

On 29 May our theme was 'Mind Games', as we looked at Nehemiah chapter 6. We saw that opposition was directed at Nehemiah as the leader. Its purpose was to intimidate him and through this to discourage the builders. One purpose was possibly to assassinate him, or failing that to spread rumours that he would be made king – in other words that the project was all about building his empire. Nehemiah is able to dismiss these threats. Then his enemies attempt to trick him by hiring a false prophet in the hope of compromising him. We hear that this man is only one of several playing the same game. Again Nehemiah is enabled to deal with these schemes decisively, and in spite of everything the wall is completed and arrangements put in place for guarding the city.

We thought about how this might be applied to the church and to us as individuals. Sometimes the most dangerous threats are from within the church, through false teachers and false prophets who undermine the work, set people against each other and lead them astray. Jesus's picture of 'wolves in sheep's clothing' perfectly expresses how easily we can be taken in by plausible people who seem at first to have our best interests at heart.

However, the encouragement is that the wall is completed. However hard the enemy of God and of his people fights, he can never win.