
The Protection Of Favor (A Broken and Contrite Spirit)

Rebuilding The Walls Of Protection

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May 14, 2023

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Sermon: Rebuilding The Walls Of Protection: The Protection Of Favor (A Broken and Contrite Spirit)

Lesson Text

Nehemiah 2:1–5 (KJV)¹ And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that wine was* before him: and I took up the wine, and gave *it* unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence. ² Wherefore the king said unto me, Why *is* thy countenance sad, seeing thou *art* not sick? this *is* nothing *else* but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, ³ And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? ⁴ Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵ And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

Isaiah 66:1–2 (KJV)¹ Thus saith the LORD, The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my rest? ² For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Psalms 51:16–18 (KJV)¹⁶ For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it*: thou delightest not in burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. ¹⁸ Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

Introduction

Last week, we learned that whereas God calls some of us to rebuild the work that has been torn down and destroyed, He also calls some of us to rebuild the walls of protection to prevent the enemy from coming in and out of our lives to destroy it all over again.

In our previous message, we started rebuilding the walls by taking on the burden of the Lord through weeping, fasting, and praying.

Let's now look at rebuilding the wall through the Favor of God!

Favor is something we receive that shows approval or preference for. And a lot of people miss out on this key element of protection because they are constantly fighting for fairness.

God never promised us fairness, but if we obtain His favor, we can overcome its injustices.

- Psalm 30: ⁵ For his anger *endureth but* a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.
- Proverbs 18: ²² *Whoso* findeth a wife findeth a good *thing*, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

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- Ephesians 2: ⁸ For by grace (unmerited favor) are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:
- Proverbs 10: ²² The blessing (favor) of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Now although God may choose to grant us favor, it does not exempt us from the woes of this world. Favor does not rid us of these issues; it just gives us victory over them. This is why we don't fight for fairness; we just learn how to obtain favor.

Luke 2: ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Proverbs 3: ⁴ So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Our first lesson records how Nehemiah used favor to rebuild the walls of protection, and our second lesson text shows us the keys to obtaining the favor of God and Man that Nehemiah had.

Isaiah 66:2 (NLT)² My hands have made both heaven and earth; they and everything in them are mine. I, the Lord, have spoken! "I will bless (favor) those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word.

Psalms 51: ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Today, we will explore the keys to obtaining favor to rebuild the walls of protection.

Series and Sermon: Rebuilding The Walls Of Protection: The Protection Of Favor (A Broken and Contrite Spirit)

"Obtaining The Favor of Man, The Favor of God, and The Favor of the Word"

I. Obtaining The Favor with Man (A Humble Spirit)

Nehemiah 2: ¹ And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that wine was* before him: and I took up the wine, and gave *it* unto the king. **Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.** ² Wherefore the king said unto me, **Why is thy countenance sad,** seeing thou *art* not sick? this *is* nothing *else* but sorrow of heart. **Then I was very sore afraid,**

One of the first things that wall builders need is the protection of Favor with Man.

Now if you remember from last week (chapter 1), Nehemiah was weeping because of the state of the people of God back in Jerusalem (the people were afflicted, the walls broken down).

Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer, historically an officer of high rank in royal courts, whose duty was to pour and serve the drinks at the royal table. Now because of the constant fear of plots to poison the king, the cupbearer was regarded as thoroughly trustworthy.

So, any agitation of the cupbearer, such as sadness was not only not allowed, it was actually dangerous; which is why Nehemiah was "sore afraid" or terrified. He could have been killed.

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But he had the protection of favor!

Nehemiah 2: ⁵ And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, ...

So how do we find or obtain favor with man?

Isaiah 66: ² For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: **but to this man will I look (Give Favor), even to him that is poor (Humble)** ...

We obtain favor with man when we walk in humility!

Humility is having or showing a modest or low estimate of one's own importance. And what the bible teaches us is that God gives favor (grace) to the humble heart!

James 4: ⁶ But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

Nehemiah was in trouble, but because of humility, he gained favor with man.

Nehemiah 2: ³ And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

He could have died, but because of favor, he was able to petition the king to build the wall.

Jesus taught us how to use our positions and giftings with people to obtain favor.

Mark 10: ⁴² But Jesus called them *to him*, and saith unto them, **Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.** ⁴³ But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: ⁴⁴ And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Whereas the world uses their positions (who they are) to lord over people, and their giftings (abilities) to take authority over people, we are to humble ourselves and serve them.

And it is our humility that will give us the protection of favor when we need it the most.

II. Obtaining The Favor with God (A Contrite Spirit)

Nehemiah 2: ⁴ Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

The next thing that wall builders need is the protection of Favor with God.

Although the King asks Nehemiah for his request before he petitions man, he first petitions God.

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Although we want favor with man, we need favor with God. Because without God, everything we do is of vain effort.

Psalms 127: ¹ Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it (Wasting Time): except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain (No Protection).

1 Corinthians 15:10 (NLT)¹⁰ But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace.

So how do we find or obtain favor with God?

Isaiah 66: ² For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor **and of a contrite spirit**,...

We obtain favor with God when we have a contrite spirit.

A Contrite Spirit is the feeling or expression of remorse.

God shows us favor when we express remorse over our sins. It's when guilt consumes us to the point of conviction.

Psalms 34: ¹⁸ The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

It is David that teaches us that the lack of sin is not what gives us favor, but a contrite heart when we do!

- Psalm 51: ⁴ Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest.
- Psalm 51: ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
- But it's verses 16-18 that gets us to the favor of God to rebuild!
- Psalm 51:16–18 (NLT)¹⁶ You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God. ¹⁸ Look with favor on Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

God wants more than our religious rituals, He wants a broken heart and contrite spirit, and then we obtain His favor to rebuild!

Romans 10: ⁹ That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

III. Obtaining The Favor with The Word (A Trembling Spirit)

Nehemiah 2: ⁵ And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

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- We obtain Favor with Man through a Humble Spirit: God resists the proud but gives grace/favor to the Humble.
- We obtain Favor with God through a Contrite Spirit: God wants more than just our religious behavior, He wants our repentant heart.
- We obtain Favor with The Word through a Trembling Spirit: God wants us to fear Him with a reverence and awe of His Word.

The final thing we need is the Protection of Favor with The Word. This requires a Trembling Spirit.

A Trembling Spirit means to lose one's strength or will in reverence to the Word of the Lord.

- Proverbs 1: ⁷ The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- Luke 22: ⁴² Saying, **Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.**

Nehemiah understood that although he had obtained favor with man, His Trembling Spirit had him seek God's favor first to order his steps: Nehemiah 2: ⁴ Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? **So I prayed to the God of heaven.**

Matthew 6: ³³ **But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

Psalms 119: ¹³³ Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

And when our steps are being ordered by the lord, we obtain Favor with the Word.

1 John 5: ¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: ¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

2 Corinthians 1: ²⁰ For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Luke 11: ⁹ **And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.**

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Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: The Protection Of Favor (A Broken and Contrite Spirit))

Lesson Text

- Nehemiah 2:1–5, Isaiah 66:1–2, Psalm 51:16–18

Sermon Outline (Notes)

- I. *Obtaining The Favor with Man (A Humble Spirit)*
- II. *Obtaining The Favor with God (A Contrite Spirit)*
- III. *Obtaining The Favor with The Word (A Trembling Spirit)*

Questions (What was your takeaway from Sunday's Sermon?)

I. Getting to Know "Me"

1. What is your favorite type of day (weather, temperature, etc.)
2. Where is your favorite place to nap?

II. Into the Bible

1. Isaiah 66 is about the judgment of the faithless and the hope of the faithful. According to this chapter, what are the consequences of the choices of the faithless and the faithful? Please provide scriptural support for your answer.
2. Psalm 51 is centered around David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba. Using David as an example, does God erase/remove the natural consequences of sin even though we've repented? Why or not?

III. Life Application

1. Describe a time when you have needed the favor of man and a time when you have experienced the favor of God.
2. After hearing this sermon, what are the practical steps that you will take to ensure your steps are being ordered by the Lord?