

REDLINED • Week 2: Anger

Daily Briefing • Day 3 of 5 • Expecting Friction

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

James 1:19–20

On Sunday we walked through five responses to selfish anger. Today we take the first one and put it to work. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I pray that You would help me have appropriate expectations for the world I live in. Help me not to expect this world to be Eden or the new heavens and the new earth, but to realize that in this life we will have trouble. I pray that I would not be caught off guard and thrown into a rage when things do not go according to plan. Help me hold this perspective without becoming pessimistic. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

In the Old Testament book of Nehemiah, a godly leader named Nehemiah was doing exactly what God had put in front of him to do. He had carried the burden for about four months before he ever spoke to the king. He prayed to God and then shockingly got the king's permission, traveled to Jerusalem, the ruined capital of his ancestors, inspected the city's broken walls at night, and organized an entire city to rebuild them. The book even clearly states that God's hand was upon his efforts (Nehemiah 2:8, 18). Even so, the opposition started almost immediately, and it came from three directions.

It came from outside first. An enemy of the Jewish people named Sanballat heard about the work and jeered at the builders in front of an army. *"What are these feeble Jews doing?"* Another enemy named Tobiah stood next to him and added that a fox climbing the wall would knock it down. When mockery did not stop the work, the opposition escalated. Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites *"all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it."* Obedience did not buy peace from the outside. It drew attention from the outside.

Then it came from inside the work. Nehemiah 4:10 records what the Jewish builders themselves were saying halfway up the wall. *"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."* These are not enemies. These are the people on his own crew, telling their leader it cannot be done. Obedience did not remove exhaustion.

Then it came from inside the people. Chapter five opens with *"a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers."* Families were mortgaging fields and vineyards to buy grain. Some had already sold their children into slavery. That complaint was not aimed at their enemies. It was aimed at each other. Nehemiah was doing precisely what God wanted, and his own people were in open conflict while he obeyed.

None of this should surprise anyone who has read the first three chapters of Genesis. When God dealt with Adam He said, *"cursed is the ground because of you,"* and then described what that would feel like on an ordinary Tuesday. *"Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you."* The ground still produces, but it produces with resistance now. That is the ground you walk onto every morning. Centuries later Jesus said the same thing about the whole of life, and He said it on purpose so that His followers would not be blindsided by it. *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* You were told in advance.

Here is why this belongs in a week about anger. Anger is a verdict, and a verdict requires a sense that something should not have happened. Remove the "should not" and most of the verdict goes with it. Think about the last three things that set you off. The traffic, the coworker who dropped the ball, the child who did not listen the first time, the project that took twice as long as the estimate. In almost every case you were not reacting to the difficulty itself. You were reacting to a shock to your expectations. You had quietly assumed a

version of the day in which those things do not happen, and when the day refused to cooperate, you issued your verdict.

This is not defeatism, and it matters to say why. Defeatism says the wall cannot be built, so stop building. Nehemiah did the opposite. *“And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.”* He prayed and he posted sentries. He reorganized the crew so that *“each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other.”* He expected the trouble and he kept building through it, and Jerusalem’s wall was finished in fifty-two days. Expecting friction did not slow the work down. It kept the work from being stopped by something any of us should see coming.

Expecting friction also does not mean absorbing everything that happens to you. When Nehemiah heard the outcry in chapter five, the text says, *“I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words.”* He was angry and he was right to be, because men were exploiting their own brothers, and that is sin rather than inconvenience. So he took counsel with himself, brought charges against the nobles and officials, and called a public assembly. That is the line we drew on Sunday. Ordinary friction is what you plan for and carry. Actual sin is what you name and confront. Expecting the first is what keeps you clear-headed enough to handle the second.

So build the expectation in before the day starts. You live in a world with thorns in the ground and people who will let you down, and God told you so plainly. The traffic will be bad. Somebody will drop the ball. The project will run long, and the person you were counting on will forget. None of that is evidence that your life has gone wrong. It is evidence that you live exactly where Scripture says you live. Anticipate it, prepare for it, and then go do the work with one hand while you keep your guard up with the other. Realistic expectations will help you guard against sinful anger.

READ & MEDITATE

Nehemiah 4:6–10

So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. ⁷ 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. ⁸ And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. ⁹ And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night. ¹⁰ 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.”

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

Read the Nehemiah passage slowly and count the sources of resistance in five verses. Enemies on the outside were plotting violence, and workers on the inside were saying the job was too big. Then notice verse nine, which is the only verse in the passage describing what Nehemiah did about it. He prayed and he set a guard. Then read John 16:33 and ask yourself whether you have been living as though Jesus said the opposite.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

A lot of anger is a reaction to the gap between what happened and what you assumed would happen. The assumption stays invisible until you write it down.

Name the last three things that made you angry. Next to each one, write the assumption you were making: how it was supposed to go, how people were supposed to act, or what the solution was supposed to fix.

Nehemiah was doing exactly what God wanted and still got mockery from outside, exhaustion inside the work, and conflict among his own people.

Where have you treated resistance as evidence that you must be doing the wrong thing?

Fill in the blank from John 16:33:

In the world you will have _____. But take heart; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

*These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.

Jesus told you plainly and in advance that this world would bring trouble. So why does trouble still catch you off guard?

Expecting friction is not pessimism. Nehemiah prayed, set a guard, armed the builders, and finished the wall in fifty-two days.

What are you building right now that you have been tempted to quit because of the resistance? What would praying and setting a guard look like for it this week?

Some friction you carry. Some friction is actual sin and has to be confronted. Nehemiah took both of these approaches inside the same book.

Which one are you facing right now, and which one have you been treating it as? Then rate yourself from one to ten on how quickly you are thrown when a day refuses to go according to plan. Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. Ask God for accurate expectations of the world you live in, and for the steadiness to expect trouble without becoming pessimistic about it.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite James 1:19–20 from memory:
