

Finish Strong Pt. 3: Big Vision Big Battle

Discussion Notes- November 9th, 2025

1. Who's someone you admire for sticking with something even when it was difficult?

This week's message, "Big Vision, Big Battle," reminded us that every God-given vision comes with both opportunity and opposition. Just like Nehemiah, who was called to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, we're called to rise and build something greater for Pittsburgh, for the next generation, and for Christ. When the vision is big, the challenges will be too, but God invites us to depend deeply on Him and work together as His people. This season is not just about building a church but also trusting God to do something lasting through our collective faith, sacrifice, and obedience.

Read Nehemiah 1:3-4

And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven."

Nehemiah was a Jewish man serving as cupbearer to the king of Persia when he heard that Jerusalem's walls were broken down and its gates burned. Though he lived far from home, his heart broke for his people and the condition of God's city. Before taking any action, Nehemiah turned to God in prayer and fasting, asking for favor and guidance. God then used Nehemiah to lead the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls which would unite the people to restore what was broken and bring honor back to God's name. His story reminds us that every great work of God begins with a burden, is fueled by prayer, and is completed through faithful obedience.

2. Nehemiah began with prayer before he started building. What does that show us about where vision should begin?

Read Nehemiah 4:6

"So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work."

When Nehemiah began rebuilding the wall, he immediately faced ridicule, threats, and discouragement from his enemies. Yet instead of giving up, he turned to God in prayer and kept the people focused on their purpose.

3. How can we keep our hearts focused on God's purpose when we face obstacles or discouragement in what He's called us to do?

Read 1 Peter 4:12-13

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings,

that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

Peter was writing to Christians scattered across Asia Minor who were suffering for their faith — not necessarily through violent persecution yet, but through constant social rejection, slander, and loss of status for following Jesus. His message was to not be surprised by opposition because it's proof you're living for something real. From Peter's encouragement to the scattered believers to the apostles' boldness in Acts, Scripture makes it clear: opposition isn't a sign that we're off track; rather, it's often confirmation that we're walking in God's will. Just as Nehemiah faced resistance while rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, the church today faces pushback when we rise to build what honors God.

4. Why do you think God allows opposition instead of removing it when we're doing His work?

Read Philippians 4:6-7

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace,[d] both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.”

Just as Nehemiah's vision began with prayer and was strengthened through perseverance, we're reminded in Philippians 1:6–7 that the God who began a good work in us will carry it to completion. The same God who stirred Nehemiah's heart to rebuild is still inviting us to partner with Him in His purposes today. When we give our time, resources, or encouragement we become part of building something that will impact generations to come. God doesn't just call us to see the vision; He calls us to help make it a reality through faithful participation.

5. What would it look like for our group/church to respond like Nehemiah's people; united in purpose, prayer, and giving toward what God is doing?

Prayer Points/Closing:

- Pray for God to give us vision and clarity for the work He has called us to do.
- Pray for courage and perseverance to stay faithful through opposition and challenges.
- Pray for hearts of generosity and unity as we give and serve for the next generation.

Deeper Dive: Nehemiah's Life, Vision, and Calling

Nehemiah's Burden and Prayer

Read Nehemiah 1:11

“O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”

After mourning and fasting over Jerusalem's broken walls, Nehemiah moves into specific, bold prayer for favor and guidance. This shows that vision is not just about seeing what needs to be done but it's also about actively asking God to prepare the way, equip us, and open doors for action. His prayer reflects dependence, courage, and a willingness to step forward when God leads.

Nehemiah Receives Permission and Encouragement

Read Nehemiah 2:1–6

"In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. And the king said to me, 'Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.' Then I was very much afraid. I said to the king, 'Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?' Then the king said to me, 'What are you requesting?' So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, 'If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it.' And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), 'How long will you be gone, and when will you return?' So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time."

Nehemiah demonstrates boldness and wisdom. He prays before answering, then speaks truthfully with the king about his burden. God orchestrates favor in the king's eyes, showing that faithful dependence on Him opens doors for vision to move forward.

Nehemiah Faces Opposition

Read Nehemiah 4:6–9

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

Even after God opens doors and people unite around the vision, opposition comes. Nehemiah models faith-filled perseverance while the work continues even under threat. Prayer remains central, and practical action is paired with spiritual dependence.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Nehemiah's example of mourning, fasting, and praying before acting challenge the way we approach God-given visions in our own lives?

2. What can we learn from how Nehemiah combined prayer with bold action when seeking the king's permission? How can we apply that balance today?
3. When facing opposition, what lessons can we draw from Nehemiah's response in Nehemiah 4:6–9 about staying faithful and keeping our focus on God's purpose?

Finish Strong Campaign Snapshot

Theme: Finish Strong — For Pittsburgh. For the Next Generation. For Christ.

Goal: Raise **\$3 million over 3 years**, above and beyond regular giving.

Theme Verse:

John 9:4 (ESV) — “We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day...”

Project 6:33 — Pray First

- We are asking everyone to **seek God first** during this season.
- **Based on** Matthew 6:33 — “Seek first the kingdom of God...”
- **Set an alarm for 6:33 PM** daily.
- When it goes off: **Pause. Pray for the church. Pray for wisdom. Pray for faith.**

Upcoming Events

Commitment Weekend

November 15–16 (All Services)

- Each family will bring their three-year pledge and we will commit together as a church.
- Includes a First Fruits Offering — our goal is for this to be the largest offering in our church's history to launch the project strong.

Ways to Give

Your giving can be structured **weekly, monthly, or yearly.**

You may give through:

- Check
- Online / automatic giving
- Stock gifts

Every gift is above and beyond normal giving.