

Sermon Title: On Daring To Do Big Things For God

Preacher: Rev.. Dr. Raphael Warnock

Date: May 21, 2023

Scripture:

Nehemiah 4:6 NRSV

So we rebuilt the wall, and all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.

Nehemiah 6:15-16 NRSV

So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid^[a] and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

Sermon Notes:

God is frustrated and offended, not so much by what we do, but by what we fail to do. Much of the brokenness in God's world would be fixed if we would dare to do BIG. things for others. We ought to act as if we serve a BIG God.

We fail to solve BIG problems because our faith and moral imagination are too small. Pastor dared and challenged us to declare how BIG our God is. He urged and provoked us to proclaim the greatness of the God we serve.

Scripture tells us that a man named Nehemiah was faced with a BIG problem: the protective wall around his city was broken. Nehemiah declared that God's people could fix the wall because the problem of the broken wall was not BIGGER than their God. But when the people began to rebuild the wall, God's enemies began to attack the work. This happens because God's enemies are invested in the problems of this broken world. God's enemies are invested in poverty and mass incarceration and racism and injustice and violence.

Nehemiah tells us that work on the wall was engaged because "*the people had a mind to work.*" The success of their work demonstrated, even to God's enemies, that God helps those of big faith and moral imagination and no weapon formed against them shall prosper.

The One Ebenezer is BIG! It intends to raise \$15 million in three years. One Ebenezer is an expression of our faith and moral imagination. This campaign is consistent with our history and tradition. One Ebenezer is BIG. One Ebenezer attacks BIG problems. We serve a BIG God who is our help.

Sermon Points:

1. Small faith and moral imagination will not solve BIG problems.
2. Expect BIG opposition when you confront BIG problems.
3. The God we serve is greater than our BIG problems.
4. BIG problems are successfully resolved because God is our help.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe a BIG problem, you have faced or are facing now. How did/does God help you?
2. How do you react to sermons about tithing and/or giving money?
3. Share time when you had a problem that was bigger than what you could handle. What did you do?
4. What would you say to an EBC member who told you they were not to participate in the One Ebenezer fundraising campaign?
5. What help do you need from God? How do you plan to get it?