them. Let that settle for a moment. There were no soldiers in Nehemiah's army.

With all the above being accurate, and it is, and with all the characters playing the roles they played, and they did, we can only arrive at one conclusion.

God is able to accomplish His goals with anyone who is willing to serve. He equips the called, He does not (always) call the equipped. God is not only able to use anyone for anything, He does it regularly and on purpose.

Watchman, this is your moment. God has called you to this role. You may be fully prepared, studied, equipped and knowledgeable ...or not.

Hear this. Write it down—no, seriously, write it down.

Repeat it to yourself until it resonates within you, and you know it as surely as you know your own name. God will use you, because He has called you, because He knows you. Say it. Believe it. Walk in it. Here it is,

**Known by God. Called by God. Equipped by God. Used by God.**

What could any Watchman, or any Christian, ask beyond that?