**Messages Series: Building the Kingdom Together**

**Pastor Demetric Felton Sr. October 9, 2016**

**Despised But Not Defeated**

Nehemiah 4:1-9

**Key truth:** It is impossible to lead without facing criticism.

**The Crucible of Opposition**:

1. God uses opposition to mature His leaders.

 A. Opposition deepens our prayer life.

 B. Opposition makes us more dependent upon God’s

 strength.

 C. Opposition reveals our spiritual maturity.

2. Lessons we can learn from criticism:

 A. Critics travel in packs.

 B. You must first respond to criticism with prayer.

 C. When criticism intensifies prayer and practical

 action maybe required.

 1. Guard your heart against them doing further

 harm.

 2. Guard the mission from being sabotaged from

 within.

 3. Gather around you people who are willing to

 fight alongside you for the mission.

**Conclusion:** Don’t give in to criticism. Fight the battle on your knees. Pray for those in leadership.

**Connection Group Study Questions**

**Quick Review:** Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

1. Sanballat and Tobiah criticize and mock the Israelites. Why are they unhappy about the rebuilding of the wall? What do they hope to accomplish with their criticism?

2. Nehemiah responds to their criticism with a strongly worded prayer in 4:4-5. What do you think of his prayer? Does it seem harsh? Why or why not?

3. When Sanballat and Tobiah begin plotting an attack, what two actions do the builders take in response (4:9)? Why are both important?

4. How might you act as a type of Nehemiah to your church and your family, leading them away from the fear of opposition and into a reliance on God?

5. Pastor Felton said, “It’s impossible to lead without facing criticism” There are two types of criticism; constructive and destructive. What is the difference in the two?

6. Even though Nehemiah had an army given to him by the king, he chose to go to God in prayer first rather violence. What does that say about Nehemiah? When you are falsely attacked what is your response?

7. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-13: Paul gives us some insight into the life of ministry leaders. What are some ways we can begin to pray for the leaders in our church?