

ICEBREAKER

Brian shared that one of his favorite trilogies was the original Star Wars movies.

- **What would you say is one of your favorite movie trilogies?**

He also pointed out that most people don't like the 2nd movie in a trilogy?

- **What 2nd movie of a trilogy do you really dislike?**
- **Can you name a 2nd movie in a trilogy that you do like?**

IDEA 1 - OPPOSITION IS INEVITABLE

Brian described through the text of Ezra 4 the opposition that the people of Israel faced as they began to rebuild the temple and the wall of Jerusalem. He pointed out the fact that opposition is inevitable and then asked the question - What is spiritual opposition and what is just life?

- **How would you answer this question?**
- **What are some of the things that characterize spiritual opposition?**
- **Where are you currently facing opposition in your life at the moment? Is there anything about it that makes you think it might be spiritual in nature or is it just life?**

IDEA 2- BIBLICAL PERSERVERANCE

The big question that Brian posed throughout his sermon was "How do we remain steadfast in the unfinished?" He responded with the biblical idea of perseverance which looks different to worldly endurance. While worldly endurance focuses on building personal strength to push through, biblical perseverance is about patient waiting with hopeful expectation, relying on God's strength rather than our own.

- **When you face obstacles or opposition, do you tend to respond with worldly endurance (trying to push through in your own strength) or biblical perseverance (waiting patiently while trusting God)?**
- **What would it look like to shift from self-reliance to God-reliance in your current challenges?**
- **What are practical ways that we can wait patiently with hopeful expectation?**

EXPERIENCING GOD TOGETHER: PRAYER

Take time to bring the opposition that you have discussed to the Lord.

Pray for perseverance and endurance.

Pray for wisdom and strength to wait patiently with hopeful expectation.

Pray for breakthrough.

PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEK - UPWARD, OUTWARD, FORWARD

Brian provided three orientations for persevering during opposition:

- Upward: Focusing on worship and prayer
- Outward: Serving others
- Forward: Looking ahead to the end of the story

As you look ahead to the rest of the week, which of these directions is the Holy Spirit nudging you to focus on?