

**Matthew 7:24-27 (ESV)**

**<sup>24</sup>“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”**

Welcome to this edition of the GodNAmerica Podcast. This is Perry Greene, your host. As always, I appreciate you for taking the time to listen in on this lesson. Please stop by our website, GodNAmerica.com and check out our articles and other teachings. We have our App in place now and I hope you will download it on your smart device.

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One of the things I want to do in this ministry is to remind us to be diligent in our walk with God. There are many who would divert you from Him. Stay strong in His power. You will make a difference.

Gustave de Beaumont (February 6, 1802-March 30, 1865) was a French historian, published his work in Paris where he documented his travels in America with Alexis de Tocqueville, May 1831-February 1832. He was commissioned by the French Government to study the American prisons, democracy, and religion. Gustave de Beaumont reported:

- Religion in America is not only a moral institution but also a political institution. All of the American constitutions exhort the citizens to practice religious worship as a safeguard both to good morals and to public liberties. In the United States, the law is never atheistic. . .
- There is no political ceremony in America that does not begin with a pious invocation. I have seen a meeting of the Senate in Washington open with a prayer, and the anniversary festival of the Declaration of Independence consists, in the United States, of an entirely religious ceremony.
- I have just indicated how the law, which recognizes neither the authority nor the existence of clergy, confirms the power of religion.
- I shall add that the religious sects, which remain strangers to party activity, are far from showing themselves indifferent to political interests and to the government of the country.
- They all take a lively interest in the maintenance of American institutions through the voice of their ministers in the sacred pulpit and even in the political assemblies. In America, Christian religion is always at the service of freedom.
- It is a principle of the United States legislature that, to be good citizen, it is necessary to be religious; and it is a no less well-established rule that, to fulfill one's duty toward God, it is necessary to be a good citizen.

Alexis de Tocqueville (July 29, 1805-April 16, 1859) was a French statesman, historian and social philosopher. As stated above, he traveled with Gustave de Beaumont on a nine month tour of the USA. He made observations about America in his work entitled, “Democracy in America.” In it he wrote things like:

- In the United States the sovereign authority is religious....There is no country in the whole world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America, and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.
- America is still the place where the Christian religion has kept the greatest real power over men's souls; and nothing better demonstrates how useful and natural it is to man, since the country where it now has the widest sway is both the most enlightened and the freest.
- They brought with them...a form of Christianity, which I cannot better describe, than by styling it a democratic and republican religion....From the earliest settlement of the emigrants, politics and religion contracted an alliance which has never been dissolved.

America started as a nation firmly established on the gospel of Jesus. Every part of American life, including the political was biblically based. In fact, Christianity was so interwoven into the fabric of the nation that people were held in suspicion who were not Christian. How things have changed!

Being a Christian has become detrimental. Christianity is looked upon as being a threat to America where once it was the lifeblood of the nation. To affirm one's faith in Christ today, and apply it to any controversial topic, brings many types of reactions – anything from ridicule to open animosity.

- A friend of mine spoke out on a social media platform citing what God says about the transgender issue and was soundly rebuked as a “bigot.”
- Preachers are being arrested for holding services with their churches.
- Preachers are being silenced – not only by certain governmental agencies, but even by their own leadership for speaking the truth of God's word in the current circumstances.

One of my favorite periods of biblical history is when the Jewish people returned to Israel from their captivity in Babylon. They went back and rebuilt the walls of the city, the temple, and the religion of the nation. Great heroes like Zerubbabel, Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah led and ministered to the remnant that returned.

It seems like today that God is working with a new remnant. It is not the “Christian in Name Only.” There is a committed few who want to be His disciples and implement biblical principle in every aspect of life. This is in contrast to the majority who are either unconcerned with God's leadership or only want His direction when it is convenient or when there is a crisis. In the last year, I believe that the church has been winnowed by the winds of assault on the body of Christ. Question, Are there churches still standing for 100% of God in their lives or is there the traditional picking and choosing?

The attacks on God's remnant are many. Just like in the days of Nehemiah the assaults occur. Nehemiah led a group back to Jerusalem after hearing of the mess the city was still in. His task was to rebuild the walls of the city, which he did in fifty-two days. It was not an easy task. He met opposition almost immediately.

### **The Loyal Opposition**

The people of the land did not want the Jews to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. They did not want the Jews to reoccupy the other cities they had given up seventy years before. They did not want the presence of their God again. So, as the Jews worked in **Nehemiah 3**, they mounted the assaults.

**A. First, there was Ridicule – Nehemiah 4:1-3 (ESV)**

**Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. <sup>2</sup> And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?” <sup>3</sup> Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, “Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!”**

1. There was mockery and insult to deflate the confidence of the Jews in their God
2. Mockery and insult to produce doubt in their task and in themselves – “Are we really supposed to do this?” // “Is our work any good?”
3. Mockery and insult to distract the Jews from their work

I wonder if Satan used ridicule and mockery in Eden. **Genesis 3:1 (ESV):**

**Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You [PLURAL] shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”**

Sometimes when we are mocked or what we have believed is mocked we let our defenses down. Maybe it happened to Eve that way.

There is an element of peer pressure that happens as well. The people of the land in Nehemiah’s day were also subjects of the same king. In some ways, the Jews may have felt inferior to them. So, when they began to pressure them about rebuilding it may have felt like a lot of the same kind of peer pressures we feel, especially when we try to defend our faith but don’t really know how.

Perhaps Adam felt a kind of peer pressure with Eve and the serpent. After all, they were all creations of God. Eve had given in, prompted by the serpent, why not Adam, too?

Today many believers are trusting God to do some pretty incredible things to reverse the direction of the country. These Christian Patriots are standing their ground with the Bible in hand only to be mocked as “conspiracy theorists” with aluminum foil hats; and people who “cling to their guns and their bibles.” Yet they aren’t giving in or backing down.

BTW, I’ve heard “conspiracy theorists” for years. My late father-in-law told me about our corrupt government over thirty years ago. I thought he was off base. However, many of the things that he told me about have happened. As things are being revealed, I am finding that there is more evil and corruption than I ever dreamed possible, not just by political leaders but among the people as well. We have drifted far from our original foundation of Jesus Christ.

**B. Second, Ridicule Escalates to Anger**

Upon hearing the mocking, Nehemiah prayed and asked God to turn back their mockery. The people continued to build and united the wall at half its height. When their enemies heard, they were angry and stepped up the pressure. Notice **Nehemiah 4:7-10 (ESV):**

**<sup>7</sup> But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the**

**breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. <sup>8</sup>And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. <sup>9</sup>And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.**

Anger against the traditional Christian beliefs is commonplace today. Not only are there insults and ridicule, there are sometimes loud disagreement and threats.

### **C. Third, Anger Escalates to Threats of Violence**

In **Nehemiah 4:10-11** (ESV) we see some of the effects of the threats and potential violence:

**<sup>10</sup> In Judah it was said, “The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall.” <sup>11</sup> And our enemies said, “They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work.”**

The people began to lose heart and doubted their abilities to continue the work.

Today, violent attacks on individuals or mob assaults on cities have become the norm. These threats and attacks have a way of deflating the courage of godly people.

A church I know was afraid to do a good deed for their police department because BLM might find out and retaliate. Fortunately faith prevailed over fear and the good deed was done. Under normal circumstances it would not have been an issue to do a kind deed to the police but violent threats have a way of stoking our fears and stopping our work.

What do you remember about faith over fear? How about **2 Timothy 1:7** (ESV):

**<sup>7</sup> for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.**

Nehemiah and his people relied on prayer and preparation for self-defense as they carried out their work. God kept answering their faithful requests.

We should note that these threats had an effect on his own people. In **Nehemiah 4:12** (ESV) we read:

**<sup>12</sup> At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, “You must return to us.”**

## **The Victory**

### **A. Victory Came to the People**

The task would eventually be completed in fifty-two days. The wall would be rebuilt to its full height, not just the half. They did not stop working.

#### **1. The People Watched and Prayed – Nehemiah 4:9** (ESV)

**<sup>9</sup> And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.**

Jesus reminds us in **Matthew 26:41** (ESV):

**<sup>41</sup> Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**

Paul states in **Colossians 4:2** (ESV):

**<sup>2</sup> Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.**

2. The People Prepared for Battle

War is not an unusual event for God's people of any age. It just takes different forms.

Remember **Psalm 144:1** (ESV)?

**Blessed be the LORD, my rock,  
who trains my hands for war,  
and my fingers for battle;**

The book of Nehemiah is one of the bases for our second amendment right to bear arms. Just as Nehemiah's workers armed themselves in case of battle, we have that right as well.

We may or may not be involved in a physical contest with evil. However, there is a spiritual application to a definite battle in which we are engaged. **Ephesians 6** tells us of the principalities and powers that we engage in this spiritual warfare. It is evident today without looking too far.

Nehemiah and his people were ready to literally fight their enemies but **did a basic thing first**. They engaged the spiritual enemies with prayer and it deterred the physical. After describing the "whole armor of God" in **Ephesians 6**, Paul reminds us to pray (**Ephesians 6:18-20**). General Flynn has mentioned in many of his interviews and speeches that prayer is our most effective weapon. It seems like it was for Nehemiah's workforce, why not us?

3. The People Participated in the Task at Hand

- They didn't quit, they persevered to the end of their work and ministry to Jerusalem.
- They would not be stopped by intimidation – they kept going in spite of their fears.
- They "feared God" more than man and honored Him.
- They brought the presence of God to that place by their prayers!

**B. We Can Win Over opposition**

1. Bullies Typically Back Down – their task was completed sooner than anticipated
2. Satan backed down from Jesus when he tempted Him in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 – he didn't stay away from Jesus but he did go away.
3. It is a promise for us, too.

**James 4:7** (ESV) **Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

**Ephesians 6:13** (ESV) **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.**

4. There is a Resistance Movement Today

WWII had resistance movements in various European countries. There is one going on today to resist the devil and his forces led by godly believers. You see, the ungodly typically don't resist the evil one but participate with him either overtly in their actions or covertly by their silence. It is important that godly people do not stand silently by in the face of godless opposition to the task God has assigned us.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer** once said:  
**“Silence in the face of evil is itself evil:  
God will not hold us guiltless.  
Not to speak is to speak.  
Not to act is to act.”**

### **Our Mission**

Nehemiah had his mission. It was not an easy one. It did not all just “fall into place.” Nehemiah led his people by faith. Through prayer and preparation the wall was completed. We have a mission, too. Ultimately that mission is to rebuild the lives of people by means of the gospel and restore them to God just like the Jews rebuilt their temple, religion and walls. That includes preparation and participation in what is happening in our world.

The church does not have the luxury of staying in its “holy huddle.” It is required to engage in the work God has set before it. Walls of protection need to be built and an enemy engaged. This is no walk in the park, no picnic at the beach, it is a challenging task.

This work of restoration begins with each one of us. To change the world you must change you. When God is the center of our lives we become leaven to others (**Matthew 13:33**). When we can govern ourselves we can then influence others to be self-governing and have a self-governing nation under God instead of a nation governed by the ungodly.

It is true as **John Adams said, that our Constitution is only for a moral and religious people.** We cannot have a self-governing nation if we do not have self-governing people. Liberty demands taking responsibility and having accountability to live freely under God by the rule of law, our Constitution, which was based on God’s word.

**“Let us rise up and build” (Nehemiah 2:18)**, as the Jews of Nehemiah’s day chose to do. In that building we commit ourselves to God. Then, we restore people to God and the fate of our nation to Him. Keep the words of **Nehemiah 4:14 (ESV)** close to you:

**“Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”**

I am finding the Bible to be more and more relevant every day. It is the “living word of God” and finds us in every situation of life. It’s not just a devotional book to make us feel good, it is here to be a practical guide to life and its challenges.

These Bible heroes really challenge me to want to be a more deeply committed Christian. When I reflect on their lives I ask, “Why not here? Why not today? Why not us?”

I want to encourage us (me too) to not be afraid of what men can do to us. Instead, stand for what is right. Stand for the truths of scripture no matter what oppositions we may face. It may be ridicule, anger, threats of violence, or even violence itself. It may be an attempted interruption of our work. As Paul in **Galatians 1:10 (ESV)** we ask:

**<sup>10</sup>For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.**

Let’s pray and prepare; then do what is before us. Until next time, Keep The Light Burning!