

## I. The Paradox of Walls

Robert Frost's "Mending Wall": Something there is that doesn't love a wall, that sends the ground swell under it and spills the upper boulders in the sun and makes gaps even too can pass abreast. The work of hunters is another thing. I have come after them and made repair where they have left not one stone on a stone, but they would have a rabbit out of hiding to please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean, no one has seen them made or heard them made, but at spring mending time, we find them there. I let my neighbor know beyond the hill, and on the day we meet to walk the line and set the wall between us once again. We keep the wall between us as we go, to each the boulders that have fallen to each. And some are loaves and some are nearly balls. We have to use a spell to keep them balanced. Stay where you are until our backs are turned. We wear our fingers rough with handling them. Oh, just another kind of outdoor game. One on a side, it comes a little more. There, where it is, we do not need the wall. He is all pine and I am all apple orchard. My apple trees will never get across and eat the cones under his pines, I tell him. He only says, good fences make good neighbors. Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder if I could put a notion in his head. Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it where there are cows? But here there are no cows. Before I built a wall, I'd ask to know what I was walling in or walling out and to whom I was like to give offense. Something there is that doesn't love a wall, that wants it down. I could say elves to him, but it's not elves exactly. And I'd rather he said it for himself. I see him there bringing a stone grasp firmly by the top and each hand like an old stone, savaged arm. He moves in darkness as it seems to me, not of woods only in the shade of trees. He will not go behind his father saying, he likes having thought of it so well. He says again, good fences make good neighbors.

I am not a poet, I am not the son of a poet, and I normally do not do poetry, but that right there sums up what our theme for camp is this year. In the world that we live in, there are two predominant themes. You have folks that say, "Hey, division is good, separation is good, national boundaries are good, individualism is really good." But then we have another push that is coming out there where it is, "No, break down the boundaries, break down the walls. Internationalism is better. It is the community over the individual." There are these two paradoxes that are going back and forth with one another right now.

The theme of that poem laid out that walls naturally break down. These guys were having to show up once a year, annually. They picked a time where they met and they built the wall that had crumbled from the previous seasons, the previous weather, all the things that that wall had gone through. They had to meet annually and rebuild that wall. The question comes up, if naturally walls break down, why do we fight against that natural process and keep trying to rebuild them? Is all the work we are putting into this divider truly necessary?

## II. The Broken Wall of the Spirit

I will say this: today, and I am speaking of Christians, we are out of control. Hysteria, fear, emotional stress, mental illness, anxiety, depression, and paranoia run rampant. We are influenced by everything and without an anchor to ground us.

*2 Timothy 3:13*

*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*

We are in the world and we are of the world. The world influences us more than we do it. The walls separating the child of God from the world have been broken down. The problem starts with us, and it starts with what we are aligning our spirits to.

*Proverbs 25:28*

*He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, and without walls.*

That is the issue today. Your spirit is the control center for who you are. Your spirit is the rudder that guides your ship. Your spirit is your drive, it is your fire, it is your passion, it is what is going to motivate you and take you where you want to go. Because of that, it is of great value to the devil, to the world, and that is what your flesh wants to have control over. It guides you and steers you down the path you will go.

The problem is the Bible says that we are bought with a price, and it tells us to glorify God in our body and our spirit, which are God's. Therefore, we cannot afford to let anything come in and influence us. We have got to build this wall.

### III. The Unrestrained Spirit

Your spirit is your emotions, it is your drive, it is your feelings. Here is the problem that we come up against: who likes to control their emotions? Who likes to control their feelings? Some of the best TV that you will watch out there is the stuff where people's feelings are going rampant, they are losing control of it. You do not even have to watch TV. You go to any little league softball game, the ump calls a bad call, you will find the infallible father in the stands letting his spirit run free.

Oftentimes, a guy that used to be on SNL, he is dead now, Chris Farley, he was big on letting his spirit run free. Back when I was in school, I had a teacher in a math class, his name was Mr. Grosso. His name pretty much identified who he was, Mr. Grosso. Not that he was nasty, but this guy was one of these old school throwbacks that somehow got let endure until the time that I was in school. Most of the teachers when I was in school were women, and that is beautiful, I appreciate that. But I just remember my parents talking about back in the days, the men that they had in their classrooms, leading them and teaching them, and the example that they set for not only boys, but just for the nation itself.

Mr. Grosso was like this old school throwback. I do not know if he was saved, I do not know if he was even mocking. But Mr. Grosso had this thick hairdo, a beautiful John Travolta Saturday Night Fever look. This was the 2000s. He used to wear these button-down shirts, but the top three buttons were never allowed to be buttoned. So he had this pepper gray chest hair that would

puff out at you, just staring you in the face while you are going through your math class, trying to get these numbers down. That was the challenge: listen to what he is saying, or look at the chest hair.

To bring even more appeal to that, he had this old school gold chain. Not like the thick one like the rappers wear, but it was just subtle enough to catch the ladies' attention, I guess, or something. I do not know. Big old hands, big fat mustache sitting above there, looked like he grabbed a beaver and stuck it on his face or something like that. There is Mr. Grosso, teaching math class. He was intimidating. He spoke with a booming voice. All the other teachers would come around, whisper to you in your ear, pat you on your back. Not Mr. Grosso. You walk in the class, you are supposed to sit down and shut up. "I am in control, I am doing this math class."

It was scary. Oftentimes, when you get faced with a presence like that, after going through teachers that pretty much coddle you all the time, it kind of shocks you and it scares you. I remember several times, he called, and that is the scariest thing, he would call on you. You think you are focused, you think you are paying attention. "Sanders!" He would shock you into existence. Here is the thing about him: he was such a man, you knew what the answer to the question was, but your fear overrode your mind. So you could not answer. "Sanders, what is four plus four?" "44."

This is where he would go into his line: "Mr. Sanders, you are not right. Do you know why you are not right? Because you are a liar, your feet stink, and you do not believe in Jesus." He would actually say that. Like I said, I do not know if he was saved, I do not know if he was mocking, but he would always go back to that line. Even though we feared Mr. Grosso, we loved Mr. Grosso because that man let his spirit run free, he let it run wild.

Jerry Springer made millions off of giving America's finest a place to let their emotions run wild. Controlling passionate emotions is like holding in gas when no one is around you, it is not necessary. That is what it seems like. It sucks. Emotions are like built-up pressure in a tea kettle that you have to let out or else you will explode. It feels best to let her rip. It is about letting go of restraints.

Restraints on emotions are oftentimes let go. It starts out subtle. A lot of these kids, when we do these lock-ins and stuff like that, we get to a certain time of night where anything you do and say is funny, it is slap happiness. Technically, that is a small amount of letting go emotions, no restraints.

One of the things I have been sucked into here lately, binge watching Amazon Prime, Netflix, YouTube, TikTok and stuff like that, that is no restraints on your imagination, time management, or appropriate content at times. Are you overly sarcastic? That is having no restraints on the seriousness. Do you oftentimes speak exactly what comes to your mind? That is no restraints on your mouth. Crying over unreal things in movies, that is no restraints on reality.

Emotional eating, I used to do that a lot. I would get off work late at night, like 12, and I worked this late shift. Family is already going to bed, there is no accountability. Next thing you know, I walk through the kitchen, there is a family-sized bag of Doritos sitting on top of the refrigerator.

Now what am I supposed to do? The family is asleep, but I am still a part of the family, so therefore, that family-sized bag has to appertain to me. So therefore, I grab that thing, sit down, two o'clock in the morning, there I am, bottom of the bag. No restraints.

On a more serious note, this is what the Bible is talking about when it talks about no rule of our spirit. We oftentimes indulge in the music of this world. We oftentimes react to our spouses, we react to our siblings instead of responding to them. We like to give our boss a piece of our mind. Unfortunately, what we are seeing out here in America with these protests, with the vandalism, they are taking that under the guise of protest, but what it really is, it is not restraining your emotions.

Like I said, no one likes to rule their spirit. Now, why is that? Remember that poem? "Something there is that doesn't love a wall."

*Proverbs 25:28*

*He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, and without walls.*

That is what we are teaching nowadays, just that hedonism. If it feels good, do it. If you naturally desire to do these things, why would you hold yourself back from them? Who told you to do that? Someone is restraining you, someone is oppressing you. You need to get free, you need to be set free.

When we rule that spirit, we are putting a wall around it. Just one more thing before we really get serious here. A funny look at a group that lives among us that we are all very familiar with, that oftentimes does not have any type of restraints over themselves: our children. Being a father, I have seen that more so than anything.

The Bible says out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. The funny thing is with kids, I do not know what they are saying comes from their heart, but I do know that whatever they are saying does not stay inside for a very long time. Whatever is in that mind comes out pretty quick. I am trying to understand these things and tie them together. One of the problems I have, especially in the summertime when the AC is on, the kids open up the doors and they go out. What is up with that? I know I did it too. I am thinking maybe there is a tie-in here, like the same way when something comes to their mind, it immediately comes out their mouth. It is the same way they treat your house. The things that are inside, they want to immediately go right out to the rest of the world or something like that. I do not know. But I have seen this thing time and time again.

It is things like this. I have been trying to keep track of what these guys have been saying to me.

➤ Brady said at one time, "Dad, I do not like myself." I said, "Brady, why not?" He said, "Because I am cool." I was like, is this guy already doing penance on him? What are you talking about?

➤ A lady at Jose Peppers came up to him and said, "Oh, you are gorgeous." Brady said, "No, I am not. I am Brady."

- "Dad, I cannot read yet." "Why not?" "Only big girls can read." The logic here, I am not sure about.
- "Dad, I am about to poo-poo my pants." "Well, Brady, I just took you." "But Dad, maybe my poo-poo was scared."
- "Dad, can I have some more donuts?" "Wow, did you guys eat that whole bag?" "No, we just ate all the donuts."
- "I almost peed my pants." "Why?" "Because I feel like a Jedi." "Dad, what do Jedis do when they pee-pee their pants?"
- "Daddy, why can you tell Brin what to do?" "Well, because I am her father." "So when I get older and turn brown, then I can tell her what to do." Now, this is Brady trying to understand the phrase, "Get thee behind me, Satan."
- "Dad, why does the devil have to get out of our behind?"
- Brady on Father's Day: "We are getting something for Grandpa for Father's Day. He is somebody's dad, but we do not know who."
- Brady: "Daddy, I do not know if I am going to die first or if Brin is going to die first." Brin interjects, "Brady, everybody dies first."
- Brady comes in mad after practicing basketball. "Why are you so upset, son?" "Because the ball keeps going away from me." "Well, did you tell it to stop?" "Yeah, and I did mean things to it, but it still went away."
- Finally, Brin here, after Mommy gives her a spanking: "Mom, you really need a lesson on how to love your children."

So, what goes in comes out immediately. No one likes to rule their spirit. Yet this is the very reason that we are broken down in a defenseless bunch of people who are vulnerable to everything the world, our flesh, and the devil throws at us. Folks, I am here to tell you today, it is really time to build a wall.

#### IV. Why Build a Wall?

Why are we doing this? Are we trying to be like the Amish? Are we trying to be like the Mennonite? Are we trying to be like monks off in a monastery somewhere, setting ourselves up high, showing how much more spiritual we are? No. The reason we are building this wall is because God is not going to have fellowship with our filth. God is a holy God. The reason I am separating myself from the things of the world is not because I am better, but because I want to be used by someone better. That is what it comes down to.

It is just like a hospital. If the hospital was run like the streets, there would be all kinds of, well, there are tons of infection in the hospital, but there would be even more infection than what is going on right now. Same thing that comes to the warrior class. We do not have the Navy SEALs, the Delta Force, the Green Berets, the PJs, all the great special forces that America has, by letting them stay and play while watching video games, eating family-sized bags of Doritos, and living a life however they want to. There is a time of discipline. There is a time of sanctification. There is a time of separation. Those guys have to go through to become something greater to help out others.

That is why we are building a wall. Because there are people, have you seen what is going on out there in the world? People need help. If you are letting the same things, the same stresses, the same anxieties, the same worries, the same fears that are running through the world rampant right now, get into your life and mess up your spirit, how are you going to reach out to them? You are in the same situation. We need to build the wall. God is not going to have fellowship with our filth.

For the times we are heading into, the world needs that. They do not need another social justice protester. They do not need another guy playing medical genius with a degree from WebMD, reading off COVID statistics, making predictions on the health, on the next lethality of the next wave. They do not need prepared preppers stocked up on guns and ammo waiting for the shot heard around the world to start the next civil war. They do not need another social distancer or shelter-in-place participant calling the cops on anyone that is walking down the streets without a mask.

You know what they need? What the world needs now is folks that still know for sure where they are going when they die. People who can still get a prayer through. Individuals who are actually laying up treasures in heaven and not on earth. That is what they need. We have got to build the wall.

It starts with me. When I submit my spirit to the rules and the restraints and the boundaries and the principles and the word of God, I then become a contrast to this world. I become a line of demarcation to them that they know something is different. I am taking a stand. I am building a wall.

## V. Historical Examples of Walls

You say, "Zach, it will not work. I have tried it. You cannot keep it up." Well, that is the question. "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." Are they actually necessary? Do they work?

The Jews built walls. They built that Western Wall around their temple, and they go over there to mourn that temple's destruction. They ended up building a security wall a while back along the West Bank. Israel says it is for security. The Palestinians say it is for racial segregation. The facts say that it is a 20-foot high concrete wall, 440 miles long. Before, they were having 73 suicide bombers blow up inner Jerusalem a year. After that wall was built, it got knocked down to 12. Before that, about 293 people were dying a year. After that wall went up, it went down to 64. 1900 were often wounded every year. After that wall went up, 445. Israel had to build the wall.

In the 1640s, the Dutch built a wall on the Isle of Manhattan to protect themselves from Indian attacks. It was 12 feet high, stretched from the Hudson to the East River. Over the years, they ended up paving a road next to that wall. You know what they call it? Wall Street. The New Yorkers had to build a wall.

In 1961, a 90-mile long, 12-foot high, 4-foot wide wall was built down the middle of Berlin, separating East Germany from West Germany. The Great Walls of Babylon back in 600 BC were supposedly over 90 feet high and 40 miles long. You have the Great Wall of China back in the 1300s, almost 4,000 miles, cut back the Mongolian tribes that wanted to run into China. They built their wall.

## VI. Nehemiah's Call to Rebuild

What I want to do, this last part, is I want to take you guys to the book of Nehemiah. We are going to look at a story in the Bible where Israel itself realized that they had to rebuild the wall before they could do anything for God. In Nehemiah, we are going to find some insight into what we will be up against when building our own wall.

*Nehemiah 1:1-3*

*The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,*

*That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.*

*And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.*

I want to say this: no matter how great you are, no matter what you are building in your life, if you do not put up some walls, then your city is vulnerable. You are going to be vulnerable. Jerusalem was the epicenter for God down here on earth. For the kingdom of heaven, it was what everything revolved around. It is where His people were. It is where His King was going to get set up. It is where His temple was. It is what God wanted to use as the central location that He did things on earth. In the millennium, when Jesus Christ comes back and that temple is set back up, all the world is going to flock to Jerusalem to worship Him. It is what God totally cares about.

I want to say in our day and age, you, the bride of Christ, are what God truly cares about. You are the program that God wants to take in this world and reach out to people. It is not Oral Roberts. It is not the United Way. It is not the Salvation Army. It is the local church and the people inside of it that make it up. Amen.

Let me tell you this: if you do not start to build walls around yourself, no matter how valuable you are, yes, you have the precious blood of Jesus Christ covering you. Yes, your soul is sealed

and all that stuff. If you do not build a wall around yourself, you cannot help somebody. Amen. Because you are just like the world. That is the first thing Nehemiah saw right here. No matter how wonderful your city is, it is only a fantasy unless walls can be erected to preserve it. If it is valuable, it needs a wall. Without walls, we are vulnerable. We are open to attacks.

*Nehemiah 1:4*

*And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.*

I want to point out here in Nehemiah 1:4 that the condition of the wall caused him to weep. Folks, what is your attitude towards your wall being broken down today? When your wall is broken down, you are probably not going to have a lot of opposition against the world because you are just like them. You have nothing that they care about. You have nothing that is opposing them. How do you feel about that? Are you fine with being influenced by the world just like the lost are? Does the breakdown of your spirit cause you to weep?

We are not going to read every verse, obviously, because we are going to be going through a lot of things here. But jump over here to Nehemiah 2:9. I want to show you something else.

*Nehemiah 2:9-10*

*Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.*

*When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.*

When you get serious with God, it will grieve some folks exceedingly. That kind of ties in back to Nehemiah 1:4, when I said, the condition of your wall being broken down does not cause you to weep. Because if you do not care about it, do not worry about it, there is not going to be any opposition. But once you do take your stand, once you do choose to go out and seek God's things and care about the things that He cares about, there are going to be some folks that do not like that. That is okay, though, because contrast is a wall. That is what we are trying to build a wall here.

Nehemiah's heart was where God's heart was. He was grieved over Jerusalem the same way Jesus Christ was when Jesus Christ showed up on this earth. He had just laid out to the disciples what the end of the world was going to look like in Matthew 24. He sat up there on that hill looking at Jerusalem.

*Matthew 23:37*

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

It grieved Jesus Christ to see what God cared about so much, running away from God. That old song we like to sing, "Come Thou Fount," has a great line in there, "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel

it, prone to leave the God I love." That is exactly what Nehemiah was going through here. He got God's heart in the matter. He cared about God's city, Jerusalem.

I want you to notice this. Back when we were in Nehemiah 1, the Bible says, Nehemiah was in Shushan the palace. We find out later on that Nehemiah was there because he was the king's cupbearer. I want to say this to you, that no adversaries are going to come against you when you are serving the world. Yes, you will do some stupid things. You will have your own little tussles and stuff like that out there with the people of the world. But you are not going to see the opposition like you see it when you start doing things for God. When he was the cupbearer in the palace, everyone was behind him. Everyone was happy. Sanballat and Tobiah, they were fine. Nobody was coming up in him and opposing him.

But when you choose to look after God's things and serve Him, you will set yourself apart and define those who are not there for that purpose. That is what the world is right now. The world does not like it when Christians actually get serious about their faith. They are totally fine with you being in high school, being a part of Fellowship of Christian Athletes, kind of playing the game here and there, going to a one-off, quoting some Bible verses. But when it comes to practice or Bible study and you choose Bible study, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Folks, now you are becoming a zealot now."

When it comes to what we are going to choose to do, when the in-laws come in town, they expect you to stay home and not go to church. "Oh, whoa, whoa, whoa, what are you? You part of a cult now?" You see, you can have your faith as long as your faith submits to my schedule. But the moment that you make my life bow down to your, "No, no, no, no. Now you are pretty much a jihadi." They do not like that. They say your faith ought to build bridges, not walls.

Folks, there was a bridge, and you guys killed him. His name was Jesus Christ. He was the bridge in between God and man. That is why He came down here. Brother, if you want to have fellowship with me, you have got to cross that bridge first. Otherwise, we are actually enemies.

*James 4:4*

*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

That is what is going on here. But we like a faith that submits to the schedule of the world, to the routine of the world. We do not like a faith that puts up a wall. We do not like that at all.

*Nehemiah 2:17*

*Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.*

Do you see yourself this way? Do you see yourself the way God sees you? Yes, you have a great job. Yes, maybe there are no problems with the money in the bank right now. Yes, it looks like you have tons of friends out there in the world. But if your wall is broken down, if you are not taking that stand for the things of God, do you actually see yourself how God sees you?

That is the problem with our church age right now.

*Revelation 3:17*

*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

"Well, how can that be? I have the best of everything." Because it is the spiritual thing here. Do you see yourself that way? Yes, you are saved. You have a Bible. You come to church. You have a collection of everything that would identify you as a Christian. But when it comes to God dwelling with you and working through you, you are like Jerusalem here. You are just a pile of old rocks. Having these things without taking a stand for them is pointless. The word of God, faith in His ministry, must be what you live by, not just ornaments that you flaunt.

The Bible says here that they were distressed. That is what I was talking about earlier. God's people are suffering. The fact that matters is that pain in life is inevitable. But true suffering is optional. You say, "Well, Zach, what about that verse over there in 2 Timothy chapter 3?"

*2 Timothy 3:12*

*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

Yes, but that is someone that is living godly. That is someone that is taking a stand. Even though they are suffering that persecution, they are like Paul, and they are able to rejoice evermore, regardless of it. But our suffering, oftentimes, we are still suffering because we have got the same heartaches. We have got the same woes, the same fears as the world. We are sitting up here hoping for a vaccine to come out to save us. We are sitting up here hoping that someone can get into the White House to turn things around to make our nation great again. Hey, that is not going to happen. You voted God out a long time ago. Forget about it.

We are distressed. We have lacked those principles. We are suffering from our bad decisions now. We have stepped away from the principles of the word of God. The Bible says here in Nehemiah 2:17 that they were wasted. What is happening with us is that we are wasting the power that we got at salvation. That is such a serious thing. I try to drive that in my kids' heads so much. "Listen, you guys have got so much potential. You are a fresh canvas. You are clean. Whatever you want to paint on that thing, you can paint. You have that ability." That is why people like kids so much. Parents oftentimes look at their kids and try to vicariously live through them to accomplish the things that they were never able to accomplish. That stuff goes on all the time.

But if your child is saved, they have an opportunity unlike anybody else in the world. Listen, there are going to be plenty more politicians. There are going to be plenty more doctors. There are going to be plenty more professional athletes. There are going to be tons of all those things. What is not guaranteed is someone that can open up their Bible and lead someone to Jesus Christ, someone that understands eternal security. You say, "Well, Zach, what do you want our kids to be? Bums?" No.

*Matthew 6:33*

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

He will take care of them. He will supply them. It may not be accomplishing the dreams that you wanted them to accomplish. You may not be able to flaunt that with your friends, and you will not boost up your reputation. But my God, when they get up to heaven, it is going to glorify Him. They took a stand down here. They took this small amount of time that they still had left to do something. They did not get caught up in the whole career plan. That is so huge, just in the last 200 years. For 5,000 years before that, there was a simple model: a man had a job, the woman had a job, they came together to raise a family. That family is what God used to reach out to others. Since then, you know what it is going to come about? "All I do is win, win, win, win, win. Me, me, me, me, me, selfies, my face, your face, Instagram," all this stuff. We are so consumed with ourselves. We have forgotten that plan. Now the family has suffered from it. What we have done now, we have taken that and given that to our kids. That is what they are driven by, careers. They are not driven by a true purpose that is going to last for all eternity. That is the sad thing. We have wasted what God gave us at salvation. The walls burned down with fire.

*Nehemiah 2:18*

*Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.*

I want to say this: building walls is good work. It is good work. It is not bad work. That is what you are going to hear nowadays. "Why are you separating yourself? Why are you isolating yourself? Come hang out with us. You do not have to go to church today. You do not have to take that stand. We are all trying to get to the same spot." The world will have you think that bridges are better than walls.

Listen, I do not want to confuse you. The Bible is absolutely for unity. It is for getting along. It is for taking the high ground. It is for solving problems and not starting problems. But listen, the unity that the Bible preaches about is a unity that is inside Jesus Christ. That is the only place we can truly have unity. That is what we are saying right now in America. We have had this melting pot of all these different cultures and these groups that have come together. We thought that man himself could force unity to work. Well, it works for a little bit, but all it takes is one person to point out all the differences that are happening, all the supposed injustices that are going on. Look how quickly that unity goes away. You know why? Because the only true unity is in Jesus Christ.

In the Bible, you see that. You had all these different nations that were fighting against each other, slaying each other. The Jews themselves separated themselves from all the other nations. But then you get over to the book of Acts. What do you find in Acts chapter 13? You find a church with all three races working together, ministering to the Lord. That is the only spot you can truly have unity because it takes the focus off of yourself. That is the problem with the world. Everybody is so focused on themselves. Each race wants themselves to be at the top. The

reason why it works in church is because we put ourselves all under, and we are looking to Jesus Christ. We are giving Him the place of importance.

Building walls is good work. After salvation, the thing to do, the Bible says, is to do good works.

*Titus 3:8*

*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

*Titus 3:14*

*And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.*

These good works, they show a contrast from your past life to the new one that you now live in Jesus Christ. That is what we are trying to accomplish here with building these walls.

## VII. Opposition to Building the Wall

The moment that you choose to build a wall, look at Nehemiah 2:19. There are going to be some tactics that the enemy starts to throw your way.

*Nehemiah 2:19*

*But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?*

The first tactic the enemy throws at you when you make up your mind that you are going to stand for God, you are going to build a wall, is that he is going to laugh at you. The goal here is to make what you are doing seem super trivial. We hate to be laughed at and not taken seriously today. That is one of the number one things, the meme culture, the GIFs and all this stuff that we have had out there, the impersonators and stuff like that. Whenever there is something serious, the quickest way to get someone to take that thing and not make it serious anymore is to find a way to get folks to laugh at it.

I have seen some pretty funny skits. Some of the funny skits I have seen, and I hate to say this, I remember back when I was younger, I saw a South Park. They actually had Jesus Christ on there. I am thinking about that. They had Jesus Christ. We used to watch the show, "The Powerpuff Girls." It is mostly William and Alex, I would not watch that stuff. But no, and they had this character that represented Satan, his name was Him. "It is Him," they would say it like that. The funny thing about that, that is not really so funny, is that they are taking monumental characters that have to do with your soul, with your salvation, and they are making a joke of these guys. They saw Jesus Christ as being a drunk, some lush somewhere, He is sleeping around with folks and stuff like that. They make the devil some moron, some goofy guy that anybody can trick and get around. When you start to look at things like that, when you start to laugh at those things,

they have less and less of an impact on you, they do not mean as much. This is the plan that is getting accomplished.

I had some girls that were out doing discipleship, and we used to do this stuff all the time. We would go out in public places and just do discipleship to meet up and hang out. Part of it was just, we did not have homes to do it in when we were younger. I could not do it at my house or whatnot, and so they did not want to do it at their house, so we used to meet up somewhere public and do it. Back when that used to happen, time and time again, adults would see us kids out there discipling, they would come over and pretty much pat us on the back. "I am so glad to see young kids doing something that is positive in the world today." Probably like eight or nine times coming up that happened to me.

Kenzie, Amanda, and Alyssa, they are out having discipleship at Panera. They are just going to town, getting into the book and everything like that, and then the next thing you know, some lady turns around in the booth and she gets up and says, "I am not going to sit here anymore listening to this mythology." So Kenzie responds, "Well, it is not mythology." You say, "Well, Zach, what happened there? What happened to encouraging kids and being excited about them doing something positive?" That is the world we are living in now, it is going down fast. What they want you to believe is that what you are teaching, what you are believing in, is a fairy tale. You are going to have to build a wall, you are going to have to take a stand.

Come over here in Nehemiah 4:1, another tactic of the enemy.

*Nehemiah 4:1*

*But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.*

So the laughter did not slow him up, they kept building. So now the laughter turns to anger, it escalates. "What do you think you are? Goody two shoes, you some Bible thumper? Are you holier than thou? Are you a super Christian? Are you a zealot?" I remember back in high school, just for trying to do the right thing, they would call me "Reverend Sanders." That was supposed to discourage me. They got a little wroth there.

Now let me show you why they are getting mad. Come down here in Nehemiah 4:7.

*Nehemiah 4:7-8*

*But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,*

*And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.*

Now why is that? It is because now you have taken away access from the enemy. When you take away access from the enemy, you are stopping him from influencing you like he wants to. You are stopping his influence. Here is the problem: you are saved now. He knows your soul is sealed. He knows you are going to heaven. The only thing he has got left is the hope that he can

influence you so that you cause other folks to go to hell. He wants you to look like a hypocrite to other folks. "Okay, you are saved, you go to church and all that stuff. But look how you live your life. It is just like everybody else out here. What is the point? What is so special about you? There is nothing special that you are doing. You skip church just like we skip church. You come out and social drink just like we do. You cuss just like we do when you are not around your parents. You live exactly like you want to live and therefore you are a hypocrite just like everyone else out there."

But when you truly build that wall and you stand on the principles of the word of God, you are taking away the enemy's influence and it pisses him off. Now this is all he has left. He cannot get you in hell. He needs access in your life. If you shut him out, then you are not going to look like a hypocrite to the world.

Look at Nehemiah 4:8. The Bible says at the end of Nehemiah 4:7, that the breaches began to be stopped. Then were they very wroth in Nehemiah 4:8, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem and to hinder it. I want to say this, when you choose to build a wall, a new wall will always get tested. I kind of alluded to this earlier. Just out of nowhere, you will get into church, you will get disciplined. It looks like you have everything cleaned out of your life and then all of a sudden, lo and behold, a new relationship will pop up that starts to pull you away from what Jesus Christ was trying to build with you. Folks, that is the hardest thing in the world, especially if your heart is prone to that, to try to build a relationship with an individual that you might be falling in love with and also build a relationship with your Savior. You better figure out what is going on there and build that wall.

All of a sudden, the family reunion will be planned at the same time as church camp and you will have to choose. You say, "Well, what is happening, Zach?" Your wall has been tested. Your relatives will want you to participate in an infant baptism, even though you are totally against that. You say, "What is happening, Zach?" Your wall has been tested. The family will want you to have alcohol at your wedding reception. "What is happening, Zach?" Your wall has been tested. Someone will start gossip and expect you to feed into it instead of using the principles in Matthew 18 and going to that person one-on-one to handle it. "What is happening, Zach?" Your wall has been tested. A new wall will always get tested.

*Nehemiah 4:9*

*Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.*

Folks, I do not like what I am about to say here because it takes the control away from my physical body. But the only way to handle this, the only way to protect your new wall, the only way to fight is to watch and pray. Amen.

Time and time again, I love the Bible, absolutely. I know that that book has closed anyone that does not love it because the Bible says it is the discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. So God knows that I love His book. But I cannot say that there are not verses in there that

just rub me wrong that I do not like oftentimes. Over there in Ephesians 6:12, that verse is really rubbing me wrong right now.

*Ephesians 6:12*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Has anybody here ever had a conversation with another Christian, with another individual? "Come on, Lord, obviously You did not know what You were doing right there. You jacked up." "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood." You mean it is not the Democrats versus the Republicans? You mean it is not the globalists versus the nationalists? You mean it is not the deep state versus the liberty folks and stuff like that? Are you kidding me, Lord?

You know why I hate that? Because it is so much easier to point out an individual in the room and say they are the problem. "If we could just get rid of them, then we would be better." Since I have been at this church, you know how many times I have made that mistake and thought that if that person were gone, our church would be awesome. You know what happens? Somebody else comes into that spot and they are playing that exact same role. You know why that is? Because we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

People, what you are looking at right now, we are influenced by spirits. Once you got saved, what God wants, when we talk about being filled with the Spirit, He wants you to take His Holy Spirit and give it more control of your life so that you are operating like Jesus Christ. A spirit wants to influence you for its purposes. When you are unsaved, you can operate off your own human spirit or you can go kind of like crazy and do like the Emily Rose thing, the exorcism, and let the devil come in there and operate. People are just vehicles for spirits to influence to accomplish their purposes. I know you do not believe that. We have a list in our Bible that proves it. Have you ever heard of the 18 types of the Antichrist? How could men keep them born and dying and that that spirit sticks around? It is not the man, it is the spirit he is influenced by.

Our battle is not a battle against flesh and blood. If you have a problem with another individual, you know what you ought to do? You need to stop worrying about them, what they are doing, who they are, and start praying to God about the spirit that is influencing them. Now, we do not like that because it takes the control out of us. We cannot point at that. It is so much easier to look at somebody and say they are bad, and as soon as they are gone, it will be good. But this makes it hard now because it puts it back on us to spend time with God and then to trust God to actually do something. That is not cool. We have got to go back to that nasty word, "pray." We have got to spend time alone with God. We have got to get serious about what He said we have to operate on.

You know what He said the weapons of our warfare are?

*2 Corinthians 10:4*

*(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

It is the word of God in prayer that we have got to rely on. You are influenced by a spirit. What you are supposed to be doing is watching what is going on and praying against those spirits. Like I said, we do not like this because now we have to wait on God and trust Him to do the work. We put the fight back into His hands.

*Nehemiah 4:10-11*

*And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.*

*And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.*

*Nehemiah 4:12-13*

*And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.*

*Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.*

## VIII. The Church's Role in Building the Wall

This is why our church is so valuable to me and this is why I love it so much. When you make up your mind to build your wall, that is great, but you guys have got to understand something. Other folks are going to have to protect you while you are building that wall. That is why God gave us a church. That is why it is so important, especially right now, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

That is what your pastor is here for. You are going to be getting into the Bible, you are going to be working in discipleship, you are going to be trying to take care of the things in your life that you need to take care of. There are going to be people that are going to be coming in and trying to influence you. I think my first or second year I came into this church at my job, I started witnessing, trying to talk to people, and the moment you start doing that, you have other Christian cults that are out there in the world. One of my supervisors was a guy from the Church of Christ, one of the pastors there. He started talking to me, trying to influence me and telling me about, "Is this water baptism, this and that?" I was not buying that, but basically, he got down to it and said, "You know, if your pastor thinks he is right, have him come debate us." I said, "No, if my pastor is right, you come debate him."

So I came to Bob and I said, "Hey, this is a guy at work." He says, "If you open it up to him, he will come here and he will debate you." You guys might remember this. We had a Thursday night Bible study one time where a group of the Church of Christ all came down here. They brought their old boys up here to lay out their beliefs. We had our guys over here. I did not need that to know that what I had was the truth, but that meant so much to me. To see that while I am trying to do the right thing, while I am trying to get into the book, while I am trying to open up my

mouth and witness and use my job as my mission field, I had a full church behind me, supporting me and backing me up. My pastor was right there to take care of me.

You know why that is? Because when you are building your wall, other folks are going to have to help you with that. The person in your discipleship, that is why God gave them to you. Lean on them for the trials and the struggles that you are going through. You do not have to do this thing by yourself. You kids that have parents that are operating by the principles, stop fighting against them, start believing in them, start listening to them. Thank God for them, that they are building the right things up in your life.

You say, "Well, Zach, it cannot be that hard. I do not have to be at a local church to build my wall." Well, try it. You do not believe it, ask Alex. Ask him how easy it was to build his wall down in Alabama. Was he saved? Yep. Did he have you guys on the phone to talk to? Absolutely. Ask him, was it easy to build while you are by yourself down there? Just ask Alex, ask Dylan over here. Ask him how easy it was to build the wall. Was he saved? Absolutely. Was he on board with the King James Bible? Absolutely. Coming up here to camp, getting fired up, loving to hear Bob preach, all that stuff. I remember he would tell me that stuff, just how excited he was while coming to camp. He loved the activities and all that stuff, but he could not wait to get back to the services to hear more preaching, hear more preaching. As soon as he gets back to Texas, the whole world comes after him. You are going to need others to stand up and protect you. Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together when you are building that wall.

## IX. The Enemy's Final Tactic: Enticement to Leave the Wall

*Nehemiah 6:1-4*

*Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)*

*That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.*

*And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?*

*Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.*

When the enemy cannot discourage you from building your wall, when they cannot breach that wall that you have built, finally they are going to try to get you to leave that wall you have built. Sadly, this is what some of the kids are saying. It is not about what you start to do. It is not even about what you accomplish today. It is about the consistency, your diligence, and keeping that same thing going over and over and over and over and over again. It is about the habits you get into building that wall.

That hit personally even for our youth group. I should have had five seniors that I had standing up before you all this year. Last Thursday night, the kids got to hear from two that have done

phenomenally. They got to hear from Maddie and Gloria. It just shows you those five kids all started off right about the same spot. They were excited at one time for the things of God. They were involved in the youth group. Kids in the youth group looked up to them. What happened? Did they build their wall at one time? Absolutely. Did the enemy get stopped by them at one time? Absolutely. But what happened? Someone got them to leave that wall. The same way they tried to get me in my mind to leave his wall right here.

When they cannot discourage you from building, when they cannot find a way to find a breach in that wall to get in to attack you, they will give you some time and they will get you to leave that wall. He wants you to leave off trusting God for protection so that you will fall into a deal with him. You guys remember Demas back there? Started out on fire for God in the ministry, but then Paul wrote about him.

*2 Timothy 4:10*

*For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

It is sad to see something like that. It is not about what we do today that ensures what is going to happen tomorrow, but folks, it is waking up each and every day choosing to crucify yourself for Jesus Christ to build that wall. Unless you do that, there are no guarantees at all.

## X. The Purpose and Outcome of Building the Wall

Last thing we want to look at here is in Nehemiah 6:15-16.

*Nehemiah 6:15-16*

*So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.*

*And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.*

At the end of the day, we are not building a wall to separate ourselves, to be segregationists, to make ourselves look more holier than everybody else. All we are trying to do, like the Bible says,

*John 12:32*

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

We are trying to take Jesus Christ and give Him the spot of preeminence in this world. So that men that still want that lighthouse, that still want that lifeline, that still want salvation, yes, even though we are in a crappy situation, folks that still want salvation can get it because they see the light that is shining in us pointing to Jesus Christ. That is why we are building this wall. It is not about "I am better than you." It is not about "this is what Christians do and that is what the world does." It is about what can I do to make myself better to be a blessing to someone. That is what we are all about here. That is why we build our wall. We build the wall ultimately to help others.

You can come to me for help because I have sanctified myself to become something for you. I have allowed the Lord to separate me so He could transform me into what I need to be to be a blessing to you.

When you look at this thing in Nehemiah 6:16, they could not stop Nehemiah from building. They tried to, they fought against them. It did not happen. The Bible says, "So the wall was finished." Nehemiah 6:16 says, "And it came to pass that when all our enemies heard thereof and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes." You cannot get saved until you humble yourself in your own eyes. That is the problem with the world. They think their way is right and there is no other way because they do not see another way out there. You say, "Well, Zach, there is another way." But they cannot see it in you because you have no wall. There is no contrast. There is no difference in your life. But when they see your diligence, when they see your persistence for God, when they see you building that wall, then they take note of that thing. That catches their eye. Contrast catches the eye.

Last thing I want to show you here is that the Bible did not say that they repented and became proselytes. But the Bible does say that they got light of who God was and who His people were. Folks, that is all that we are guaranteed to do. The Bible says that God is the true light that lights every man that comes into the world. You know what it says about your spirit? That spirit that you are supposed to rule. When it is not ruled, it is like a broken city without walls. You know what God says about your spirit?

*Proverbs 20:27*

*The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*

God wants to take His light and light your candle with it to draw people to Him. But folks, you have got to protect it. You have got to build something. You have got to show a contrast. You even have got to build that wall. Will you build the wall? Will you just keep riding out the rest of whatever time we have down here like everyone else? Checking into the last news reports. Seeing what you need to do next to be safe. This is what it comes down to. I am not minimizing what is happening out there in the world, but these bodies were not made to last. One way or another, the Lord is going to call you through your, He is going to punch your time clock. One day you will not be here the next day.

Did you leave something worth being excited about going up there before God and saying, "Lord, I could not prevent this, I could not prevent that, but what I did do is I built my wall for You, Lord. I wanted to make sure that You could have fellowship with me. I wanted to make sure that I kept things out. I wanted to rule my spirit so that You could use me to reach out to others. I took my candle, Lord, and I let You light it so that I could draw other men to You"? That is what it is all about.

Guys, I thank you for tolerating that and putting up with it. I look forward to going into camp next week with your kids. It is going to be a good time. I feel like we are kind of closed down for repairs right now. That is going to develop something great for us as we step into this next year. No matter what the world throws our way, no matter what we come up against, we are going to

build the wall, we are going to be a testimony to this world, keep doing the work that Jesus Christ called us to do.

Let us have a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, thank You so much, Lord, for giving us the word of God that has endured throughout all time. A man has tried to use his education and his knowledge, Lord, to get around it, to tear it up, to break it down, Lord, but You build a wall around Your truth. I thank You for that. So now that I have it, Lord, and just like You preserved Your truth, God, help us to realize what we have as saved people here. We have got something that the world needs. They do not need another executive. They do not need another career person, Lord. They need another Christian that is going to stand for You and keep passing on what You have given us to give to them, Lord. These bodies are frail. They are here one day and gone the next. They are like a vapor, Lord. Help us to invest in them what really matters. Help us to take what You have done in our lives at salvation and what You have built in us from what we get in the principles of the word of God and take those things, Lord, and preserve them, protect them, Lord. We have got something we are fighting for, Lord. Help us not to spend more time fighting for the foolishness that is out there in the world than we do for what You have given us. Help us not to sacrifice the immediate on the altar of the eternal, Lord. I trust that anyone that opened up their heart to hear this message, You give them the direction that they need to take to accomplish this, Lord. I trust that You are going to do something great with us next week at camp. I just look forward to it. Your Son, Jesus Christ, I say my prayer and ask it all. Amen.