

GOD'S REMEDY FOR DISCOURAGEMENT

(Nehemiah 4:14)

Have you been deeply discouraged lately? All of us, in some measure, at different seasons of our lives, would face this malady of discouragement. As we reflect on Israel's experience of intense discouragement in Nehemiah 4, we will learn that God's remedy for discouragement is Himself. As Charles Spurgeon once said, "*God teaches His people every day, by sickness, by affliction, by depression of spirits, by the lackings of the joys of His countenance, that He is God and beside Him, there is no one else.*" Let's consider two important instructions concerning God's remedy for discouragement.

1. Realign your _____.

In time of crisis and great discouragement, even those of us who profess to believe and trust in God have the tendency to forget the Lord. When trouble comes, the reality of God as revealed in the Scripture could be overshadowed by the problems at hand. Nehemiah confronted this problem among the people of Israel as they were gripped by the fear of their enemies who were opposing the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 4:14,7-8). The Jewish remnants of Nehemiah's time suffered the ruins of their city and the reproach of their nation. In light of these hostile opposition and paralyzing fear in the hearts of the Israelites, God used His servant Nehemiah to encourage His people. Nehemiah summoned the people together to realign their focus from the threat of their enemies to the glorious characters of God.

Nehemiah reminds the discouraged Jews of the greatness of God. This attribute of God refers to His sovereign power and unrivaled dominion. Our great God is the powerful and almighty God who rules over all, both in heaven and on earth, and the One who has absolute control over our lives (Neh. 4:14; 1:10 1 Chron. 29:11-12). Nehemiah also calls the people to remember the awesomeness of God. God alone is the One to be feared and revered (Neh. 4:14; Isa. 8:13). When we focus on fearing God alone, all other fears will shrink and vanish from our heart. The fear of God removes all other fears in life (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 2:10; Prov. 14:26).

2. Remember that you are fighting a spiritual battle with _____.

Nehemiah provided a rallying point for the nation of Israel: the family of God and the faithfulness of God. He unified the people of Israel around a God-centered goal: fighting for the welfare of their family is fighting for the honor of God's name (Neh. 4:14). This teaches us a crucial principle in the Christian life. You and I need the family of God to encourage and build us up as we fight the good fight of faith and as we walk through the valley of discouragement (Heb. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:11,14). Ultimately, it is the faithfulness of God which brings the greatest encouragement as we fight our spiritual battles (Eph. 6:12). In the words of Nehemiah, "*Our God will fight for us!*" Since the battle belongs to the Lord, then we who are in Christ are on the winning side! (Deut. 20:4; Rom. 8:31,37; 16:20; 1 John 4:4). If God is for us, who can be against us?