

Reacting to Ridicule¹

Nehemiah 4:1-9

PROPOSITION: Nehemiah 4 tells how to handle ridicule.

INTRODUCTION:

1. As Nehemiah began to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, he faced ridicule, one of Satan's chief tools.
2. Christians also have to face ridicule at school, at work, and maybe even at home.
3. God's enemies laughed at Jesus, and a servant is not above his master (Matt. 10:24).
4. When ridiculed, remember Nehemiah.

DISCUSSION:

I. Observing Ridicule

- A. The Feebleness of the People
 1. Enraged Sanballat asked, "What are these feeble Jews doing?" (v. 2).
 2. Though the world is impressed with size, prestige, finances, and great numbers, it is a mistake to measure effectiveness by size.
- B. The Futility of the Task
 1. "Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?" (v. 2).
 2. It looked hopeless, but it was a glorious work.
 3. Jesus is building His church by building people.
- C. The Foolishness of their Faith
 1. "Will they sacrifice?" (v. 2).
 2. People make fun of trust in God.
 3. Some in Paul's day called the word of the cross, "foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:18).
- D. The Frailty of the Work
 1. Tobiah added, "Yes, what they are building – if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!" (v. 3).
 2. No one should say of the Lord's work, "It will not last. It is too weak. It is too little. It is futile. It will not work."

II. Overcoming Ridicule

- A. Practical Consideration of It
 1. First, ask, "What is the cause of this ridicule?"
 - a. Some cannot reason so they laugh.
 - b. Some cannot reason you out of faith so they try to ridicule you out of faith.
 2. Next, consider the character of the ridicule.

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- a. We are known by the friends we keep and by the enemies we make.
 - b. Cf. Acts 5:42.
- 3. Consider also Whom you serve.
 - a. Some Bible verses break our hearts (Mark 5:40; Luke 22:63; 23:35).
 - b. If Christ received ridicule, you will, too.
- 4. Finally, consider the compensation you will receive.
 - a. Cf. Matthew 5:11, 12.
 - b. Cf. Psalm 37:12, 13.
- B. Prayerful Supplication concerning It
 - 1. Nehemiah made a prayerful supplication regarding ridicule in verses 4 and 5.
 - 2. Cf. Proverbs 3:34.
 - 3. The wall was built, “for the people had a mind to work” (v. 6).
 - 4. We may do the Lord’s work and please God, but we cannot earn salvation (Eph. 2:8-10).

III. **Opposing Ridicule**

- A. Opposition may bring on a fight (vv. 7, 8).
- B. God’s people must be on their guard (v. 9; cf. Mark 14:38).
- C. Anytime God’s people have a mind to *work* (v. 6), the devil’s people have a mind to *wreck*.
- D. We must know our enemies.
- E. Nehemiah had adversaries. He had to arm and equip his people. Having enemies also, we must equip ourselves (cf. Eph. 6:10-20).
- F. When you stand with the Lord, you will be in a battle.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. It takes prayer and work to overcome ridicule.
- 2. God will bless us when we work, so don’t let ridicule stop you from doing what God wants you to do.