

REBUILDING GOD'S PEOPLE FOR GOD'S MISSION 8

Facing and Overcoming Opposition Part 2

Nehemiah 4 : 10 - 23



Overcoming Discouragement



anxious

fatigue

stressed

disappointment

worried

Discouragement

- It's universal.
- It's recurring.
- It's highly contagious.



4 External Causes of Discouragement



1. Fatigue (Loss of Strength)

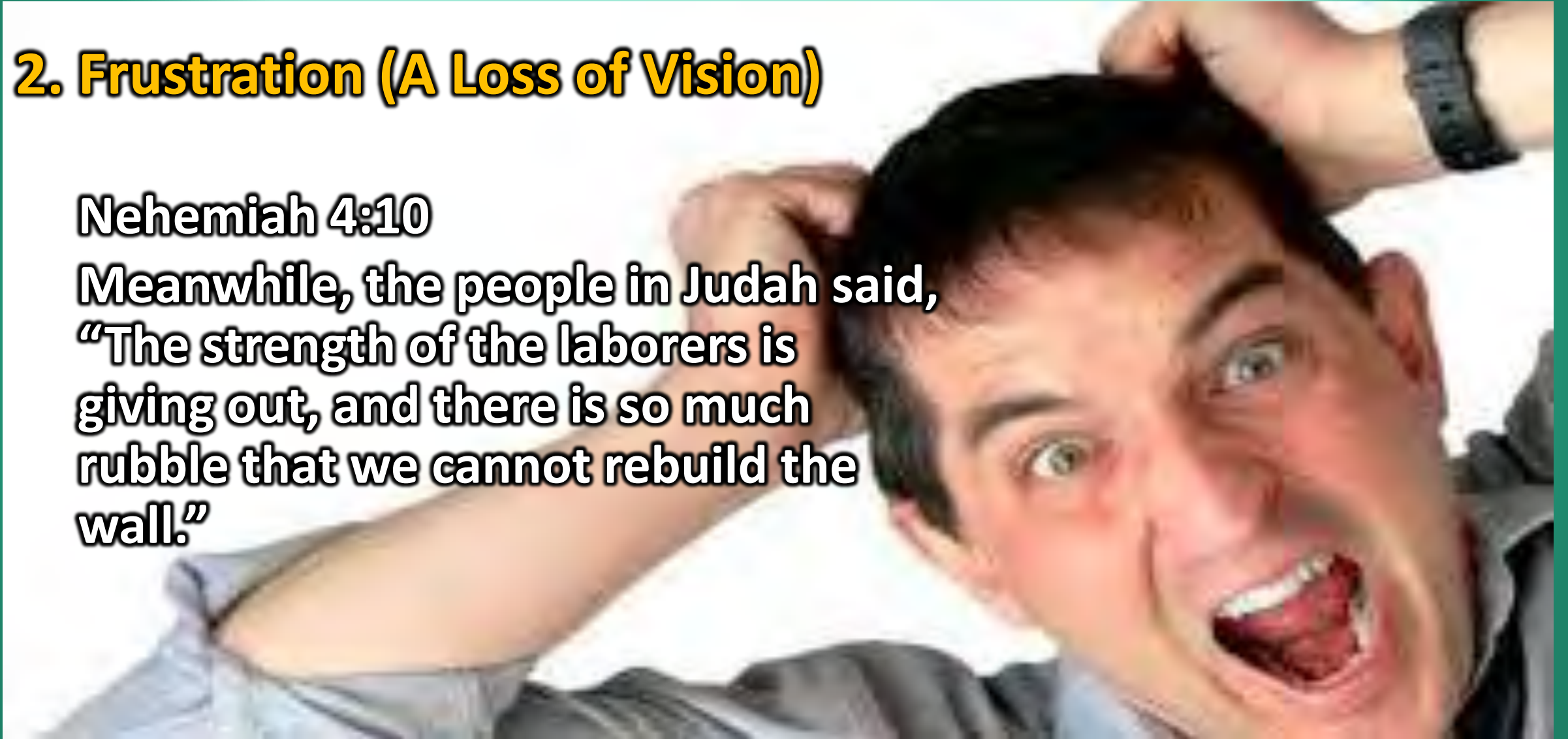
- Nehemiah 4:10 reads, “Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, ‘The strength of the laborers is giving out...’”
- “giving out” = “staggering, tottering, and stumbling.”
- Timing: The wall was built to half its height (Nehemiah 4:6)

4 External Causes of Discouragement

2. Frustration (A Loss of Vision)

Nehemiah 4:10

Meanwhile, 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.”



*Therefore, since we are surrounded
by so great a cloud of witnesses, let
us also lay aside every weight, and
sin which clings so closely, and let us
run with endurance
the race that is set before us.*

HEBREWS 12:1



4 External Causes of Discouragement



3. Faithlessness (A Loss of Confidence)

- “we cannot rebuild the wall.” (Nehemiah 4:10)

4 External Causes of Discouragement

4. Fear (A Loss of Security)

Nehemiah 4:11-12 Also our enemies said, “Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.” Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, ‘Wherever you turn, they will attack us.’



Choose Faith Over Fear

- 60% of our fears are totally unfounded
- 20% are already behind us
- 10% are so petty they don't make any difference
- 5% are real, but we can't do anything about them
- 5% are real, and we can do something about them



The Cures for Discouragement

1. Re-organize To Take Retreat and Rest

Nehemiah 4:13, 15 - Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows...When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work.

The Cures for Discouragement

Nehemiah 4:14 After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”

2. Focus on God

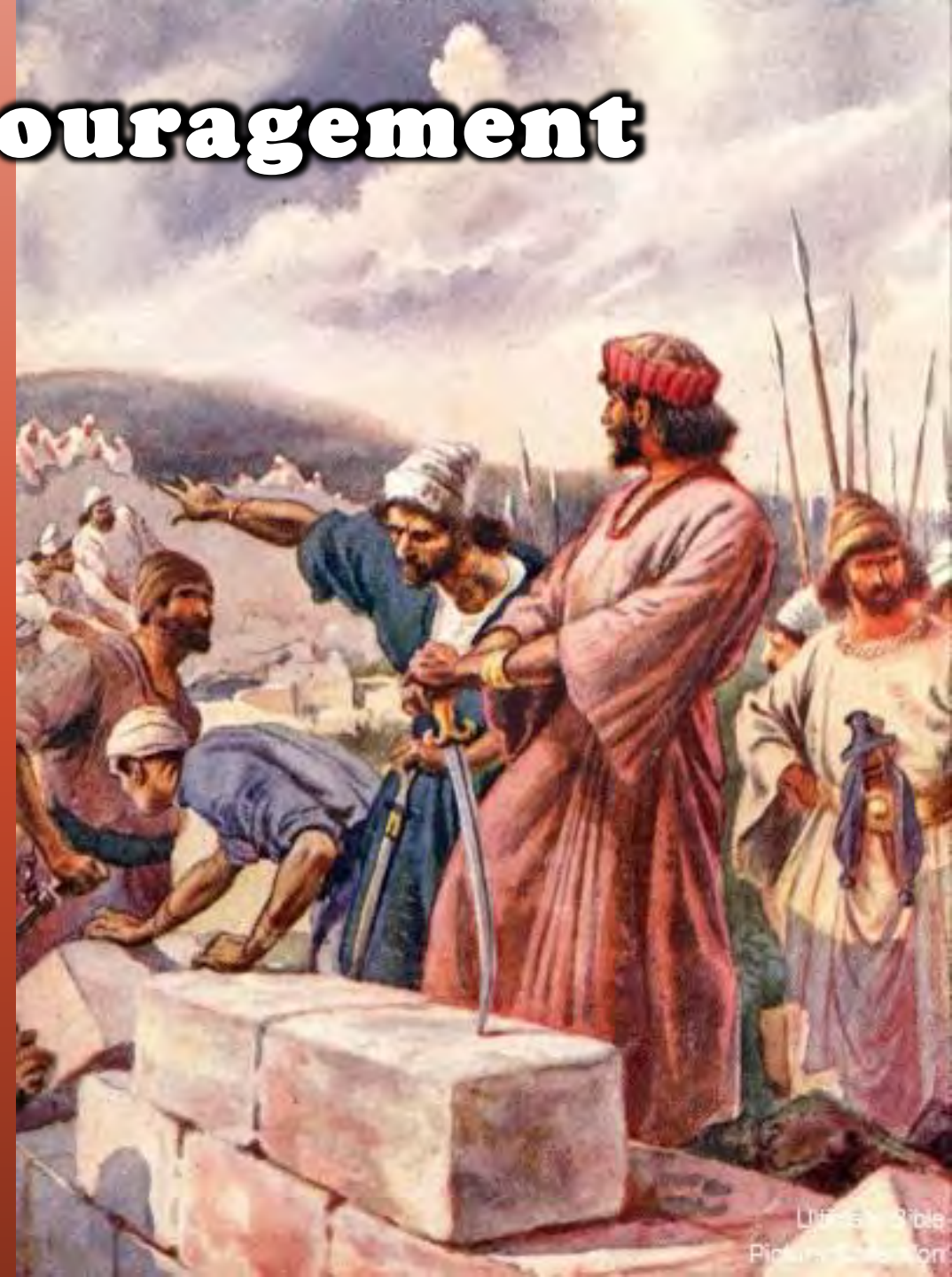
- Who He is
- What He’s done
- What He said

The Cures for Discouragement

3. Balance in Faith and Action

Nehemiah 4:14b

“fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”



The Cures for Discouragement

4. Developing Supportive Relationships

Nehemiah 4:19-20 Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!”



The Cures for Discouragement

5. Sacrificially Serving Others

Nehemiah 4:21-23

So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out. At that time I also said to the people, "Have every man and his helper stay inside Jerusalem at night, so they can serve us as guards by night and as workers by day." Neither I nor my brothers nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water.



Application

1. In what ways have you found yourself prone to depression and discouragement for lack of proper eating, sleeping, and rest? In what ways do you find rest and retreat in order to protect yourself from discouragement?
2. How can we refocus on God in the midst of difficulties?
3. In what ways have you seen people who say they are walking by “faith” but are not willing to do their part? How do we keep a balance between faith and works?
4. How should we practice this principle of developing supportive relationships in our lives, in order to battle discouragement?
5. In what ways have you experienced blessing, refreshment, strength, etc., while serving others? How can we tell when it is time for us to rest or when we should extend ourselves in service to others?