

Hail to the Victor

Many of us have experienced the convenience of flying across the country or around the world. For others, stepping onto a plane that is about to take flight is petrifying. Regardless of your disposition, manned flight seemed like a fairytale a little over 120 years ago. That is until Wilbur and Orville Wright proved it to be possible on December 17, 1903. Four times the brothers tested their aircraft that day, each flight with increasing success - the final test carried Wilbur a distance of 852 feet and for 59 seconds. Yet, much of the general public refused to believe their account let alone that flight was possible. Nevertheless, the Wright brothers were steadfast in their pursuits, leading to advancements in aviation that the two could never have imagined!

Nehemiah 4-5 demonstrates the importance of remaining undeterred - faithful to God and committed to His cause regardless of the resistance or opposition. This opposition is inevitable when people are dedicated to God's work. When good things happen in God's name and for God's glory, enemies are angered and agitated. They disparage, discourage, and bully in every way possible. This was the case when God's people came together to rebuild the walls and repair the gates of Jerusalem (Neh 3). Similarly, when the local church rolls up its sleeves and begins to see souls saved, sins forsaken, and relationships restored, enemies look for breaches in the wall and discouragement among the laborers.

Still, woven throughout the entire narrative is an unwavering trust in a God "who is great and awesome" and an unflinching "fight" for His cause and His people (Neh 4:14). In preparing for a possible enemy attack, Nehemiah took God's sovereignty in one hand and his human responsibility in the other. His leadership demonstrated the undeniable correlation between God's trustworthiness and our toil, between God's providence and our preparedness:

"In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. **Our God will fight for us.**" **So we labored at the work**, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out. (Nehemiah 4:20-21)

So, when we face the inevitable resistance that comes with a life committed to Gospel-service, that is fixed on loving God and people, and that is determined to bring Him joy, we keep going. We do so, because we know that trials and tribulations are not an end unto themselves. Rather, they help us to grow in our service and our soul. Overcoming opposition demonstrates that we are new

creations (2 Cor 5:17), that He has freed us from sin (Rom 6:6-7), and that Jesus is the Victor (Col 2:15). Hail to the Victor!

Colossians 2:13-15 (ESV) - “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ***He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.***”