

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ENEMY PRT 2

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.

This morning, I want to preach the second leg of the message I started last week titled **HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ENEMY PRT 2**.

Last week we learned that we are up against a foe who is cunning and relentless in his ways. From the story of the exiles rebuilding the temple of God, we learned that our enemy is not a physical one but rather a spiritual one. He is diabolos, the accuser of God's people, who comes against us in various ways, and last week we looked at only 5 of those ways, as guided by the story in Ezra 4.

1. The enemy always reacts to spiritual progress

2. The enemy seeks legal access to your life

3. Weakening of your hands

4. The use of False Accusations

5. He stops the work

- Without wasting much of your time, I want us to dive straight into today's teaching, and we are going to be looking at how one should respond in the face of such opposition.
- What I am going to share with you is not exhaustive, but I believe it is what the Lord wants us to pay attention to in this season – in other words, this is a rhema word for the church.
- Let's learn from the leaders of the captives on how to respond to the enemy

*Ezra 4: 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.***

- This must have been a stressful moment for the leaders of the captives. Standing before them were officials, people with authority and representing the great kingdom of Persia.
- Usually, when the enemy comes against you, he wants to put you in a place of fear, and fear has a paralyzing effect on you if you are not careful.
- When fear comes upon you, your body gets into a fight-or-flight mode.
- When I read this verse, I got the sense that Zerubbabel and the rest of the leaders chose to fight rather than to flee.

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- Whenever the enemy comes against you, you will always have a choice between fighting back or being on the run.
- I got the sense of a leader who was in a defiant mode, ready to defend his ground. I can picture Zerubbabel looking his enemy straight in the face and declaring his position.

1. Stand your ground in the face of the enemy

- I know that there are certain things that are easier said than done, but there is no other way around this matter.
- You can't afford to hand over your territory to the enemy by running off. You have to remain standing to give heaven a chance to fight for you.
- We have many believers who are on the run all the time, at the appearance of the enemy.
- The devil is tenacious and relentless, but when you decide to stand, you can outlast him.
- Jesus outlasted him.

Luke 4:13 When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

- The devil tried all the tricks in his book, but Jesus did not give him an inch – he gave up and left him for a season.
- If you stand long enough, the devil will let go for a season – yes, he is bound to come back, but you will have a breathing space for a season.
- We don't stand out of arrogance, but rather we stand by submitting ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus. A submitted believer has the backing of heaven.

James 4:6 But He gives us more grace. This is why it says: "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

- The devil will flee away from every believer who stands his ground from a place of submission.
- Sometimes we are defiant on the outside; we walk around with our chests out, and yet we are not submitted to the lordship of Jesus.
- When you stand from a place of submission, your life is covered by the whole armor of God. Many people are naked in the spirit; as such, there is no amount of resistance that chases the devil away.

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you will be able to stand your ground, and having done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then...

- Paul is going into overdrive, emphasizing the need for you to stand. He is challenging us to stand in all circumstances – don't quickly throw in the towel.
- Stand your ground when access is denied the fourth time, stand your ground when you have failed the entrance exam, stand your ground when you feel like you are on fire in your

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marriage, stand your ground when your kid keeps going back to the hospital – having done all to stand, stand.

1 Corinthians 15: 58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

- God Himself will enable you to stand, but you must be willing to stand – God sent Ezekiel to a people who were hard of hearing and it needed someone who would stand his ground in the truth.

Ezekiel 3: 8 But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. 9 I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people.”

- In the process of being defiant, they kept building, but they also did something very important. Look at this verse with me again:

Ezra 4: 3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said to them,

- Standing by itself is not enough; you need to raise the temperature by speaking out. Many people are standing silently.
- In his defiance, Zerubbabel used his tongue to assert his authority
- What did Zerubbabel do in the face of his enemies – he spoke up! “...he said to them,...

2. Use your tongue in the face of the enemy

- The enemy seeks to silence you; that is why whenever you are under severe attack, you tend to lose your voice and start keeping quiet.
- After standing, your next line of defense is your tongue. Don't waste your weapon because what you say matters.
- With his tongue, he placed his enemies where they belonged – they were not part of what they were doing for God...”*You have nothing to do with us to build a house to our God”*
- The devil is afraid of his destiny and what awaits him – he needs to be reminded that he is a defeated foe.
- He can try and jump around, but on the cross he was defeated. Unless you are bold enough to remind him, he will continue to operate as if he has the upper hand.

Colossians 2:14 having canceled the debt ascribed to us in the decrees that stood against us. He took it away, nailing it to the cross! 15And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

- How did David obtain victory against Goliath? Unless you read the story carefully, you will not realize where his victory came from. The sling was not what brought the victory but rather the tongue. David deployed his tongue when he encountered Goliath.

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1 Samuel 17:26 And David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man who kills this Philistine and takes away this shame from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?... 36 Your servant killed both the lion and the bear. And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God.

- Whilst everyone was running away in fear, David came on the scene and deployed his tongue by rightly identifying Goliath.
- Goliath was a giant in the natural, but he was a small entity in the spirit – he was an uncircumcised Philistine, therefore had no covenant with God.
- David did not just believe it; he pronounced it aloud. Paul said, Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak – 2 Cor 4:13.
- Your tongue will loosen the hold of the enemy over your children, over your finances, over your marriage.
- That is why the Bible says we believe with our hearts and we confess with our mouths unto salvation – salvation requires both belief and confession (Romans 10:10).
- With his tongue, he asserted their identity and their responsibility. Your tongue reveals your identity and the extent of your authority.
- Your speech reveals your true identity. Look at what Zerubbabel said – *“But we ourselves together will build to Jehovah, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us.”*
- To continue doing what God called you to do, you must be comfortable in your identity and tell the devil who you are. You are a child of the Most High God; you are the beloved of the Lord; you are formed in His image; you are the apple of His eye.
- You must regain your voice and start prophesying over your life.
- Prophetic people shape their environment by their words, by infusing heaven into the earth.
- The tongue channels our faith into the right place.

Matthew 17:20 And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Move from here to there. And it shall move. And nothing shall be impossible to you. 21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

- The tongue releases indwelling authority.
- Your mountain is not afraid of the faith in your heart but is afraid of the faith that speaks.
- When your faith is strong enough to leave your heart and come out of your mouth, it is the faith that can move a mountain.

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- This explains why many believers don't see results in their lives; it is because they have lost their voices.
- Your faith must come out as words in prayer – the devil does not want you to pray because through prayer, we shape our world.
- Jesus gave two dimensions of using your tongue – one by declaring and secondly by supplication and travailing in prayer. You must learn to do both – declarations and supplications.