

Leader Guide

Reimagine.

Fall 2026 | Week 5

Message Date 10/11/2026

THE GOAL

This week we bring our Reimagine series to a close. For the past several weeks we've walked with Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem as they did what looked impossible, rebuilding a broken wall, because with the help of God they chose to reimagine their lives. Along the way we've talked about our families, our finances, who we are at the job site, our relationships, our singleness, and how powerfully our faith shapes all of it. The big idea has stayed the same from the start: the blessing of God is within your reach, and the obedience that brings it has always been right on your doorstep.

Sunday was about maintaining what God has built. In Nehemiah 6:1–9, the wall is finished and the gaps are closed, yet the distractions keep coming. Nehemiah's answer is simple and settled: "I am engaged in a great work, so I can't come." We'll look at who gets to define a great work, how to give a kind but clear "no" by speaking the truth in love, and how Ephesians 6:10–20 teaches us to stand strong in the Lord, wearing the whole armor of God, so that what our Father is building in us isn't torn down or moved. And we'll rest in Zechariah 2:5, where the Lord Himself promises to be a wall of fire around His people and the glory in their midst.

Our goal is for this week is to leave knowing the great work God has invited us into, and to feel encouraged rather than pressured, and ready to keep showing up with endurance.

MY STORY

- 1) What's the most creative excuse you've ever used (or heard) to get out of an invitation you didn't want to go to?
- 2) If you had to wear one piece of everyday "armor" all week long, like oven mitts, a bike helmet, rain boots, or noise-canceling headphones, which would you choose and why?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) What caught your attention from Sunday's message?

DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

Nehemiah 6:1–9 (NLT)

Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies found out that I had finished rebuilding the wall and that no gaps remained—though we had not yet set up the doors in the gates. ² So Sanballat and Geshem sent a message asking me to meet them at one of the villages in the plain of Ono.

But I realized they were plotting to harm me, ³ so I replied by sending this message to them: “I am engaged in a great work, so I can’t come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?”

⁴ Four times they sent the same message, and each time I gave the same reply. ⁵ The fifth time, Sanballat’s servant came with an open letter in his hand, ⁶ and this is what it said:

“There is a rumor among the surrounding nations, and Geshem tells me it is true, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel and that is why you are building the wall. According to his reports, you plan to be their king. ⁷ He also reports that you have appointed prophets in Jerusalem to proclaim about you, ‘Look! There is a king in Judah!’

“You can be very sure that this report will get back to the king, so I suggest that you come and talk it over with me.”

⁸ I replied, “There is no truth in any part of your story. You are making up the whole thing.”

⁹ They were just trying to intimidate us, imagining that they could discourage us and stop the work. So I continued the work with even greater determination.

- 4) Notice the timing in verse 1: the enemies made their move after the wall was finished and no gaps remained. Why do you think the season after a breakthrough can be just as vulnerable as the season of building? What does “maintaining the wall” look like for you right now?

The pressure didn’t let up when the last stone was set; that’s exactly when the invitations to Ono started arriving. When something good has been rebuilt in us, it’s natural to exhale and assume the hard part is over. Nehemiah kept the finished wall in sight and in mind. Maintaining the wall isn’t about living anxious; it’s about living attentive, staying in the rhythms that got us here. God hasn’t brought us this far to leave us now.

- 5) Nehemiah’s answer was clear and concise: “*I am engaged in a great work, so I can’t come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?*” What “plain of Ono” invitations tend to pull you away from what God is building in you? And why is it often so hard for us to simply say no?

Most distractions don’t look like enemies. They look like reasonable invitations, people we want to please, one more commitment, or the pull back into an old offense.

Nehemiah didn't over-explain. He knew what his life was for, and that settled it. Every "no" to a distraction is a "yes" to the work God has given us.

- 6) Nehemiah was standing his ground, and the work he was protecting wasn't seen as "great" by the important people in his region. Sunday we heard that in God's economy, children take precedence over career, marriage is worth more than money or title, and who a person is at the heart level far exceeds any accomplishment. Who defines a "*great work*" in your life? Seriously, what great work is God engaging you in right now?

The influential people of Nehemiah's day saw nothing great about that wall, but he knew who defined a great work. Our culture measures by paycheck, title, and influence; God measures by integrity, faithfulness, and love. That's why the funeral story hits home: in the end, all that mattered was who the man was. The great work might be your kids, your marriage, your integrity at work, or your freedom in Christ. Naming it makes it easier to protect.

Read **Ephesians 6:10–20** for the following questions.

- 7) Paul begins, "*Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might,*" and then reminds us that "*we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.*" How does it change the way you see a hard relationship or situation when you remember that the real battle is spiritual, and that whatever is working against what God is building in you comes from the enemy of your soul?

Our strength to stand is "*in the Lord,*" not something we work up ourselves. Real people may oppose what God is doing in us, but they aren't the true enemy; what's behind them is. Remembering that changes how we treat people. We can stop seeing a spouse, coworker, or family member as the enemy and start praying for them instead. Invite your group to ask, "What might God be protecting in me here, and how can I stand in His strength?"

- 8) Paul describes the shield of faith that extinguishes "*all the flaming darts of the evil one,*" the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Second Corinthians 10:5 adds that we "*take every thought captive to obey Christ.*" What lies or "*flaming darts*" tend to target your mind, and how can God's Word help you cut through them?

Flaming darts are the lies that try to tear down the Jesus path: "You'll never change." "God isn't really for you." Faith is the shield we lift when we choose Jesus anyway. The helmet of salvation guards our minds even when we stumble. And the sword of the Spirit cuts through the knots and chains, not through people.

- 9) Paul closes the armor with prayer: "*praying at all times in the Spirit... keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,*" and then he asks the church to pray for him too. Sunday we were encouraged to give a faithful someone permission to check in on our wall regularly. Who has that permission in your life, and how could prayer and that kind of loving accountability become a regular part of your week?

After all the armor, Paul lands on prayer, because prayer is how the armor stays on. “*Keep alert*” is vigilance that notices a crack while it’s still small. And Paul didn’t stand alone; he asked the church to pray for him. Maintaining the wall was never meant to be a solo project. If no one has permission to check in on you yet, this is a great week to ask. That’s the blessing of God within reach, built side by side.

CHAIR TIME TOOLS

Reflection Questions for Chair Time: think about the following questions and pray through them with Jesus.

- 1) Set aside unhurried time this week simply to be with Him, and ask Him to help you see, hear, and believe what He is doing in your life.
- 2) Ask the Lord, “What great work are You engaging me in right now?” Then ask Him to show you one distraction you need to lovingly say no to so you can stay on the wall with Him.
- 3) Pray over your part of the wall: your heart, your home, your relationships, and your part in what God is building at Heights Church. Ask Him what it looks like for you to maintain it, including how you give, serve, and stand with your church family in this next season.