



NO LIMITS

WITH PASTOR DELMAN

I'M NOT COMING DOWN

S E R M O N G U I D E

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Nehemiah 6:1-14

INTRODUCTION

They say that somewhere around mile 20, every marathon runner hits what they call “the wall.” It is a barrier you feel in your body when every fiber of your being is screaming to stop. Those who finish the race are not the ones who never hit the wall; they are the ones who hit the wall and keep their feet moving anyway. Resilience is not the absence of the urge to quit. It is what you do with that urge when it happens. Many of us know what it feels like to hit a wall in our marriage, career, health, or faith. When you hit that wall, everything in you tells you to give up.

Figuring out how to navigate the walls of life is what our text today is all about. In the book of Nehemiah, we find a man in the process of rebuilding what was broken. He returned from exile to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and restore safety and dignity to his people. By the time we get to chapter six, the work is almost done. But just as he is on the verge of victory, the opposition intensifies. The attacks he faces are designed with one goal: to get him to come down off that wall. Nehemiah's story is a masterclass for us on how to stand firm when the world tries to make us give up on our Kingdom assignment.

KEY POINTS

1. Refuse To Be Blinded By Distractions

Nehemiah's enemies, Sanballat and Geshem, try to lure him away from his work with a seemingly friendly invitation to meet in the plain of Ono. The text reveals their true intent was to do him harm. Nehemiah saw through the seduction. He understood that a strategic “pause” was just as dangerous as quitting altogether. Distractions are persistent; they sent for him four times. The enemy doesn't always have to stop us with one big catastrophe. He can stop us with a thousand small interruptions and conversations we have no business having. Nehemiah's response was clear and decisive: “I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down.”

In our modern world, the “plain of Ono” is filled with endless distractions. They call to us from our social media feeds, our text messages, and even from well-meaning people who pull us from our purpose. When we are engaged in the “great work” of building our lives, families, and communities, or fighting for social justice, the enemy will try to wear down our will with constant interruptions. Focus is not just saying yes to your assignment; it is saying no to the hundred other good things that compete for your attention. For believers on a mission, “no” is a complete sentence. We must have the wisdom to recognize a distraction for what it is and the courage to refuse to come down from the wall God has placed us on.

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2. Refuse To Come Down For Defamation

When distraction failed, the enemy turned to defamation. Sanballat sent an open letter filled with lies, accusing Nehemiah of rebelling against the king and plotting to make himself a king. It was character assassination by gossip, designed to get Nehemiah to stop building so he could start defending himself. People read the letter, but nobody fact-checked it. Nehemiah, however, does not waste his time on a public relations campaign. He stays on the wall, sends a short reply stating, "No such things as you say have been done," and then immediately asks God to strengthen his hands. He refused to be consumed with defending his reputation.

As followers of Christ, especially those who dare to speak truth to power, we must expect to be lied on. From Ida B. Wells to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., slander has always been a weapon used to silence voices for justice. The temptation is to come down from our wall to argue in the comments section or chase down every rumor. But you cannot finish the work and feed the rumors at the same time. God calls us to keep our hands on the plow. Our silence in the face of lies is not weakness; it is the strength of someone who is focused on their assignment. We must learn to turn the lies over to God in prayer and let our finished work be our ultimate vindication.

3. Refuse To Be Paralyzed By Discouragement

The final and most dangerous attack came from within, dressed as a friend. A prophet named Shemaiah, whom Nehemiah trusted, tried to use spiritual language to instill fear. He urged Nehemiah to hide in the temple to save his own life. The goal was to make Nehemiah sin by acting out of fear. Nehemiah's response is a powerful lesson in identity and discernment. He asks, "Should a man like me run away?" He recognized that God had not sent this message of fear. He saw the plot for what it was: an attempt to discourage him into quitting.

Fear is the opposite of faith, and the enemy traffics in it. Discouragement often comes wrapped in religious language, urging us to play it safe and protect ourselves. True spiritual resilience is the product of discernment, the ability to distinguish God's voice from a counterfeit. Nehemiah's stability came from his identity. He knew who he was, and a man on a mission from God does not run. When discouragement comes, we must talk back to it. We must remind ourselves of who we are in Christ and whose we are. Our identity gives us the stability to stand firm against fear, even when it comes from sources we trust.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What “invitations to Ono” (persistent distractions) are currently trying to pull you away from your God-given assignment, and how can you practice saying a firm “no” to protect your focus?
2. The sermon mentions that leaders from Marcus Garvey to Dr. King were lied on. In what ways can you entrust your reputation to God and “keep building” when faced with gossip or misunderstanding in your own life or justice work?
3. Nehemiah declared, “Should a man like me run away?” How does knowing your true identity in Christ give you the stability to stand firm against fear and discouragement, especially when it comes from seemingly friendly sources?
