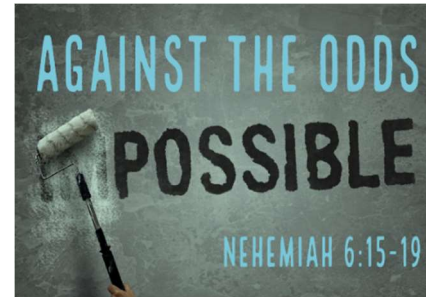




Nehemiah 6:15-19 New Revised Standard Version

¹⁵ So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem; for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God. ¹⁷ Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them. ¹⁸ For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah son of Arah: and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam son of Berechiah. ¹⁹ Also they spoke of his good deeds in my presence, and reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to intimidate me.

Notes _____



In a 1946 commencement address to the graduates of the University of Miami, Sir Winston Churchill stated, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." Churchill's aim was to encourage perseverance within those graduates as they faced

the world ahead of them. Although much hard work was already in their past, there would still be opportunities for additional successes and even challenges to those successes. The important thing to keep before them was a willingness to continue moving forward no matter what.

We call such a continuance "perseverance" and it is vital to everything we do in life. Even as a people of faith, we need perseverance in order to make it through each day. This is true individually and as a community as we seek to be faithful to God's mission.

When we consider the story of Nehemiah, it required great perseverance on the part of the people of Judah in order to see their building project through to completion. The text tells us this was accomplished in just fifty-two days. As impressive as that sounds, it was far from easy. In this journey, God does not supply us with lives of ease, but does promise to be faithful to us as we work together for God's glory.

The people's contributions paid off and made a great deal of difference. Key to their success was their willingness to stay the course and continue working even when others tried to discourage and hinder their work. As the Church, we have an opportunity to make a difference in this present world, but it will come with its share of challenges. As with Nehemiah and the residents of Judah, we have a decision to make when the odds seem overwhelming.

1. Difficulty is inevitable, but quitting is optional.
2. God never guarantees ease with our service.
3. Do not dwell on the word "impossible."

Prayer Pebble: Lord, when I feel like giving up, give me the strength to endure.