

UNSTOPPABLE FAMILIES

The Transformation for Adult LifeGroups

We partner with families.

OCTOBER 7, 2018/OCTOBER 10, 2018

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: **Nehemiah 4:1-21**

*When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews,² and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"³ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!"⁴ Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity.⁵ Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of [b] the builders.⁶ So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.⁷ But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry.⁸ They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it.⁹ But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall."¹¹ Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work."¹² Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us."¹³ Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows.¹⁴ **After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."**¹⁵ When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work.¹⁶ From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah¹⁷ who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other,¹⁸ and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me.¹⁹ Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall.²⁰ Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!"²¹ So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out.*

FIRST THOUGHTS

- What's the most memorable family vacation you've been on? What made it special?
- What's the worst family vacation you've been on? Why?
- Have you ever tackled a challenge together as a family that required you to work together? Maybe it was building something or an adventure or a contest. What positive things did it do for your family to work together? What was the hardest part about working together?

Watch the Video

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Nehemiah recounts the story of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the return of a third set of Jews led by Nehemiah after their 70 years of captivity in Babylon. The events of Nehemiah take place between 445 B.C. and 430 B.C. The new Persian King allows Nehemiah (and Ezra and others) to return to Judah. Nehemiah's return is sparked by his brother's account of the state of Jerusalem and the people there. He returns and organizes the people to rebuild the walls and stand against their enemies. He works with Ezra the scribe and other religious leaders to help the people return to the faith of their fathers and worship the one God of Israel. Nehemiah shows us God is not done with his people and will provide leaders and resources to accomplish his plans.

DISCUSS THE VIDEO

- What do you think are the greatest sources of stress on your family?
- What role did the church play in your family growing up?
- How has the church partnered with you as a parent?

> Read Nehemiah 4:1-12

- What stresses and pressures were the families in Jerusalem facing as they rebuilt the walls of their city?

> Read Nehemiah 4:13-21

- What steps did Nehemiah take to address the threats facing them? What did he do to encourage the people?

Some things haven't changed. Our families are still facing pressure from outside to give up, to blow up, to quit on each other. We are easily side-tracked by the pressures of life, the demands of our schedules, and our own selfishness so we don't focus on what God wants for our families. As you think about what the families during the time of Nehemiah face and what he did to help them, what can you apply to your family today?

- What enemy does my family need protecting from?
- What can I do to protect my family?
- How can I make my family a greater priority and show them that?
- How can the church partner with you and your family to accomplish God's vision for your family?

If we want to be unstoppable families, here are a few things we can learn from Nehemiah:

1. The power of prayer.
2. The power of working together.
3. The power of purpose.

Take 20 . . .

Choose one or more of these Take 20 Challenges to complete this week:

- Take 20 minutes to have a family meeting this week. Read some verses to encourage you and your family and pray for each other and celebrate what God has done for you.
- Take 20 minutes to do something to serve others together as a family this week. You may want to reference the 20 ways to show unstoppable love from last week.
- Take 20 minutes to play. If you have younger kids, the story of Nehemiah is a fun one to play out with them. Build walls out of blanket forts or boxes or building blocks. Talk about the enemies who wanted to tear down the walls. Share how God helped the people to rebuild the walls.

UPCOMING LESSONS

Focus more on the idea of God's Unstoppable Truth by reading in your Personal Devotional Guide.

- 10/14 Unstoppable Community—We practice community.
 10/21 Unstoppable Generosity—We give generously.
 10/28 Unstoppable Mission—We live beyond ourselves.

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

8th - Ezra 9-10; Psalm 131; Luke 21 | **9th** - Nehemiah 1-2; Psalm 133; Luke 22 | **10th** - Nehemiah 3-4; Luke 23 | **11th** - Nehemiah 5-6; Psalm 146; Luke 24 | **12th** - Nehemiah 7-8; Acts 1 | **13th** - Nehemiah 9-10; Acts 2 | **14th** - Nehemiah 11-12; Psalm 1; Acts 3