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Poor Nehemiah. Nehemiah is besieged.

Nehemiah has rallied the people of Jerusalem. They're working hard to rebuild the city wall. Stone upon stone, piece by piece, day after day. Slow but steady progress.

And now comes opposition. From the start, enemies trash-talked and laughed at Nehemiah and the Jerusalemites. But now, as the protective wall takes shape, opposition intensifies. From all sides, enemies of Jerusalem conspire to stop the wall project.

Samaritans, from the north. Their governor, Sanballat, gathers an army, and prepares to attack. Ammonites, from the east, seeking to take over the lands around Jerusalem. Arabs, from the south, hungry to expand their territory at the expense of the Jews. And Ashdodites, from the west, descendants of Israel's ancient enemy, the Philistines.

Here sits Nehemiah, in Jerusalem. Besieged ... surrounded ... overwhelmed.

Ever felt like that yourself? Just inundated? Problems and troubles mounting up on all sides?

To tell the truth, I think we are the ones besieged, way more often than we like to think. Not just life's difficulties and hardships pressing against us occasionally. Modern-day Christians are being spiritually besieged every day. Our faith is being tested constantly. Our relationship with God is pressured daily.

We're not facing Samaritans and Ashdodites. We're besieged by an increasingly godless culture around us, pulling us relentlessly away from the Lord's ways. We're besieged by temptations, luring us into sin; and by worldly

concerns, pushing God way down on our priority list. We live in a society that embraces religious pluralism, teaching us that it's cool to just choose whatever we want to believe, and express our religious life however we wish, instead of paying attention to God's Word and God's commands.

Like Nehemiah, we're besieged. And all these assaults can weaken our faith. They chip away at our faith connection with God.

So what does a Christian do, when besieged? Well, let's look today at three practical things Nehemiah did, three things we Christians can do. P-T-T.

P stands for pray. All throughout this book, we see Nehemiah praying. He prays for God's help, God's direction, God's protection. And here he goes again, in chapter 4. Nehemiah writes, "And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night" (vs. 8-9).

"We prayed to our God." Nehemiah knows, and he makes sure the people know, that God is listening. He knows God still cares about his people. He knows God is all-powerful, and they're not. So, when he's besieged, what does Nehemiah do first? Pray!

We've said this for a few weeks now, but let me say it again today. When we're attacked, inundated, and overwhelmed, our first step should be prayer. Instead of moaning and groaning about all your troubles, and how you can't handle them all by yourself, turn to the one who can. God is the one who knows you inside and out, and the one who knows what's best for you. So when you're the one besieged, begin with P. P is for pray.

Next, T stands for trust. Nehemiah exhibits a strong, active trust in his God. At one point, the people start getting

discouraged, feeling afraid. They lament, “By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall” (v. 10). Nehemiah implores them, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes” (v. 14).

He’s saying here, “Look folks, I know we’re in grave danger. We’re besieged. But remember the Lord, who is great and awesome. Remember all the times he’s helped us and saved us in the past.”

Nehemiah has a genuine trust in God. Not just an intellectual belief in a higher power. But a deep-rooted confidence that his God is going to help him. A rock-solid conviction that God will help the people, will protect the city. “Our God will fight for us,” Nehemiah says (v. 20). His trust affects his attitude and his actions, even while he’s besieged.

Think about the kind of trust you have in God today. Do you express it only here in church? Or do you put it into action, in real-life ways? Is God really is on your side? Is the God who sent his Son to die on a cross for you going to abandon you, and forget about you, this week? Or can you really trust that he’ll be there for you, and especially when you’re besieged? T is for trust.

Finally, a second T. T for team. “Team up,” Nehemiah urges the people. “Help each other out. Guard and protect each other. You, Meshullam, watch Zadok’s back. And you Tekoites, you stand by the sons of Hassenaah.”

With enemies all around, Nehemiah sets up a teamwork system. Half the people worked with construction tools, half of them stood by with spears and bows. They teamed, they partnered, so the Lord’s work could go on.

In our day and age, in our church, we need to team like that. We need to watch each other’s backs. Are any of us, on our

own, strong enough, resilient enough, to fight off all the dangers and perils surrounding us? I'm not. I need to team, to work together with you, as we carry on with God's work.

I know many of you are true believers. Many of you are convinced, deep down, that God has got your back, that he's going to see you through, no matter what happens to you in this life. And that's great.

But not everybody's got that strong, deep faith. Not everybody handles their adversities so calmly. Not all of our kids and youth are going to keep their faith, as they grow up and face their foes. So we need to team up. We need to help each other out. We need to watch out for each other in our small groups, in our ministry teams. We need to actively support our church's ministry programs and events – not just for our own sake, but to help each other grow, to encourage someone else's faith, to support one another through the hardships and the challenges.

P -- prayer. T – trust. T – team. An important formula for Nehemiah; and for you and me, when we're besieged. Amen.