

Bristol Conference 1975-13 Nehemiah - His Progress

by Stan Ford

This sermon explores Nehemiah's progress and how he overcame challenges to build the wall in Jerusalem, highlighting the importance of trusting in God and standing out from the crowd.

Duration: 45:27

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:3-7, 1 Corinthians 7:10, 1 Corinthians 15:10, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Faith And Work", "Overcoming Adversity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the book of Nehemiah and the challenges faced by the people in building for God. The sermon highlights the pain and difficulties encountered in the process, such as financial struggles and unemployment. The speaker emphasizes the importance of Christians laboring in the work of building for Christ, even in the face of adversity. The sermon also highlights the peculiarity of Nehemiah as a governor who did not take advantage of the people like his predecessors.

Transcript

For the benefit of the Greensboro Christians, though, we do have Keith and Jerry Currie, who used to fellowship with us in Greensboro, and they're now in Abingdon, Virginia. They're here tonight, and I know you'll want to see them. And any others who are visiting from the area, we're delighted to have you.

Now, for our message this evening, our brother Stan Ford from England. Go to four. Thank you.

I wonder if we may turn to the fifth chapter of the Book of Nehemiah for our further studies in this very wonderful book. Nehemiah chapter five, and I will read a few verses there, and then a few verses in chapter six. I'm going to ask your permission to go rather quickly this evening.

I don't mean necessarily in my talks, you're always telling me I do that, but to go through the chapter. We won't be able to consider all that's in these chapters, but nevertheless, we will do our best. Chapter five, please, and I would like to read in verse one.

And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren, the Jews. For there were that said, We are sons and our daughters are many. Therefore, we take up corn for them, that we may eat and live.

Some also. There were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn because of the dirt. And then, please, in verse nine.

Also I said, It is not good that ye do, ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen, our enemy. I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might expect of them money and corn. I pray you, let us leave off this usury.

Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, and their olive yards, and their houses. Also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye expect of them. Then said they, We will restore them.

Then, if we may go into chapter six, please. Now, it came to pass, when St. Ballat, and Tobiah, and Gershom the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had builded a wall, and that there was no breach left therein, though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gate, that St. Ballat and Gershom stood unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in Plum, one of the villages in the plain of Odo. But they thought to do me mischief.

Verse nine, For they all made us to pray, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work. Let it be not done. Now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hand.

Now, the Lord will add his blessing, I'm sure, to these rather jumbled, and yet I think you will see in a moment what's on my heart, these rather jumbled verses. I wonder if I may just say what I said the first evening as we introduced together this wonderful book of Nehemiah. I reminded you that Nehemiah was not a preacher, that Nehemiah was not a priest, that Nehemiah was not a prophet.

I reminded you that when God wanted a work done that would last, it was not to a priest or a preacher or a prophet He went, but to the type of man that we would call today a Christian businessman. A man like most of the men and women that I am talking to this evening. Men and women who have a task to do, a job to perform.

Men and women whose lives are spent most of the hours of the day in a task which they have turned to. And yet when a man does a task well for himself or for his employer, that's the sort of man that God looks to and for to do His work. We have been challenging our hearts evening by evening and morning by morning as we have realized that there's much to be built for God.

And I have used this expression again and again, and I would like to use it tonight, that I believe that the world is looking at the puppet when Christ is looking at the pew. Christ wants you, young man. Christ wants you, young woman.

Christ wants you, my brother, my sister, to labor in the work of building for Him. And if the outcome of the ministry in the epistle, or rather the book of Nehemiah, if the outcome of the ministry is nothing more than it sends us forth realizing there's a work for Jesus, for me to do, then I will have felt that I have succeeded a little in what I said. We have considered together Nehemiah the person.

We thought of Nehemiah and his problem. We considered something of Nehemiah and his plan. This evening I would like us to look in these two chapters at Nehemiah and his progress.

We're going to read words before we come to a close that tell us that the walls have been built. Isn't it grand to see progress in the things of God? And yet that progress was filled with constant problems. As

we look at chapter five, I'm going to draw your attention, if I may please, to a pain that led to praise.

We started, as we read that chapter, with these tremendous words. And there was a great cry of the people. There was pain amongst God's hosts, for though something was being built for God.

But the wonder is this, that that pain led indeed to praise. And we came to the 13th and all the congregation said, Amen! And they praised the Lord. You know, I could hardly find words nearer my heart than those words.

But all the people said, Amen! And praised the Lord. Isn't it wonderful when crying turns to praising? Isn't it wonderful when tears turn to joy? And we'll see in a moment how this happens. But then we will notice not only how pain leads to praise, but then we will see in this chapter how peculiarity leads to power.

How peculiar were the things that Nehemiah did and what a peculiar person he was. And yet, praise God, that peculiarity led to power. And we find that the man that Pope Luke had, the man who indeed they gazed at and wondered whatever it was he did, the thing he did, was the man that was filled with the power of God.

First of all, may I draw your attention to the fact that here is the story that tells us of pain that leads to praise. Now we know something of the general background of this chapter. I have made reference to it in previous episodes, sufficient to remind you that there had come amongst God's Pope times of dire poverty.

There were times when there was not enough food to feed their children. There were not enough clothes to clothe their children. There was not enough money to pay the very mortgages that they had taken out that they might indeed live.

Brethren, sisters, I'm going to suggest something to you this evening and I believe it needs to be said in the day in which we live. I don't know very much of your country, but I do know something of my own. And if I read newspapers or write, I believe I'm saying it to your country as well, that we are living in a day when there are many Christians who are seeking to build something for God, just like these people were, and yet they are facing great difficulties and problems in this.

In my land at this present moment, we are facing a desperate, desperate time of trade depression. There is more unemployment in my land today than there has been for many, many long years. Some of us who were brought up in those hungry years, when there was dire poverty, when there was so much anxiety, we're wondering whether those days are not coming back again.

I believe I'm right in saying that the few weeks I've been in your land are true, that there are many Christians in America today who are in business facing problems the length of which they've not seen for years. May I ask you something? What are we as a church doing about it? What are we as a church doing about it? Oh no, no, please, I'm not asking you, are you putting your hand in your pocket? Are you making contributions that these people might be cared for? But what I am asking you is simply this, what are you doing about it? I have been thrilled at the prayer meetings these last two weeks. It has been a joy, night by night, to hear one after another, one after another, of our brethren's tender airpiece, and plead to God for so many things.

But it has almost become evident by the fact that it has never been mentioned that few of us have thought towards those that are facing problems in business. I wonder if I may ask this, do we not all agree that if

we are brethren, if we are in the body of Christ, if we are in church fellowship, that for our brethren that face these problems, we should be constantly in prayer. My Bible says, pray one for another.

And when Nehemiah saw the people that were in desperate need, he did something about it. Would you notice what he did? This chapter tells me, first of all, the story of a man who was rebuked. First of all, I consulted with myself.

I like that, don't you? You know, that's the sort of committee I agree with. A committee of one. Oh, he didn't consult with one another, he consulted with himself.

Brethren, let's grasp this truth. If something is going to be done for God, it's got to start with a committee of one. It's got to start with me.

Let me say, I'm going to do something for God. Well, he started with his committee of one, and so there was no one to argue with him. No one to say, well, brother, I think we'll do it this way, or that way.

He consulted with himself, and then we read verse 7, he rebuked the nobles and the rulers. He went to the very source of the problem and spoke to them. Now I know this, that it's not possible for you and I to go to the source of economic problems today.

The difficulty is, it depends on our political outlook, doesn't it? As to who we go to. Some of you might go to a man who bears my name. Nothing to do with me.

Nothing to do with me. In my country, they might go to other men. No, I'm not thinking of that.

But what I am thinking is the fact that if there be in our fellowship that which would disunite us, that which indeed would bring discord and not harmony, if some of God's folk will be perishing for the bread of life, when it should be given to them, then let us rebuke that which is wrong and that which would hinder any blessing amongst us. Let's pray for the temporal needs of man, but in the spiritual needs, let's be nearby us and let's seek to rebuke that which is wrong. Then you will notice that there is not only rebuking in this chapter, but restoring, verse 7, Restore I say you to them, even this day.

Verse 12, We will restore them, even this day. So we see them restoring. I believe that God's people are willing to listen to a word of correction.

I do not believe that we are living in such a low spiritual place that when there are things that are hindering to the church of God, if a godly man comes and speaks to us, that we will not listen. But let the man who comes to speak to us be a godly man. I mean, I wouldn't mind Nehemiah speaking to me, would you? Oh, I have little doubt he might be a bit rough.

He might be a bit rough. We'll see tomorrow night that he was the man who said, If you do so again, I'll lay my hands on you. Oh, but we wouldn't mind listening to him, would we? Because he was a man who lived it out himself.

He was working himself. He was laboring himself. And when those that need to be rebuked were rebuked, it was Nehemiah that did it.

And they listened. Brethren, sisters, when a godless sister or brother comes and counsels you in the things of God, whatever else we do, don't take offense. It is wrong to give offense.

But I suggest to you it's equally as wrong to take offense. Let's realize God has something to say to you. And here we find them.

A people who indeed who were crying, but their crying turned to praying because there was that rebuking and that restoring. And thank God it led to that rejoicing. Why, for plenty and all the people said, Amen! Amen! And, and, praise the Lord! You know, those were the people that not only had the things restored to them, but those were the people that gave them the things as well.

You know, isn't it grand when you did something for God it makes you glad? Isn't it wonderful when indeed you had something that you thought very much of, and yet suddenly you realize, the Lord wants that, that it's that giving that brings joy to thine heart. Joy and blessing to the assembly of God's people. Oh, here's crying that leads to praising, all that we might be able to say, Amen! And, praise the Lord! But it's satisfying tells me of pain that leads to praising.

Why, it also tells me of peculiarity that leads to power. Now, whatever you may say about Nehemiah, I think you all acknowledge this, that he was a very peculiar man. I mean, whatever way you look at him, he was a very peculiar man.

Would you notice how verses 14 and 15 tell us something of his peculiarity? The governors that had governed over Jerusalem before we are told, our governors, the former governors, were tangible unto the people. They had taken their bread, and their wine, and their silver. But notice verse 15, So did I not.

You know, I wish I could put that in inverted commas. I wish I could underline that. What a peculiar governor! All the governors before had been tangible to the people.

They had taken taxes. They said, if I'm going to govern you, I tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to demand from you enough that I might live in the exalted position of the governor.

Oh, Nehemiah said, I will take a penny from you. It's peculiar. Do you know, brethren, if there is one thing that thrills my heart about the testimony of God's folks, it's this, that in all the years I have preached amongst them, I have never preached in a gospel service where they've taken out for collection.

I thank God for that. And I'll let you know a secret. If you were to do it, I'd walk off the platform.

I am glad that the gospel is tangible to no one. And we may be peculiar folks, but I tell you this, I'm glad we're peculiar folks. I pray that day will never dawn when we suggest that we are tangible for the people.

Thank God for a God who has promised indeed to supply our every need. And I'll let you know a secret. In 30 years of daily trusting Him, He's never failed us.

As a matter of fact, He supplied so much for the last weeks I've had to be on a diet. You know, what a God we've got. What a God we've got.

I am glad that I will teach to be tangible to no man. But bless God, He's never failed us. Never failed us.

My wife's here. You come and have a word with her afterwards. She'll tell you that there's been times when it's been difficult.

But bless God, He's never failed us. And never will. I say, how peculiar.

But if you find this governor is a peculiar person, well, surely, surely you will grant me this, that this is the mark of a believer. When I turn forth away to that wonderful epistle of Titus, do you remember the 14th verse of the second chapter? This is that which is written. Who gave himself for us? All the wonder of it.

Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people fellows of good work away in the county of Essex in my country. If you were cycling down the country lane, there's every chance that in almost every Essex village you would see a chapel building and outside of the chapel building you would see this notice the meeting room of the peculiar brethren. Oh.

I say, that's not a bad title, is it? The meeting room of the peculiar brethren. Now see, when Titus repeats this letter he is not saying peculiar, ha ha. Oh no.

I'll tell you what it means to be peculiar. I'll tell you what it means. You come with me back into the Old Testament, will you? For the story of a young man.

Are you young fellows listening? Are you listening now? Come on. Click up your ears a minute. Here was a young fellow.

He got told as a slave to move into the home of Potiphar. And one day the wicked woman of Potiphar's wife, she came to this young man and tempted him to sin. But he was a peculiar fellow.

You know what he said? I'd rather go to prison than do that. You know, that's the sort of peculiar God one. Potiphar will look at sin and say, I won't.

I'll tell you what it means to be peculiar. Why? There were three young men. Golden Nebuchadnezzar wretched a golden image.

And he said, when the band plays, brr, brr, brr, brr, you must bow the knee and worship it. And do you know what these three young men said? Listen, we're not going to bow our knee to your golden image. If you don't, you'll be cast into the fire. Well, our God is able to deliver us and he will.

But just you understand this, Mr. Nebuchadnezzar, if he doesn't, we won't bow our knee to you or your image. Oh, man, this is wonderful when you meet peculiar folks like that who will look at sin and say, although it appears to be attractive, not me, not me. We used to sing an old shanty moody hymn.

You don't sing it over here. But we still use the shanty moody hymn book, you know. And we used to sing an old shanty moody hymn.

Have courage, my boy, to say, no, that's on D, you don't know the hymn. Have courage, my boy, to say no. Isn't it grand when you meet some men like the three young men in the story of Daniel, like Joseph, like Nehemiah, men who indeed are prepared to sing to that which is evil.

We won't. We will not be chargeable to any people. We will not place a burden on the shoulders of God's folk.

We will not hinder them in laboring in the works. Oh, what a peculiar person. But that peculiarity led to real power.

And this is just it. Whenever you find a man who's prepared to walk with God and obey God, that man is a man filled with power. And do you remember why he said he would not be chargeable to the people? Here

it is.

Joshua has, in verse 15, because of the fear of the Lord, so did not I. Because of fear of the Lord. You know, brethren, I still think that Proverbs 1 and 7 is a rather good verse, don't you? Don't you? The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. Oh, Nehemiah needed the knowledge to see God's folk bearing witness for him and in fear of the Lord.

And the fear of the Lord was the beginning of knowledge. And because he feared God, all young man, young woman, my older brother and sister, do we, and I speak to myself, do we fear the Lord? Do we fear the Lord? Oh no, please, please. Not are we frightened of the Lord.

But do we fear Him? As you know, I've two children. I've got one of every sort you can have. Even the Queen of England has a lot more sorts than we've got.

But you know, we've not only two children, we've got four grandchildren. And I hope my children fear Mary and myself. I hope our grandchildren fear Mary and myself.

Now they have never shown any sign of ever being frightened of us. But I do ask that they fear us enough not to do anything that would bring disgrace to our name. Love us enough.

Love us enough to seek to do those things that are pleasing to us. This is the fear of God. The fear of God that bring us knowledge.

Not just the fear of being cast into the lake of fire, but a fear that we have that ever we would do or say anything that would make men and women point their finger at our God. Say we taught you things, Pope, and sanctify them, and strengthen them. Look at that man.

And look at that woman. But he feared all. And because he feared God, he wouldn't take anything off anyone.

He just trusted the Lord immediately. But then would you notice something more? Would you notice indeed that here this peculiar man with what power he had, with what power indeed he labored. And would you not please permit me just to remind you, or maybe tell you, for most of you are not here, that the first evening of this conference, when I came, I saw above my head those words, He must increase, but I must decrease.

And so the first evening before we started our studies in One Timothy, I opened my Bible with the brethren and sisters that were here the first week of the conference, and I read those three verses, Galatians 2 and 20. I read 1 Corinthians 15 and 10. I read 1 Corinthians 7 and 10.

And I reminded those that gathered with us that first evening that I live yet not I. Christ liveth in me. I reminded them in the words of 1 Corinthians 15, I labored more abundant than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. I reminded them in the glorious words of 1 Corinthians 7 and 10, I come on, yet not I, the Lord.

And I suggested the first evening that I was here, if ever that text would be true in our experience, it would be so when we were prepared to say, not I, but Christ. Not I, but the grace of the Lord. Not I, but the Lord.

And Nehemiah had reached that stage before Paul ever reached it. He feared the Lord and fearing to do anything that would be displeasing to him or bring disgrace to his name. Oh, what power he had.

What mighty power. Because of the fear of the Lord. I did not do that.

But when we come to chapter six, we find ourselves now not looking at pain that leads to praise, not looking at peculiarity that leads to power. But when we come to chapter six, it seems to me that we have brought before us again the dangers that approach us. How remarkable, right through the chapter as Nehemiah was speaking to Laban, right through the story that we've been considering, there were always the enemies of the Lord.

They seemed to open their mouths and speak in every chapter. They seemed to walk as it were, march right through every chapter. If I have learned anything when a man tries to labor for God and God is blessing him, I've learned this, that the old devil is interested in that as well.

Brethren, when difficulties arise in our assembly and problems seem to surround us, let's remember this, if we were no good for God, the devil wouldn't be a bit interested in us, not a bit. He'd say, by their retreat, I'm not going to wake them up. Let them sleep on, sleep on beloved, sleep on.

But the moment a man or a woman does something for God, it seems as though the possess of hell will lift up their hand and try and withstand it. And in chapter 6, first of all, we see the dangers that approach us. But thank God we see the deliverance that's available for us.

The dangers that approach us. Would you notice verse 2 please? They thought to do us mischief. Would you notice verse 19? Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

Oh, I say, what dangers approach us. First of all, there were those dangers that came from these men who thought to do the mischief. Dangers that came through letters that were sent that Nehemiah and the people of God might be made fearful.

Now I don't know about you, but it seems to me as I read this chapter that the dangers that approach us, Nehemiah and the people of God in that building, it seems to me that they were twofold. First there was an attack on the message, and then there was an attack on the men. First an attack on the message, would you turn please to verse 7? I think it is the most interesting verse.

And thou hast also appointed Topheth to preach to thee of Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah, and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. They attacked the message, but the tragedy was this, they did what all people do to attack the message of the Christian faith, they twisted it.

Nehemiah was not standing in Jerusalem and saying, There is a king in Judah. He was not saying that, he never said that. He was laboring in the building of the wall.

He was laboring in the hanging of the gates. He was laboring in the care of the people. He was not leading a rebellion against others.

But there these enemies of the Lord, they tried to twist the message of the Lord. And brother, sister, it's not just a prank, but men and women are doing this today. Whenever there is found a preacher of the gospel whom God is honoring, there are men and women who will come and take the message that he teaches and twist it.

There are many people that have come from America to my land for which we have been extremely thankful. Of course there are some who we wish had never come. But of all the men that have come to my country and from your country, in the past year, I do not hesitate at all in saying that the man that brought more blessing to my land was Billy Graham.

Now folks can say what they will and they can argue what they will and they can point out things they wouldn't do. I only know this, that as I travel up and down Great Britain, I am coming now, not then, but now, across literally scores and scores of men and women at that time in the fellowship of God's folks who were going on for God and serving God who were led to the Lord under the ministry of Billy Graham. Now as far as I'm concerned, brethren, I would not permit any one of you to say anything against it because God has blessed it and I am extremely thankful for what God did to it.

I only know this, that when he first came for the services in Herringdale, an old boxing stadium that I fought in many a time, he came to preach in it. And you know, he came over on your great boat to the United States and he was met before the boat got almost all the newspaper reporters. Why, they got in a boat and out they went to meet the United States and they clambered aboard and they wanted to see this Billy Graham.

Oh, they had some questions to ask him. And some of the dirty, underhanded questions some of those press reporters asked. I don't think I need say very much about press reporters in America.

Almost the first question one of them asked him was to look into his face and said, Mr. Graham, are you a servant of Jesus Christ? Billy Graham very graciously said, I trust I am. Well, Jesus Christ walks everywhere. Why do you travel first class? What a dirty trick.

Was it lovely that he could look at him and say, I travel first class, sir, because the owners of this boat paid my taxi and gave me a free ticket to come. But what I meant is this, that the greatest of God's servants have to face again and again attacks by the enemy. And if men that God has used to face attacks like that, then we must face them, mustn't we? We must expect to face them.

And Nehemiah faced them. Why, I say, they thought to do him mischief. They sent letters to put him in here.

They attacked the message. They said, why, this man, this man is preaching that there's a king in Judah. And yet he dared to answer them by saying, there is no such thing done as thou sayest.

And then he went straight on. I like that, don't you? He didn't spend time arguing with them. As a matter of fact, we'll see later on, as a matter of fact, this is what he said.

And later on he dared to say, Lord, sing from these things. I like that, don't you? I like that. In other words, he's saying, I'm not even at a different time to think about them.

I'll let you think about them, God. And brethren, when there are difficulties and problems arise from without, let strength go and flood on, flood on, seeking to flood the Lord. Then would you notice they not only attacked the message, but they attacked the men.

First hand. Why? They said, they will come to slay thee. They were trying to get on Nehemiah to go into the temple and hide, you know.

They said, come on, Nehemiah, you come in the temple and hide from these people. Why? He dared to say this concerning them. He dared to say, should a man like I flee, I'm not going to run and hide.

I'm going to labor for God. Oh brethren, God misses men and women like that. Men and women who will not flee, but will say by the works and labor for God, even as it means, even as it means, that death has to stare us in the face.

May I please remind you of the most wonderful words that have been said in the two weeks of this conference. May I repeat that? And my friend Mr. Phillips won't mind me saying it because they weren't said by him. And they weren't said by Mr. Morgan.

And they weren't said by that fellow called Poor. But the most wonderful words that have been said in two weeks of this conference were said by Fred McKenzie. When in the first week speaking of missionary work, he told of the little girl that challenged my heart more than any person I've ever met.

Betty Beattie, a wedding yonder in Angola. He told how the brethren had written her. Some of the desperate trials of Angola today when so many are being murdered and killed.

They let her know that if necessary funds were available to bring her out. And her only answer was this, if some of these African Christians have to die, then I don't mind dying with them. Please, I don't know how old Betty is.

I've got a strong feeling she'd be in her forties. I don't know. I wonder if I may ask you 40-year-old peers how many of you are prepared to say if God's folk have to die, I don't mind dying with them.

Now this is not some mystical story of the days indeed that have long passed. This is 1970 times in our day of child youth commending to the work of God. Thank God for men like Nehemiah.

Are you listening? Thank God for sisters who have the character of Nehemiah who when the enemy says we will kill thee will dare look back and say should such a man, should such a woman as I, please, I'm going to work for God. God should have just gone back to our homes, our assemblies to work like that. I must come quickly to a close.

I said there were dangers that have come to us but there's deliverance that's available to us. And that deliverance is seen in two ways. It's seen first in prayer, verse 9. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hand.

All that's been men and women of prayer. Would you notice verse 14 that I've already referred to? My God sends upon Tobiah and Samballa. You know it's the old prayer I was telling them about last week.

Of a dear old sister away in Franksville during the war who gathered every day with the rest of the Pope and prayed. And she said Lord bless General Eisenhower. Lord bless General Montgomery.

Lord bless Mr. Churchill. Lord, and she went to a long list of the generals and indeed admirals of the Navy. Then she came to the end of her prayer and she said and now Lord, there's that man Hitler.

Yes, and do what you like with him. I say, O God, think on Tobiah and Samballa. Think on Tobiah.

Lord, I'm not going to even think about them. You think on them. I can leave them in your hands.

I say isn't it wonderful that the source of our deliverance is prayer? And not only is that deliverance available when we pray, but that deliverance is available when we keep going on with God. Our perseverance brings deliverance. When we go back to verse 3, why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you? Verse 15, so the wall would finish.

When we come to the first two verses of chapter 7, we read indeed now it came to pass when the wall was built and I have set up the doors and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed. Oh, this is it. This is where deliverance comes when we pray and persevere in the work of God.

Then, bless God, there will be found the porters, those who work. There will be found the singers, those who witness. Oh, Mr. Preacher, what do you mean singers, those who witness? Well, what did this choir do tonight? They didn't stand up there to entertain us, did they? I'm sure of this, that our good choir master and every member of the choir, they wouldn't have stood there.

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