

TALK IT OVER

REBUILDERS SERIES | PART 4

12 JULY 2026

NOTES TO LEADERS

Our next prayer meeting is on the 28th of July at 7pm. Encourage your LifeGroup to join us for supper from 6pm.

SCRIPTURES

NEHEMIAH 6:1-4

When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it—though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates—²Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: “Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono.” But they were scheming to harm me; ³so I sent messengers to them with this reply: “I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?”⁴Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.

NEHEMIAH 6:15-16

So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

JOHN 16:33

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

... being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

START TALKING

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
2. What has God been doing in your world - what can we celebrate?

START THINKING

1. Read Nehemiah 6:1–9. Nehemiah repeatedly refused to "come down" from the wall despite distractions, accusations and pressure. What does this passage teach us about recognising the difference between a genuine opportunity and a distraction? How can we grow in discerning what deserves our attention and what doesn't?

2. Read John 16:33 and Philippians 1:6. Jesus promises that we will experience trouble, while Paul reminds us that God faithfully completes the work He begins. How do these two truths complement one another? What confidence should believers have when facing opposition, discouragement or seasons where progress feels slow?
3. Read Ephesians 4:15 and Nehemiah 6:8–9. Nehemiah refused to accept false accusations, yet he responded without becoming defensive or distracted. What does it look like to "speak the truth in love" today? How do we balance grace, courage and humility when standing for truth in our families, workplaces and friendships?

START SHARING

1. Ockie challenged us to consider the difference between hearing God and obeying Him. Has there been a time when you sensed God prompting you to do something but delayed acting? What held you back, and what did you learn through that experience?
2. Nehemiah stayed focused on the assignment God had given him. Where are you currently most tempted to "come down from the wall"? Is it distraction, busyness, discouragement, fear, people-pleasing, comparison or something else?
3. The message reminded us that opposition doesn't always mean we've missed God—it may actually confirm that we're walking in obedience. Can you identify an area where you've experienced resistance while trying to follow God? Looking back, how have you seen God remain faithful through it?

START PRAYING

1. Pray for Courageous Obedience. Ask God for ears that are attentive to His voice and hearts that are willing to obey quickly. Pray for courage to take the next faithful step, even when it feels uncomfortable or uncertain.
2. Pray for Strength to Stay on the Wall. Pray for one another to remain focused on God's assignment. Ask the Holy Spirit to help identify distractions, resist discouragement, overcome fear and stand firm when opposition comes.
3. Pray with Confidence in God's Faithfulness. Thank God that He always finishes what He starts. Pray that every member of the group would experience His peace, wisdom and perseverance as He continues His good work in their lives, families and workplaces.

START DOING

Stay on the Wall. Take some time this week to prayerfully identify one distraction that has been pulling your attention away from what God has asked you to do. Make one intentional decision to remove, reduce or reorder that distraction so you can focus more fully on His assignment.



TALK IT OVER

SUMMARY OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday was the final week in our Rebuilders series, based on the book of Nehemiah.

Ockie opened with a humorous story about taking his "proper" shovel to the beach with his family. While everyone else battled with flimsy plastic beach spades, his sturdy shovel effortlessly carved trenches into the sand. Before long, those trenches became walls, and those walls became an impressive fortress that withstood the incoming waves. The picture was simple but memorable: building something worthwhile requires intentional effort. This became the perfect illustration for the book of Nehemiah. God had called His people to rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem, but rebuilding wasn't easy. Every step forward was met with resistance. Ockie reminded us that the Christian life is much the same. Whether we're building a marriage, raising children, serving in church, leading a business, growing in our faith, or investing in God's Kingdom, we will face opposition. The question is not whether opposition will come, but whether we will remain faithful when it does.

1. Hearing God Is Not the Same as Obeying Him

Nehemiah's journey began when he heard about Jerusalem's broken walls. His first response was to pray, fast, mourn and seek God (Nehemiah 1:4). But he didn't stop there. When the opportunity came before the king, Nehemiah courageously acted on what God had placed in his heart.

Ockie reminded us that hearing God's voice is only the beginning. True obedience always results in action. He described two common ditches that believers often fall into: The first is hearing God but never obeying. We know God has asked us to forgive someone, step out in faith, serve, give generously, lead courageously or trust Him in a new season, but fear keeps us waiting for one more confirmation before taking a step.

Sharing personally, Ockie recalled a season where God spoke very clearly to him. The encounter was so powerful that he was physically shaking, yet months passed without him acting. It was only when Ange gently asked, "God told you something—what are you doing about it?" that he realised hearing without obedience wasn't enough. The second ditch is equally dangerous: becoming so busy doing "Christian things" that we never pause to ask what God is actually asking us to do. Activity is not the same as obedience.

Our culture often encourages us to build our careers, schedules and financial plans first, and then invite God into whatever space remains. Nehemiah modelled the opposite. God spoke first, and everything else was rearranged around His calling.

The miracle wasn't simply that Nehemiah heard God—it was that he trusted God's voice enough to reorder his entire life around it.

2. Not Everyone Leads the Vision. Everyone Is Called to Build.

Throughout Nehemiah chapter 3 we see ordinary people rebuilding the wall together. Priests, families, craftsmen and merchants each repaired the section directly in front of them.

Ockie reminded us that while not everyone receives the vision, everyone receives an invitation to participate. Some people are called to lead. Others are called to faithfully build. Neither role is more important than the other. One of the most memorable statements of the message was: "Not everyone receives the blueprint, but everyone can carry a stone."

God never intended His work to depend on one person. His Kingdom advances as ordinary people faithfully play their part together.

Peter echoes this in 1 Peter 2:5, *"you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*

Whether our contribution feels large or small, every act of obedience strengthens the wall God is building.

3. Opposition Often Confirms the Assignment

The moment rebuilding began, opposition appeared. Ockie walked through the six forms of opposition Nehemiah encountered:

- Mockery – *"What is this you are doing?"* (Nehemiah 2:19)
- Ridicule – *"Even a fox could knock your wall down."* (Nehemiah 4:1–3)
- Threats – Enemies plotting to attack the builders (Nehemiah 4:8)
- Discouragement – *"The strength of the labourers is giving out."* (Nehemiah 4:10)
- Slander – False accusations disguised as concern (Nehemiah 6:5–9)
- Intimidation – Spiritual fear intended to stop the work (Nehemiah 6:10–13)

Each time one attack failed, another followed. Ockie shared a personal story about sensing God's call into pastoral ministry as a teenager. While many celebrated the calling, his father questioned it and doubted whether he would succeed. Those words hurt deeply, yet God remained faithful. Looking back, Ockie recognised that opposition had not cancelled God's calling—it had confirmed it.

This is an important encouragement for every believer. We often assume that if God is in something it should be easy. Nehemiah teaches the opposite. If God is leading us, resistance should not surprise us.

Jesus Himself prepared His followers for this reality: *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33)

Opposition is not necessarily evidence that we've missed God. Sometimes it is evidence that we are exactly where He wants us to be.

4. Laser Focus Finishes the Work

As the wall neared completion, Nehemiah's enemies repeatedly invited him to leave the work and meet with them.

On the surface, the invitation sounded reasonable. It sounded productive. It even sounded polite.

But Nehemiah recognised it for what it really was—a distraction. His famous reply has become one of Scripture's greatest examples of focused leadership: *"I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down."* (Nehemiah 6:3)

Ockie applied this powerfully to everyday life. Many of us are not abandoning God's calling because of obvious sin, we're simply becoming distracted. Busyness has become a badge of honour, calendars overflow, meetings multiply. Urgent things crowd out important things. The enemy often doesn't need us to quit, he simply needs us to come down from the wall.

Distraction can take many forms: offence, endless arguments, unnecessary commitments, competing priorities or constant interruptions.

God is not asking for one compartment of our lives, He is asking to become the centre around which everything else revolves.

The invitation remains: Stay on the wall. Remain faithful to the assignment God has given you.

5. Stand for Truth. Name the Lie.

When distraction didn't work, Nehemiah's enemies escalated their attack.

Rather than becoming defensive or drawn into endless debate, Nehemiah simply responded:

"Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head." (Nehemiah 6:8)

Many followers of Jesus have become so afraid of causing offence that they remain silent when truth needs to be spoken, but Paul writes in Ephesians 4:15, *"Speaking the truth in love..."* Truth without love becomes harsh and love without truth becomes compromise. Jesus calls His people to hold both together. Whether in our homes, workplaces, schools, friendships or church communities, we are called to lovingly stand for truth while reflecting the grace of Christ.

6. Remember the Lord When the Pressure Is Great

As opposition intensified, Nehemiah continually pointed the people back to God. He encouraged them: *"Don't be afraid... Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome..."* (Nehemiah 4:14)

Yet Nehemiah also acted wisely. The people prayed, then they posted guards. Faith is never passive. God often works through the wisdom, gifts, relationships and opportunities He has already placed in our hands. Prayer and practical action belong together.

Paul echoes this same truth in Philippians 4:6–7, encouraging believers not to be anxious but to bring everything before God in prayer, trusting Him to guard their hearts and minds with His peace. Nehemiah kept his eyes fixed on God while keeping his hands firmly on the work.

7. God Is a God of Completion

Against all expectations, the wall was completed in only fifty-two days. The surrounding nations recognised that what had happened could only have been accomplished with God's help. The work that began with God's burden ended with God's faithfulness.

Paul echoes the same promise: *"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 1:6)

This is wonderful encouragement for every believer: God finishes what He starts. The journey may be difficult, opposition may be intense and progress may sometimes feel slow but God never abandons His purposes. Our confidence rests not in our strength but in His faithfulness.

Nehemiah Points Us to Jesus.

Ockie concluded by showing how Nehemiah ultimately points us to Christ.

- **Nehemiah** left the comfort of the king's palace to rebuild a broken city.
- **Jesus** left the glory of heaven to rescue broken humanity.
- **Nehemiah** faced ridicule, opposition and slander.
- **Jesus** endured rejection, false accusations and ultimately the cross.
- **Nehemiah** refused to come down from the wall until the work was complete.
- **Jesus** refused to come down from the cross until salvation had been accomplished.
- **Nehemiah** finished rebuilding Jerusalem's walls.
- **Jesus** finished the work of redemption for the entire world, declaring: *"It is finished."* (John 19:30)

Nehemiah's story ultimately points us to the greater Builder — Jesus Christ — who is restoring lives, building His Church and completing His work in His people.

Ockie closed with three deeply personal questions for every listener:

- What has God been saying to you?
- What have you rearranged because of what He has said?
- Where have you been tempted to come down from the wall?

God never promised that rebuilding would be easy, but He did promise His presence and His faithfulness. Opposition is not a reason to quit—it is often a reminder that what we are building matters. Stay focused on God's calling, encourage one another, keep your hands on the wall, and trust the God who always completes what He begins.