

**MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, 3500 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh, NC 27612**  
**NEWS & EVENTS – October 2022**

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As a tentmaking pastor, technically referred to as *bi-vocational*, I get the privilege of working every day in the workaday world. Imagine the quizzical looks I received one day when I explained what it was like in church world to some who never attend church meetings. I told them I was a body builder! They were probably making a mental note about the lack of bodily evidence. At some point on most Wednesday afternoons, I leave the construction environment and enter the arena where body building takes place. I prepare to engage a group that needs building up...the Body of Christ. I am a Body Builder. A pastor, a teacher, a counselor, and a part of the body. I was reading lately about a man named Nehemiah. He was a body builder. Here's what I mean by that.

*When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people: "Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses." (Nehemiah 4:14)*

Nehemiah is a great model for learning the practice of encouragement for those working through difficulty. The tactic of encouragement builds up the body, whether it's the church, the family, tribal connections, or work teams at work. Nehemiah was burdened over the sad situation of Jerusalem in need of restoration. We can learn two things from his interaction there.

**I. BIG PROJECTS HAVE BIG OPPOSITION.** Here's three of the biggest oppositional messages that you might hear while doing what God calls you to do. *It's not possible... You're not able... There's not enough.* The rebuilding of the wall and gates of Jerusalem was a monumental task. When the people became engaged in the work, then discouragement began. The first tactic of the discouragers was to convince the workers of the futility of the project. The Jews were hearing that they were not strong enough to complete the work. They were told that the work itself was substandard. *Not good enough* was the taunt that was issued. How many times have the people of God begun a good work to hear seeds of doubt from the mouths of others that there is *not enough*...not enough people...money...strength...not good enough in the quality of the work...so we might as well quit. I've heard that more than I care to recall. Many times it came from within...me talking to myself. The seeds of doubt begin to take root in the Nehemiah project and the people were discouraged. This seems to be natural to a human being. The desire to give up. Quitting becomes the norm. But as for the people of God, there is a different way to live. Live being encouraged, rather than discouraged. Courage comes from God, who empowers godly leaders to encourage those around them. These three voices that communicate these messages try to distract and dominate. Even if they are whispered, we can hear them as loud. But the Living God is a loving God. And He has the *say so* in what *is so*... When you hear *Not possible, Not able, and Not enough*...*Here's a word from the Encouraging Word...all that is Not true when it's God's project to do!*

**II. GOOD LEADERS KNOW FEAR WHEN THEY SEE IT.** This old adage is a good one. **FEAR is False Evidence Appearing Real.** Nehemiah recognized that the work was much bigger than them. And he *saw* their fear. Fear is a visible thing when it manifests itself in our lives. When a leader sees his people afraid, he speaks to them about the source of courage. The tactics of terrorism were evident. The threat of their physical safety was very real. Nehemiah reminded them to remember the character of God and fight for restoration. The strength that they relied upon was in the community effort of trusting God with their lives. They needed one another. Courage is often exhibited when fearful people do what's right. They learned to work fiercely in the midst of their fear. They watched each other's back. They were moving in a direction of community strength as **they learned the secret of body building.** They cannot be strong against outside forces when they treat one another as outsiders. A lesson for God's people. Learn to treat the family of God like the Father wants them treated. God's people made peace with one another, courageous in their unity against those who sought their destruction. God was not only praised, but He was pleased. He is pleased when His people look out for the welfare of one another. Let's build up the body, loving and trusting God who helps us love, trust, help, encourage and serve one another. Here's a lesson to the people of God.

Here's another old adage I remember to remember. **COURAGE IS FEAR THAT HAS SAID ITS PRAYERS. INTREPID LEADERS TAKE ACTION WHEN THEY SEE THEIR PEOPLE AFRAID. BE A BODY BUILDER** Fear God, not people.

Blessings to you,  
Pastor Sam