

Sustaining Worship through adversity *Brian Doerksen*

My dream – a result of positive encounters with God and negative encounters with the church

Another dreamer - Nehemiah

Nehemiah 1: 2 - 4

² . . . one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

³ They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Some obstacles in my calling to worship:

Fear

Opposition

Negative circumstances and tragedies – the result of living in a fallen world.

The obstacles to Nehemiah's dream.

Nehemiah 4

¹ When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, ² and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble-burned as they are?"

³ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building-if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!"

⁴ Hear us, O our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. ⁵ Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

⁶ So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

Why is following our God given dream so difficult?

It's tough because we are opposed!

It's tough because people will let you down!

It's tough because in a fallen world there are no guarantees so there will be disappointments!

So how do we sustain worship in the middle of adversity?

Embrace the call to live in faith.

Let go of the expressions of worship that are only sustained by our need to impress.

Be honest with how you are really doing

Remember what worship really is – a willing surrender of all we are to all that God is.

This world will never fully embrace the call to worship – be prepared for opposition!

Remember the power of prayer!

Nehemiah 4

⁸ *They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it.* ⁹ *But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.*

Remember the poor!

Find strength with others who are going through adversity

Sustaining means asking for courage!

Conclusion: Who is your hero?