

# Remember the Lord

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala's sermon encourages believers to remember the Lord and persevere in their calling despite challenges and opposition.*

**Duration:** 25:19

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 27:1, Psalm 56:3, Isaiah 41:10

**Topics:** "Remembrance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages the audience to not be afraid and to remember the greatness and awesomeness of the Lord. He emphasizes the importance of fighting for one's family, home, and calling. The speaker acknowledges that when we work for God, the enemy will come with distractions and discouragement. He uses the example of Nehemiah from the book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament, who faced opposition while rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. The sermon concludes with a reminder to remember the Lord's greatness, power, faithfulness, and track record.

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## Transcript

Life is just a battle, but if you want a real battle, just try to do something for the Lord. Just try to rebuild the broken lives that are strewn all around us. Just put your shoulder to the wheel and you will have a fight.

You'll have glorious victory, you'll have fulfillment, you'll have a peace and a joy you'll never know, but you will have an attack. Anyone who works for God is attacked. Everyone's attacked in one way or another, but there's extra special attacks for those who's in their own area of calling say, no, I'm going to build.

So the book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament is a book about a Jewish man who was serving the king of Persia and he was the cup bearer for the king of Persia and he was a Jew. And one day the king of Persia looked at him and saw that he was downcast and he said to Nehemiah, why are you so downcast? You're not depressed and sad usually. And Nehemiah said, how can I be happy when my people, the remnant that have gone from Persia back to Jerusalem to try to rebuild the temple and the walls, they're living in a place that's desolate.

The walls have broken down. Anybody can attack. The temple has not been rebuilt.

It's a mess. God gave favor, Nehemiah says, gave him favor with the king and the king says, you get your people together. I'm going to provide a military escort and you go back to your land and you rebuild that

place.

Now that's the same time around that Ezra happened, Ezra and Nehemiah are contemporaries. And what that was, was the Jews went into captivity, Babylonian captivity. When they had listened, no one wouldn't listen to the prophets, wouldn't listen to God.

And God had warned them, I'm telling you, if you serve these idols and turn your back on me, it will not work out well for you. So Jeremiah actually prophesied the 70 years that they would go into captivity. That's a couple of generations.

So the Jewish people were conquered by the Babylonians. They burnt the temple, destroyed the walls, left Israel as a land and Jerusalem, especially desolate, but especially Jerusalem. They burned everything to the ground.

They went and stole all the gold and silver articles that were in the temple, the temple of Solomon. They destroyed it and nothing was left. The pride of Israel had been just taken down.

So off they went into captivity. They were sent to different places in the Babylonian empire. And only a few people were left to watch the crops and make sure the animals didn't get, just get crazy with everything.

While they were in Babylon during that 70 years, the Babylonian empire was conquered by the Persian empire. And the Persians replaced the Babylonians as the big guy on the block. So now the Jews, Jewish people who were scattered, it's called the diaspora, they were sent all over the place.

That's when synagogues came into vogue. Once you could find 10 Jewish men, you had the right to then start a synagogue. There was no temple, no sacrifices, no priesthood, no prophets, nothing.

You weren't in Israel. The possession of the land that happened under Joshua had been undone. Now you're scattered all over what we would call Iraq, Iran.

So while they were there, that's when synagogues and rabbis really came into strong positions of power. You didn't offer sacrifices in the synagogue, but you went there on the Sabbath and you had the law read to you. And the law was kept in a special box and became like the sacred, sacred thing, scrolls, which is still true among the Hasidim.

And the rabbi started to dominate in their teaching and interpretation of the law. So during this time, an edict went out by Cyrus, the king of Persia, who said, let whoever wants to go back to the land of Israel to rebuild the temple, let them go back. And, you know, tens of thousands, not a huge number, went back.

I think it was something like 30, 40,000. But that vast land and that city, so they go back to the land. And that's the same time that Nehemiah was downcast because he had heard stories.

They went back, but they didn't have the wherewithal to rebuild the city. You couldn't have a city back then unless you had strong walls. No walls meant people could just come in and destroy you.

And the temple building was going slow. So Nehemiah goes back and he starts to organize because he was like a governor, like an administrator. He was different than Ezra.

Ezra was a priest. So Nehemiah goes back and he sizes up the situation. He takes a tour at night around the city and he goes, what a mess this is.

We got to get this fixed. So he approaches the leaders and the priests that had gone back, the few and the leaders. And he says, listen, I've come.

I got a little support from the king of Persia and we got to rebuild the walls. What are you people doing? You're not giving yourself to the work. You were sent back here to rebuild the city.

What are you fooling around for and not doing the work? You're not giving yourself to the work. But you see, building a fresh wall is much easier than restoring a broken wall. Repairing things and restoring things is hard work.

You know, when you just have dirt, you get plans, up it goes. But when we came in this building, which was built in 1917, Pastor Petri, among others, was overseeing the restoration. But every time we started fixing things, we found out this was broken.

We found out, oh, this thing is broken, this pipe that we got to do this. No, we just found a beam we didn't know was there. We got to do this.

Because it's all broken and it's old. And that's very discouraging work. It's like the work that God does in our lives.

What does Jesus do through the gospel? He rebuilds broken lives. How many say amen? Broken people. How many were broken and he's fixed you and he's working on you still, right? So there's a beautiful analogy there.

So he goes back, Nehemiah, as he's already been there, and Nehemiah goes back and says, come on, we got to rebuild the wall. And then there's a whole chapter that I just read a while ago, which is amazing. You wonder, like, why is it even there? Because it's all these names you can't pronounce, right? And it's all the assignments they were given on the wall.

And such and such a person rebuilt the wall from this spot to that spot. And this person fixed the wall right in front of their house. The fish gate was rebuilt by the sons of Hasaneh.

They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. Merimoth now, the son of Moriah, the son of Hakhaz, repaired the next section. Next to him, Meshulam, son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel, made repairs.

And next to him, Zadok, son of Bena, also made repair. The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa. But it notices here, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.

In other words, they name for a whole chapter. Let's see. Verse 1 goes to verse 32.

32 verses of nothing but names and what parts they fixed up of the wall. And that's chapter 3 of Nehemiah. And now they even point out, now this guy, though, he was too high and mighty to work.

Everybody else was working. You got to rebuild the walls. Come on.

This is God's city to them. This is God's territory. We got to rebuild the wall.

That one wouldn't rebuild. So they mentioned the people who shirked. They mentioned all the people who rebuilt the wall.

That's how important it was to God. Builders are important to God because God is still building a kingdom, but he needs builders to work with him. He needs workmen.

He's the master builder. Amen. But he needs workers.

He needs people who put their shoulders to their wheel. But we don't build walls. We don't use bricks.

We don't use all that stuff. We use prayer, encouragement, counseling, going after them, sometimes turning the other cheek, showing mercy, intercessory prayer, because God is building his own temple today. Didn't we learn that on Sunday? God is building his temple, but who are the stones? We're the stones.

And sometimes the stones get broken down and God is looking for workers. Paul says, always honor those who give themselves to the work of the Lord. What's the work of the Lord? Repairing all the broken stuff that's down here.

Everybody's broken. How many are a little bit broke yourself? Say amen. I don't mean broke financially.

No, I meant you're just broke. So he's back there. He's trying to get them all to work and now they start.

Praise God. Hallelujah. The work is back on track.

Well, what did I tell you? If you work for God, you are going to get a punch in the mouth. Oh yes, you will. Or some, an attempt at it.

So look what happened as they're working. Now, when Sanballat, one of the people from Samaritan, who was against what they were doing, heard that we were rebuilding the wall, Nehemiah says, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, more enemies, he said, what are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? In other words, in the temple, will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble? In other words, it was a mess.

It's a huge demo job. Burned as they are. Tobiah the Ammonite, that's another bad guy, who was at his side said, what they are building, even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones.

Ridicule. Nehemiah breaks out in prayers. Hear us, our God, for we are despised.

Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from their sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

If I may point out that, that's a prayer in the Old Testament that we cannot pray today. We do not pray that our enemies get a hit in the head. How many say amen? What did Jesus tell us to do? Bless our enemies, love our enemy.

So whenever you see these imprecatory psalms or prayers like that, like give them a a pow-pow, we do not pray pow-pow. How many say amen? We pray for success, we pray for victory, but we never pray for vengeance. Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord.

You don't pray that prayer. So we rebuilt the wall, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders. So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height.

You imagine how discouraging that is? You had this big high wall, and now you killed yourself. You got it just half the height, but it's progress. For the people worked, oh praise God, they worked with what? You know, I got a pastor here from California.

We're going to pray for God's blessing on him, and we were talking about it, and this is what I hear from pastors all over, is there's no workers, no workers. People don't mind coming to church if the meeting's not too long, and if they like the music and so on, but work. Put your shoulder to the wheel.

Personal time invested in other people so that God's kingdom can be built up. No, no, no, no. Just talked to a choir director from another church, someone who used to be a part of the music ministry here, and he told me that's my problem.

I got a core group of about, you know, 10, 12 that can want to sing. I can't get beyond that. The others come, then they don't come.

They come to practice once a month. I'm busy. I got to watch The Voice on TV or whatever.

Workers, but how are you going to have a good choir if someone doesn't practice? How are you going to have a prayer ministry if someone doesn't pray? Am I right? How are you going to do visitation if no one's there to visit? So they worked with all of their hearts, with all their heart, but when Sembalat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the people of Ashdod, and there's a whole bunch of bad guys there, heard that the repair to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps, oh, the gaps were being closed. There's a sermon, and the gaps were being closed. They were very angry.

They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. Imagine Nehemiah, the pressure on him. He finally got the people to work.

They're rebuilding the temple. Now all these troublemakers have come and said, let's attack them while they're building. It's not enough you have to build.

Now you got to build and fight people while you're building, but what did I say? Whenever you give yourself to the work of the Lord in missions or in anything else, you are in for a fight, and the more the devil fights, it probably means you're doing good for God, but we prayed to our God, Nehemiah says, and we posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. Notice they prayed and they took logical steps. Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, the strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble.

It's a demo job. There's so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall. Now on top of the discouragement of the wall, getting the workers, getting the people to do it, now you're being attacked by enemies, numerous enemies, and now someone comes.

I got news for you, Nehemiah. Everyone's run out of gas. They can't work anymore.

Imagine the pressure under leaders like Nehemiah, pressures on him. He got everything going sideways, and yet he knows what God wants him to do. On top of that, our enemy said, before they know it or see us, we'll be right there among them, and we'll kill them and put an end to the work.

I mean, please. You think you have problems? How about Nehemiah? Gotta build a crazy wall, rebuild it. There's gaps, there's holes.

Now you got the workers. Now you got enemies attacking for no reason. Listen, they hate him for no reason.

They hate the work for no reason except Satan's behind it, and now when he says, no, we're going to fight them off, we prayed and set a guard. Now someone comes with the great news. The laborers, they formed a union, and they won't offer 30 days.

They're tired. They are tired. They're done.

Makes you just want to pull your hair out. But see, that's what happens when you work for God. When we give ourselves to the work of the Lord, the enemy is going to come.

This distraction, that discouragement, this enemy. Now you're tired. Come on, sit down.

You need a rest. Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us 10 times over, this is his own people. Wherever you turn, they will attack us.

Thank you for that wonderful word of faith. With everything else going wrong, he got his own people coming and saying, hey, no matter how you try to do this, wherever you turn, they're going to grab you, and they're going to kill us, and they're going to attack. Don't you meet people like that? Come on, anybody met people like that? They always have a sweet word of negativity to lay into your life.

Whatever you're doing for God, yeah, it probably won't work, and the devil, and that's probably not real. And you know, you're investing a lot of time in that person, but you know what? I think they're unstable. They're never going to turn around, and then it's just the devil talking through people.

This is his own people. These are his friends, the Jews. One of his own, which is he is one of them.

Therefore, I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall. Sorry for the long reading, but it's good for us. At the exposed places, posting them by families with their swords, spears, and bows.

Think what it took to rebuild that wall. After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome.

Say that with me. Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome.

Say it again. Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome.

And fight for your families, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your homes. Come on, let's put our hands together. So all I want to say tonight is this, what God laid on my heart, I feel.

Those of you who are beset on the left and the right, in the front and in the back, with every kind of discouragement, every kind of enemy, every kind of negative report, every kind of insurmountable problem. Pastor, I got a heart for God, but you don't even believe what I'm facing. My family, my friends, I got people like poor Nehemiah, who just come and say, I have a great word for you.

Nothing's going to work. It'll never happen. You're wasting your time to pray.

Anybody here just facing insurmountable problems, negativity? My heart went out to Nehemiah as I was reading this late last night, and the other night I've been rereading it. You heard of Murphy's Law, right? If it can go wrong, it will go wrong. Sometimes we pastors have felt that Murphy is a deacon in our church, because sometimes we just face, I don't believe that happened.

The devil will attack. And Nehemiah gave these two words. Hey, don't be afraid.

Remember the Lord. I want to say to someone here today, don't be afraid. Remember the Lord.

He is awesome. Can I get a hand clap of an amen here? Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid.

Anytime you do anything, you want to follow God, serve the Lord, there is a fight, there is a battle. Anyone who tells you different doesn't know the Bible. That's total hogwash.

I've got visitors here from Zimbabwe who have gone and were around through their Christian walk some of the excesses of the positive faith, positive confession, faith movement, just speak and you'll have all the money and there'll never be a problem. What absolute nonsense. Tell that to Nehemiah.

Tell that to Paul when he's in prison. There's a fight, but you can't be afraid. If anybody here has a spirit of fear you're battling with, we're going to pray for you.

We're going to cast that thing away from you. We're going to push it away from you. You can't serve God if you're full of fear.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but what? Come on, love, power, and a sound mind. So you can't have fear. You can't have fear.

And God will take that away from you. And here's what I also want to say to you. Remember the Lord.

Has he not helped you to this day? Do I get a witness here from anybody? Has he not helped you to this moment? Pastor Holliday, what has he brought you and Vanessa through? What has he brought Carol and I through? What has he brought this church through? What has he brought you through? When you didn't have a thread to hang on to, right? Did not God come through in the past? How many believe if he did it in the past he's going to do it again? He's going to do it again. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid of failure.

Don't listen to negative reports. Don't be afraid of smack talk from your enemy, spiritual enemies. The devil is always suggesting evil things to our mind.

Don't be afraid. Remember the Lord. I said, remember the Lord.

Say it with me. Remember the Lord. Remember the Lord.

See, with everything happening, he had to try to get them refocused. Remember the Lord. Don't look around at what's going on.

Remember the Lord. Let's close our eyes. Praise God.

Praise God. God, we worship you. Let's just lift our hands up and praise him out loud.

We praise you. We remember you. Real good tonight, Lord.

Not going to be afraid. Not going to be afraid. We're not going to be afraid.

Remember the Lord. Awesome in power. Hallelujah.

We praise you, God. We praise you. Just open your mouth and praise him.

We praise you, God. We praise you, God. We praise you, God.

We honor you. We extol you publicly, God. The God of Nehemiah is still alive.

Who makes a way when there's no way. He who called you will also perform it. He who called you will also do it.

He who led you this far will take you all the way. Hallelujah. Remember the Lord.

You know, just this and then we'll pray for whoever battling fear. I faced a lot of things in my life. I'm not especially given to fear, but I had to take a fear up in my office a few years ago when I found out that my grandson, Levi, had to have--how many years ago was that, Brian? How old was he? Three, four? He was five years old.

So that was just two years? Five years ago. And they had him because of some problem. They had to open up his head.

They had to drill through. Pastor Brian told me, Sue told me, I don't want to hear the details. That's my Levi.

And suddenly in my office, I just was remembering him in prayer. And I'm telling you, demonic forces of fear came. He'll die.

He's going to die. Yeah, you're telling everybody how God used the petries and how God worked to bring him from Ethiopia. He's going to die.

You can't open a kid's head. You're going to die. I'm telling you.

It was as real as this thing. How many have ever had an attack like that? Just negative. Oh, negative.

Boy, God had a--I had a stomp around my office, cried a bucket of tears. And I just had to remember. Remember the Lord.

Remember the Lord. Remember the Lord. Remember the Lord.

Come on. Remember the Lord. Remember the Lord.

God brought him through. But that was an attack, and I had to fight back. That's what I'm telling you now.

They fought with--they had a trowel and working or whatever they did with those bricks, and they had a sword. That's how they had to build the temple. Look, one hand doing this, the other hand--no, fighting.

That's how they had to be ready, to drop that and fight, then drop the sword and go back to work. And that's how it is. We build, but we had to fight back the enemy in prayer through Jesus' name.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Doesn't mean he won't come back again, but he will flee every time you resist him. Those of you here who say, Pastor, that was for me tonight.

I'm battling now. I'm being attacked left, right, front, back, friends saying negative things, just everything. Get out of your seat and come on up here.

We're going to flat out pray. We're going to pray. Anybody here going through some battles with fear, attacks from every which way? Just when you think you can't take any more, there's more.

There's more. And then when you say, all right, that's all I can take, there's more. And you wonder where God is sometimes.

Come on, get up here. Get up here close. Don't be afraid.

The word of the Lord tonight is, don't be afraid. And part two is, remember the Lord. Remember the Lord.

Remember his greatness. Remember his power. Remember his faithfulness.

Remember his mercy. Remember his track record. Remember what he's done in the past.

Remember that he never lies. Remember that he cannot fail. Remember the Lord.

Let's put our hands together and shout, we remember the Lord. We remember the Lord. We remember the Lord.

We remember the Lord.

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