

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ENEMY

Ezra 4:1 And when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the sons of the captivity built the temple to Jehovah, the God of Israel, 2 then they came to Zerubbabel and to the chief of the fathers, and said to them, Let us build with you, for we seek your God, even as you. And we have sacrificed to him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assyria, who brought us up here. 3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said to them, You have nothing to do with us to build a house to our God. But we ourselves together will build to Jehovah, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us. 4 Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building. 5 And they hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

This morning. I want to talk to you on a message titled **HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ENEMY**. You see, it is important that you know who your enemy is. Unless you know your enemy, you won't know how to respond and end up fighting the wrong enemy.

The word used for enemy in Hebrew is tsawr, which means a tight place, a troubled place, a pebble that causes affliction/discomfort/anguish, an opposition or foe.

This is what the enemies of God's people were doing; they were there to oppose their progress, to cause anguish, and to stir trouble.

- The enemies of the builders were physical, but they were driven by a spiritual agenda(*the captivity built the temple to Jehovah, the God of Israel*); therefore, your enemy manifests in the natural, but the real driving force is spiritual.
- What you see manifesting in the natural is simply a reflection of a spiritual enemy. It is therefore important for you to understand that the real enemy is not the person causing you pain but the spirit behind that person.
- It is tempting to physically fight a person because it makes you feel like you are really fighting the enemy.

2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

- In other words, don't mistake your enemy with a physical person – your enemy is a spiritual entity.
- This is where you either win or lose the battle. Many believers fight the wrong enemy, using the wrong weapons.
- When you engage the correct weapons, the enemy cannot match the firepower behind a believer's weapon – its only when a believer uses the wrong weapon that the enemy becomes victorious.

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ENEMY

- What you know about your enemy determines your response.
- Unless you know the enemy's modus operandi, you won't know how to respond.

2 Corinthians 2: 10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And if I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven it in the presence of Christ for your sake, 11in order that Satan should not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Lets look at how the enemies of God's children tried to attack them and from there we can become alert to his cunning ways – the devil will use the same tactics on you today

Ezra 4:1 And when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the sons of the captivity built the temple to Jehovah, the God of Israel,

1. The enemy always reacts to spiritual progress

- The enemy has ears to hear, eyes to see, and brains to think about what God is doing in you and through you.
- The enemy pays attention to every threatening move in your life. He will not react to anything that does not threaten him.
- They were opposed to the building of the temple not because the temple was taking up prime land but because the temple was a spiritual threat to the agenda of the devil.
- Every time you decide to scale up your spiritual temperature, the enemy gets awakened – he rises up to oppose you.
- The day you decide to pray more, to read the Word more, to fast more, to come to church more (early), it is the day that a spiritual entity gets awakened.
- When David was anointed king over Israel, the enemy was awakened and pursued him.

2 Samuel 5:17 And the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel. And all the Philistines came up to seek David. And David heard, and went down to the stronghold.

- This prepares you to fasten up and be ready to respond – you are not immune to this phenomenon.

Ezra 4: 2 then they came to Zerubbabel and to the chief of the fathers, and said to them, Let us build with you, for we seek your God, even as you.

2. The enemy seeks legal access to your life

- There is certain harm that the enemy cannot inflict unless he gets a legal right from you – you give him permission by giving him authority to injure you.
- The enemies of the builders were looking for proximity and authority, and this was only going to be possible by being allowed to be part of the project team (Matthew 4 – Jesus' temptation).
- He always wants to legitimize his involvement. He comes seeking alliances with you to have access to your life.

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ENEMY

- That is why you must never enter into alliances blindly, because you could get yourself into unholy alliances/agreements.
- The devil seeks a hand in marriage with you – don't just marry anyone because they sound Christian, or look Christian – seek God about any agreement.
- Alliances will either advance your life or set you back and hinder your progress.
- For every agreement, there are applicable terms and conditions that must be observed.
- Worldly and wicked men often seek to form alliances with the religious and the godly. These alliances are of different kinds: commercial - partnerships in business, social - reception into their society, or personal friendship and matrimonial.
- You don't get into alliances only by signing legal documents; you also enter agreements by your words, and by acting in line with a certain code of practice.
- The words you speak over your life give legal access to either God's hand or the enemy's hand.
- When your behavior is aligned with a system, you become susceptible to the outcome of the system.

Ezra 4:4 Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building. 5 And they hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

3. Weakening of your hands

- Have you realized that Christians tend to face way more hurdles in business, in career growth, and in their relationships than the ordinary person?
- It is because the enemy is determined to weaken your hands in what you are doing.
- It is important that you understand this so that you don't quickly give up.
- They were told that they would never finish the project; they were told that what they were building was not strong enough to withstand the test of time.
- Discouragement and frustration are some of the prime weapons the enemy uses to stop us from pursuing the things of God in our lives.
- They deployed counselors to give them advice on the best way to build the temple. These were well-trained construction professionals who offered consulting services in the industry.
- The consultants were giving them ill advice. You must be careful about which voices you listen to when building for God.

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers.

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ENEMY

Ezra 4:6 And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem...12 let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have come to Jerusalem, and are building the rebellious and the evil city, and have set up its walls, and have joined the foundations.

- When they failed to stop them, they decided to escalate the matter and accused them of treason.

4. The use of False Accusations

- There is nothing that stings like a false accusation and if you are not careful, the enemy will throw you arrows of accusations to wound you and thereby slow you down.
- He is called the accuser of brethren, who stands before God to accuse us daily (Rev 12:10) – he uses the good that you are doing to falsely accuse you of wrongdoing.
- They accused them of plotting against King Artaxerxes.
- Accusations attack a believer at the level of identity, which then compromises your confidence in who you are in the Lord.
- They were being labeled as rebels, enemies of the king, and yet they were simply building a house of worship that had been decreed by God and supported by King Cyrus.
- This letter had the potential of scaring the builders, resulting in them stopping the works.
- Be careful of the sting of accusation – you will get voices telling you that you are a horrible person, and you cannot be used by God anymore.

Ezra 4:21 Now make a decree to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not built until the decree shall be given from me. 22 And take heed that you do not fail to do this. Why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings? 23 And when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they hurried to Jerusalem to the Jews, and made them stop by force and power. 24 Then the work of the house of God at Jerusalem ceased. So it ceased to the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

- The church must never underestimate the tenacity and aggression of the enemy – he will pursue you relentlessly.
- Eventually, the enemy brought the works to a stop.

5. He stops the work

- Yes, the devil will bring to a stop the work that you are busy with.
- The devil comes to steal, kill and destroy – his aim is to bring to an end all that you are building.

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ENEMY

- The devil does not want Christian marriages; he does not want Christian businesses – he will try to make you abort your dream, or cause a stillbirth.
- Let us not be naive about the intention of the enemy – if he can't kill, he will steal from you; if he can't steal from you, he will destroy you.
- Am I saying all these things to put the devil on a pedestal? No, I am doing this to awaken you to seek answers on how to respond appropriately.
- Lets continue next as we learn how to respond to the enemy.