



AWCI SERMON *Notes & Announcements*

DATE: Sept. 14th, 2025

SPEAKER: Bishop (Dr.) Vincent Collins

SERMON TITLE: Build Anyway: Thriving in the Face of Opposition

Visit www.agapeworship.org/resources to access a digital copy or scan the QR Code.

KEY PASSAGE

Nehemiah 4:1–23 (NIV): When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, 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!” 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. ⁵Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders. ⁶So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart. . . .

INTRODUCTION

Every time you try to put forth the effort to do right, to do something good, opposition will show up. Try to build your marriage—expect attacks. Try to build your finances—expect challenges. Try to build your faith—expect resistance. Nehemiah discovered this the hard way. As the walls of Jerusalem began to rise, so did the voices of opposition. Sanballat and Tobiah mocked, threatened, and tried everything in their power to discourage the builders. But Nehemiah’s response is what sets him apart. He didn’t deny the reality of the threats, and he didn’t allow fear to paralyze him. Instead, he prayed, posted guards, encouraged the people, and kept building. His life reminds us that the true test of faith is not whether we face opposition, but how we respond to it. So, the question is: How do we balance life when the world is against us?

SERMON POINTS

I. Expect Opposition

You don’t stop moving forward because of opposition—you move forward anyway.

- Nehemiah 4:1–3 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, 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!”
- 2 Timothy 3:12 (NIV) “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
- John 15:18–19 (NIV) “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”
- 1 Peter 4:12–13 (NIV) “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

II. Pray & Keep Building

Prayer is not an excuse to sit back and do nothing; prayer fuels the courage to keep working while God fights on your behalf.

- Nehemiah 4:9–10 But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. ¹⁰Meanwhile, 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.”
- Philippians 4:6–7 (NIV) “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NIV) “Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”
- Isaiah 40:29–31 (NIV) “He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

SETTING BOUNDARIES

Three Ways Nehemiah Modeled Healthy Boundaries

1. **He Chose Prayer Over Arguments**—you bring it to God first.
2. **He Protected the Mission**—boundaries protect what God has called you to build.
3. **He Refused Distractions**—Knowing when to say “no”

Three Obstacles to Setting Boundaries

1. **Fear of People’s Opinions**—Fear of rejection often keeps us from saying “no.”
2. **Internal Discouragement**—Sometimes the rubble in our own lives makes it harder to stand firm.
3. **Pressure to Compromise**—Being pushed to overcommit, compromise values, or break focus.

When to Say “No”

- When it distracts you from God’s assignment (Nehemiah 6:3).
- When it compromises your integrity (Nehemiah 6:13).
- When it drains your strength instead of fueling your mission (Nehemiah 4:10).

A healthy “no” is not rejection—it’s protection. Saying “no” to the wrong things creates space to say “yes” to God’s best.

III. Build and Battle: Stay Ready, Stay Faithful

Build what God has placed in your hands while staying alert to the schemes of the enemy.

- Ephesians 6:11 (NIV) “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NIV) “Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”
- 2 Timothy 4:7 (NIV) “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

BEYOND THE MESSAGE

Don't be shocked by spiritual pushback. If you're experiencing resistance, it may be because you're finally moving in the right direction. If the enemy isn't bothering you, it could be a sign you're not building anything that threatens his kingdom. Resistance is proof of progress. When you encounter opposition, don't get discouraged—lift your head and thank God, because the attack means the wall is going up and the enemy is nervous.

Don't waste your energy trying to silence the voices of doubt. You'll never satisfy every critic. Instead, keep your eyes on the mission God has given you. Let the mockers talk while you keep building. Let the enemy laugh while you keep praying. Let the critics doubt while you keep believing. Because when the wall stands tall, the same people who laughed at you will have no choice but to recognize that it was God who made it possible.

The lesson is simple but powerful—stop wasting energy fighting critics. You don't need to defend yourself to every doubter. You don't have to convince everyone of your calling. You don't have to answer every sarcastic voice. Your job is not to prove your critics wrong—it's to prove your God faithful by finishing the mission He gave you. So when opposition rises, pray. When mocking comes, pray. When fatigue sets in, pray. And after you've prayed, pick up your tools, post your guard, and keep building.

Don't just build—stay armed. Carry your Bible in one hand and discernment in the other. Work hard, but stay spiritually awake. Stay sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Watch over your family. Guard your heart. Keep your sword close, because the enemy doesn't send invitations—he sends ambushes.

Don't let the rubble stop you. Don't let your past failures define your future. Don't let fatigue convince you that you can't finish what God started. Don't let the voice of despair drown out the promise of God. The rubble is not your end—it's your beginning. If you will keep praying and keep building, the very rubble that once discouraged you will become the foundation of your testimony.

NOTES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please note: There are multiple ways to sign up for an event. You can scan the QR code, visit our website, or sign the signup sheet in the foyer under the event registration section.

Sept. 3rd - Oct. 8th at 7:00 pm: Wednesday Night Bible Study: Blueprint of Faith: The Nehemiah Bible Study!

Sept. 20th at Weston Lake at 10am & Sept. 28th at AWCI after 11AM service - Our next water baptism celebration—scan the QR code and sign up to take this powerful step of faith!

Sept. 21st- Church Anniversary and Pastoral Appreciation Celebration

Sept. 20th at 10:00 am-4:00 pm —Annual Church Picnic. For more information, contact Minister Wanda Brown or your Life Group Leader. Sign Up Today by scanning the QR code.

Oct. 15th-Nov. 19th at Various Dates & Times: Fall Into Fun: Agape's Interest Groups. Scan the QR Code to sign up today. For more information, contact the Christian Education Department.

Nov. 1st at 10am-3pm -AWCI Community & Health Fair. For more information, contact: Deacon Eureka Washington.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH & FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

Sunday School

- Every Sunday at 10:10 am-10:55 am.
- Scan QR Code to Sign Up & receive a digital copy of the Sunday School Book.

Men's Ministry Meeting.

- Every 3rd Saturday, 8:30 AM.
- At Agape Worship Center International
- All men are invited.
- More information: Contact Deacons Teddy Spence or Eureka Washington.

Breakfast For Champions: Weekday Devotion & Prayer

- Monday-Friday at 7 am
- Call In: 717-908-1690 Access Code: 577625

Intercessory Prayer

- Every 1st, 2nd, and 4th Monday at 6:30pm-7:30pm

Virtual Midday Bible Study - Starting Back August 14th, 2025

- Every Thursday at noon
- Call In: (470)869-2200 (US East)
- Meeting ID: 393-678-9202
- Virtual: meetings.ringcentral.com/j/3936789202

CONNECT, GROW, BELONG!

Whether you're a first-time guest or a long-time member, we invite everyone to fill out our Connect Card—just scan the QR code to update your information, share prayer requests, and take your next step, whether that's joining a membership class, signing up for baptism, finding a life group, volunteering, or simply learning more about our church.