



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

December 2, 2018

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Steve McCreary

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Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:30 pm

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SATAN MET A BRICK WALL

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

Temptations to forsake good works have ever plagued mankind. Satan has always known that the quickest and surest way to bring a good work to a halt is simply by discouraging the workers. Our enemy, as *“A roaring lion...seeking whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8)*, delights in shrouding any shining ray of hope behind dark clouds of doubt and defeatism.

A wonderful Biblical example of one who overcame Satan’s temptations to quit a worthy work can be found in the Old Testament story of Nehemiah. Nehemiah had not been laboring long in rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem before Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, enemies of God’s people, heard of it and began a major campaign to halt the work. At first they ridiculed the project. Tobiah dismissed the wall as being so weak that it would fall under the weight of a fox. **(Nehemiah 4:3)**. But the work continued.

These enemies then *“conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it,”* but still the work continued with the workmen holding a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other **(4:8, 17)**. Sanballat and Geshem tempted Nehemiah to take a rest from the work and meet with them on the plains of Ono to talk the matter over. But the invitation was refused and the work continued **(6:1-4)**. Finally, ugly and untruthful rumors were circulated in a last ditch effort to discredit the work and the motive behind it **(6:5-9)**. But the work continued and the wall was finished in just 52 days **(6:15)**.

The key to Nehemiah’s success? Among others, note these: first, *“They strengthened their hands for this good work,”* believing that God would help them. **(2:18; 20)**. And second, *“The people had a mind to work” (4:6)*. Because the work was perceived as greater than the workers and because it was seen as a work of God and aided by God, Nehemiah’s company *“had a mind to work.”* They would thus be neither discouraged nor dissuaded.

Satan met a brick wall when he came up against Nehemiah and his workmen. May the same be true of his efforts against our good works as we labor for the Lord today.

Dalton Key

“DO NOT PUT ON A GLOOMY FACE”

Most of you probably know the context of this command of Jesus. “Do not put on a gloomy face.” It comes from **Matthew 6:16** where He was giving examples about not practicing one’s righteousness solely for the purpose of being seen by others. He had already used the example of giving to the poor that it was to be done in such a way that the left hand wasn’t to know what the right hand (the giving hand) was doing. Prayer likewise was best done in the closet and not on the street corner.

Then, Jesus comes to the subject of fasting, i.e. the total abstention from food for spiritual reasons. He basically instructed one to not let the outward demeanor be reflective of the inward struggle of privation. In other words, keep a smile on your face while your stomach is hurting, Jesus said, “*so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret*” (**Matthew 6:18**).

Peter suggested a similar thought when he wrote, “*But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing*” (**I Peter 4:13**). Again, “Keep a smile on your face while you are suffering inside.”

When asked about his welfare, one of my good brothers will always respond, “I’m doing great!” Sometimes when he is obviously in pain, he’ll still say, “I’m doing great!” Several times he has explained his response to me, “It makes my friends glad and my enemies mad.” There’s a lot of wisdom in that thought.

Whenever I’m around the Christian who has fairly mastered the display of a joyful composure in all circumstances, I’m truly inspired. I want to be that way! I want to make the choice of life that laughs in the face of adversity and smiles in the presence of pain. I want unending contentment and boundless tranquility in Christ. I want a bounce in my step when my load is heavy. I want my head held high when cares are threatening to pull it down. I want my suffering for Christ to be seen only by my Father while the world doesn’t have a clue. I want my countenance to make my friends glad and my enemies mad. I want to walk through life with a smile and not a frown. I want to inspire others to a greater mastery of their own problems. “Do not put on a gloomy face!”

Floyd Kaiser