

Don't Despise the Day of Small Endings

by Carter Conlon

Don't despise the day of small endings, because God sees the whole picture and is working everything out for our good.

Duration: 50:23

Scripture: Daniel 6:22, Zechariah 4:6-7, Zechariah 4:9-10, Matthew 23:11, Acts 2:1-4

Topics: "Gods Will"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Zechariah chapter 4 and encourages the audience to find strength and courage in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes the importance of overcoming condemnation and misunderstanding in the body of Christ. The speaker highlights the journey of building a life and compares it to the original temple, reminding the audience not to despise small beginnings. He concludes by referencing the historical precedent of Zerubbabel and how it serves as a type for individuals who have been redeemed by Christ and given the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Transcript

How many live your Christian life condemned because you feel like your life doesn't measure up? Can I see your hands? That's a lot of people. How many should have raised your hand? Would you raise your hand now? Yeah, I thought so. Alright, we're going to... I'm going to believe God with you today that that spirit of condemnation is going to be broken.

Absolutely shattered, destroyed. Not just for a day or a week, but for the rest of your Christian life. I'm trusting that God's going to open something to you.

I have a message today called Don't Despise the Day of Small Endings. You know, we have a tendency... I've always heard it preached because that's the way it's written. Don't despise the day of small beginnings.

And we don't mind if our life begins small as long as it ends big. But what if it goes the other way? I want to talk about that. I want to show you something in the scriptures.

Zechariah chapter 4. Now, Zechariah is two short books back from Matthew in the New Testament. Just a few pages in your Bible. So if you find Matthew, just go to the left and you'll find Zechariah chapter 4. Now, Father, I thank you for the anointing of your Holy Spirit.

It's only by the anointing that the yoke is broken. You have to give us courage, Lord, and strength to face these days. Bring your church out from under condemnation.

Every lying voice of the devil. Every condemning of our own hearts. Every misunderstanding of what it means to be part of the body of Jesus Christ.

I pray God give me the wisdom to speak this. Override my own frailty, Lord. And grip my mind and my heart and give me the power to speak it in a way that men and women can hear it.

Lord, you're going to give us strength for these days. And I thank you for it with all my heart. In Jesus' name.

Don't despise the day of small endings. Zechariah chapter 4, beginning at verse 6. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.

And he shall bring forth a headstone, thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall also finish it.

And thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto you. For who has despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven. They are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro throughout the whole earth.

Now, I know those are a lot of big words in the King James text, but essentially speaking, Zerubbabel was a governor. He was sent to rebuild the temple of the Lord after a 70-year captivity in Babylon. The people had dealt very carelessly, the people of God, with the things of God.

And because of it, they were taken in and became captive by the society around them. There are incredible and obvious comparisons, perhaps, to the generation that we're living in today. And then suddenly, after this season of discipline, a decree, the king of the Medo-Persians, Darius, he wrote a decree and allowed the people of God to head back home again.

The historians, the biblical historians, tell us that about 50,000 accepted that first invitation and they went back to rebuild what had been lost. Now, it's a type, I suppose, it can be a type of church ages and generations. It's got a historical precedent.

It's also a type of you and I, born as it is into this world in the image of God, filled with hopes and dreams and aspirations when we were children, only to find out we were without the grace that needs to cover us to become that which God had destined our lives to be. And so, without Christ, we walked into ruin. And in ruin, we went into captivity.

And suddenly, somewhere, whether you were reading your Bible, somebody brought you the word of God, you realized a decree had been issued by the hand of Almighty God, allowing you to come home and rebuild your life. Rebuild it in the image of God. There was a former glory.

And the people were called to build something or rebuild something that had a former reputation of being a place where God had awesomely glorified himself. And we think about Solomon's temple, for example.

Scripture tells us that when Solomon built the platform and prayed, the glory of the Lord, in the Hebrew, it's the weightiness of God, came into the temple so powerfully that the priests could not stand to minister.

There was nothing they could do but shout. God had come into his temple. And this was a place where the Lord had chosen to dwell.

And the people there were given the responsibility of caring for that temple. Just as you and I have been given the responsibility of caring for the New Testament temple, which is your life and mine. No longer God is dwelling in a place made with human hands.

He now dwells in people. And they had lost this testimony through carelessness. And after 70 years, they're journeying home.

And you can just imagine the conversation along the way. We're going to rebuild that temple. And the glory of it is going to be great, because the promise, of course, in this chapter of Scripture is that the glory of the latter temple will be greater than the glory of the former.

So you can just imagine, as the people are heading home, and they didn't have these words from Zechariah yet, but there's got to be an inner knowledge. There has to be, because the Holy Spirit would have borne witness to something in those that belong to God. And I'm going to do something that's going to bring glory to my name in a profound way.

Just like you and I, when we came to Christ, and we read the book of Acts, and we hear of these 120 ordinary people who went in an upper room, and suddenly were empowered by the Spirit of God. And they stepped out of that upper room, filled with faith and vision and hope and the beginnings of supernatural ability. The Scripture says they spoke with the Megalios of God.

That means that, and I've shared this with you many times, their mouths were speaking about something that God was going to do because of His inner presence in their lives. And they were given this initial evidence, which was the ability to speak to other people in known languages that they had not learned about these things that God was about to do. And that's what so pricked the hearts of the 3,000 who turned to Christ that day.

So they're speaking of things which they've not yet attained, most likely, but they have already attained something which cannot come into the hearts of people but by the Spirit of God. In other words, we're not everything we're supposed to be, but we're not what we were yesterday. We have changed, and we're going forward, as Paul says, by step by step, image to image and glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

Now, when you read it, and I read Acts chapter 2, there must have been an explosion, there has to be an explosion of faith. Oh God, I wonder what wonderful thing you're going to do in my life. And we're starting from a little point, in a sense, in our own sight, and we read in the Scriptures, and we go to a church somewhere, and somebody tells us that God has this incredible destiny for us, and we think like natural people.

And the incredible destiny is always from small to big. My question today is, what if it goes from big to small? What if it goes from an incredible vision, and what if the vision is actually true, but it's not happening the way we think it should happen? Remember the Scripture says, My ways are not your ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts, says the Lord.

As the heavens are higher than the earth, my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts. And so they headed out to build this glorious testimony for Christ, like you and I did, only to become discouraged in our own eyes by how little it seems to resemble the original vision of what we thought our lives would be. The original vision.

I remember one time I needed a janitor in my church, and a fellow called me, and he said, Pastor, I was in my devotions this morning, and he said, The Lord told me that greatness awaits me. I said, Wonderful. I need a janitor, and you're just the person, I think, to fill this spot.

I said, For the Scripture says, The greatest among you will be your servant. I remember him saying to me, He said these exact words, That's not quite what I had in mind. It never is what we have in mind.

Our concept and our ways of thinking quite often don't match the ways of God. And so they headed out to build this incredible testimony, and Haggai the prophet, in chapter 2 and verse 3, let me just read it to you, it says it this way. Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? We start to build, we have this vision, you have it, I have it, of what greatness is, and what our life is going to amount to, and then we're 5, 10, 15, 20 years down the road in this journey, we read the Bible, we see Daniel stopping the mouths of lions, David taking down a giant, Jonathan and his armor bearer taking a half acre of land and sending a ripple through hell, 120 coming out of the upper room and changing, as it were, the whole known world of their generation.

People given courage and victory, and we read these things, and we see what the original temple, that's the original temple, folks, I'm talking about. And we see this original temple, and we've been building as it is for a long time, and we look at the foundation of what's been laid of God in our own lives, and we say, could it be that my life has fallen short of what I thought it would be? Have I failed God? This temple looks nothing like what I thought it was going to look. They came home, they came home with all this expectation, they laid the foundation, and essentially speaking, the people stood back and said, this was the place where the glory of God fell, but this is such a mess, look at the rubble, look at the ruin here, look at we're building with leftover pieces of former glory, and it looks nothing like the original temple, and of course there was opposition against it, and if you know the history of it, people just simply drew back in many cases and stopped building because they didn't see any hope, and that happens with Christian people.

Coming into the house of God, and you have plans and visions and dreams and ambitions, and you have a whisper in your heart that perhaps God himself spoke to you, but you look at your life after all the work you put in, and you say, this looks nothing like the book of Acts chapter 2, this looks nothing like the vision that I feel that God gave me. I don't know, maybe I built the wrong way, maybe I've fallen short, maybe God is displeased with me, and after 10, 15, 20 years, many people lose heart. There's a pivotal moment, I believe, in the lives of many Christian people, where zeal stops and complacency takes over, and despair begins to occupy the mind, and that zeal, as it is, to live a life that will make a difference, dies, just like threatened to happen here, but it was the voices of the prophets that God raised again, Haggai and Zechariah, that came to the people, just the way I feel I'm doing today, and say, no, the problem is, you don't see the way God sees.

Your understanding is short, you don't understand that God hasn't lied to you, and your life is not a failure, and you're not building on the wrong foundation. I'm talking now to the honest seeker of God, the person who really came home and wanted to build a life for God's glory, but yet, because it doesn't look like what

you thought it was going to look like, God told you great things were in store, but immediately, your mind, it was all about crowds, it was all about a marquee, it was all about a brochure, wasn't it? Your name was gonna be on it, you're gonna do some great thing for God, but the problem is, you don't see, God didn't lie to you. Quite often, we don't, you see, we don't see the whole picture.

I want you to think about Joseph for a minute. I'm talking about the husband of Mary, the stepfather of Jesus. He's given, the plan of God is put into his hands.

First, in Matthew 121, it tells us that he was a just man, and a devout man, and an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, no, take Mary as your wife. She is with child of the Holy Spirit, and this child is going to pay the penalty, as it is for the sins of the people of God of that time, the children of Israel. And of course, Joseph wouldn't have understood, it would be not just Israel, it was the whole world.

And so, Joseph is given the charge of protecting this plan of God, just like you have the plan of God put into your hands. He had the plan of God put into his hands. He had the salvation of the world put into his hands.

Folks, do you understand this? He's given a child. Now, the last time we hear of Joseph, Jesus was 12 years of age. And do you remember they took a trip up to sacrifice in Jerusalem, and they lost Jesus.

Can you imagine that? They lost him. You're given the plan of God for the salvation of the world. Can you imagine Joseph and Mary going back to that temple? Can you imagine the discussion? I thought you were looking after the plan of God for the salvation of the world.

Well, I thought, I mean, he's your son. He's not mine. I mean, it's your responsibility to look after the plan of God.

My wife preached a message one time called Losing Jesus, and said they must have felt like the biggest idiots in the history of the world. They were given the plan of God for the salvation of the world, and they lost it. And folks, we can feel that way too sometimes.

Now, Jesus was in the temple. We know that. He was 12 years old.

He was astounding to scholars. He was about his father's business. You can't lose the plan of God for your life.

Don't buy the lie of the devil. You might lose sight of it, but the plan of God is still going on in your life. Nothing has stopped.

Now, somewhere between the time Jesus was 12 years of age and when he was 30 and began his ministry on the earth, most believe Joseph died at that time because there's no more mention of him. And you can just imagine when Joseph died on his deathbed, what was in his heart? Have I failed God? I had it out with a plan of salvation for the world, and all I have to show for my life is one child is not even my own. I want you to think this through.

I want you to stop and reason it for a moment. The things that could have been in Joseph's heart, not speculation, the scripture doesn't record it, but he has to be an ordinary person like you and I. You say, God, did I fail you? Maybe. I assume that Jesus is probably in his 20s at the time that Joseph dies.

And he's on his deathbed. The plan of God is now over 20 years old, perhaps. And Joseph is saying, did I spend too much time in the carpenter shop with him? Did I not read the scriptures enough? Did I not pray enough? God, you put the plan of salvation for the world into my hands, and nothing materialized on my watch.

Nothing happened. He's still making tables and chairs. And here I am dying.

Are you displeased with me, Lord? The scripture doesn't tell us why Joseph is removed, but would he have to deal with the displeasure of God? Did I fail you? You know, in our time, we always want to see the fulfillment. We want to see the fullness, and it has to happen before us or we lose the sense that we've been successful. Think of the apostle Paul for a moment.

He starts preaching to crowds in the temples and arenas. It was not always the best of circumstances, but at least there were crowds. And he's in the temple.

Every time he's in the temple, he draws a crowd. He draws a crowd in the arena on more than one occasion. And there are good people trying to stop him from the journey that he's on because he's starting from a place of seemingly much influence to a place of insignificance.

And even Agabus, the prophet, tries to stop him on the shores of one of his journeys. He ties his hands and says, Paul, the journey you're on, you're going to end up imprisoned. Look at what you could do here.

Look at the numbers of people you could be speaking to. Look at the magnitude of your ministry. And you're heading off on this plan, and this plan's just going to... What are you going to do, Paul? Stand before some demon-possessed seizure that thinks he's God and end up in jail? And look at all the people here that need you and all the Christians.

You see, Paul, this is where success is. And Paul says, No, are you trying to break my heart? I have a heart to follow God, in other words. Are you trying to break it with your reasoning? Are you trying to introduce me into man's reasoning? No, Paul left the crowds.

He left the temples. He left the accolades of men. He left the arenas to a prison cell with just a few friends.

And in that prison cell, all he could do was write to some of the friends he had left behind. And he didn't despise the day that appeared to be a small ending. He started big and he was finishing small.

He wrote in Philippians 1, 12 from jail, I would that you should understand, brethren, that the things that happened to me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel. Paul said, I wish you could understand what I understand. I don't need to know all things, but I do know him into whose hand I've committed my life and my future.

I do believe that all things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to his purpose. Paul could write this down because he was not driven by having to fulfill some ambition and see it with his own eyes. How could Paul have known that the hand of God was superimposed over his hand, writing much of our New Testament text in a prison cell? God would have spoken to Paul and said, Paul, I have an incredible destiny for your life and wonderful things are going to be accomplished.

Paul didn't know what a printing press was. Paul didn't know that leather-bound Bibles were going to be produced in every language of the world and sent all over the world to hundreds and hundreds of millions

of people were going to be reading his letters. And what seemed to be a small ending in the natural was everything but in the spiritual.

Think of Jesus himself. He was helping and feeding thousands of people. The crowds were following him.

He had the accolades. When he would meet in a house, there'd be so many people they'd have to let sick people down through a roof on a stretcher. And he ends up alone, almost, on a cross.

Mary is there, his mother, and John is there, and there's a few associates who are far off. The voice of the tormentor trying to convince him that his life and mission were both a failure and a disappointment to God. Don't think he didn't have to endure this.

Remember, they said he trusted in God. Let him deliver him now if he will have him. For he said, I am the Son of God.

Some mission. You can see the devil himself there saying, Jesus, I showed you the kingdoms of the world in an instant. If it was about ruling and reigning, you could have had it.

All you had to do is agree with me and my reasoning that there's another way to do this, but by strict obedience to God and by trusting in God. Now you trusted in God, and you turned down the offer to rule the kingdoms of this world, and now you're ending up alone. A failure.

A great beginning seemingly finishing with a small ending. And you and I, of course, know the story. And the point is simply this, that God sees the whole picture.

While we in our own eyes see only a little part. That's the problem with humanity. Go to Hebrews chapter 11, please, with me in the New Testament.

Are you starting to get this? We see only a little part. God is building a hundred million piece puzzle on the earth. A huge, beautiful picture.

And every one of us have a little part in that. But you ever notice, you ever walk into somebody's house and they have a thousand piece puzzle that they put together on the dining room table and one piece is missing? It doesn't matter if there are 999 pieces in that puzzle. It's the one that's missing that draws your attention right away.

And it has marred the whole picture. And because that piece of the puzzle is missing, you can't frame that picture. You can't display it because everybody will just say, well, where's that piece? There's a piece missing in the puzzle.

Do you understand? There's a thousand people more or less in the lower sanctuary here today. Do you realize that you're an important part of what God is doing in the earth? You can't be missing in the final picture. Now look at Hebrews chapter 11, verse 8. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went out, not knowing whether he went.

By faith he sojourned in a land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles or tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. It's a strange country for sure to the people of this world. For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one and him as good as dead, as many as the stars of the sky and multitude in the sand, which is by the seashore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Now people of this earth have to see to be successful. The glossies have to be there. The name has to be on the marquee.

The crowds have to be in attendance. There has to be something tangible and visible, but these died not having received the promise. Can you imagine that? Think of Abraham for a moment.

Lord takes him out of his tent one day and says, look at the stars in the sky. He says, I'm going to, if you can count them, these are your descendants and go to the seashore and count the grains of sand. There are going to be so many people born from you into this world.

And not only will there be that many people, but the whole world will be blessed through you. And so Abraham takes his journey from his home and he's traveling. And when he comes to the end of his journey, he's telling people along the way, you know, God, I'm sure he did.

You know, God gave me a promise. God's going to, God's going to bless me. And my descendants are going to be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

And through my life, the whole world is going to be blessed. How'd you like to travel Brooklyn or the Bronx with that declaration? Going down your hallway of your apartment or in your workplace? Well, in the beginning, it was probably exciting. And as time went on, especially when he got to old age, he's got one child, one child.

I mean, can you imagine getting to the end of your life's journey, having started with that big a promise and you end up with one child? Now he's got Ishmael, that doesn't count because that's a child of human effort. He's got one child by faith called Isaac. But how, how would the picture be marred if that child were not born? When he was holding Isaac, did he have any idea he was holding the DNA of Jesus Christ, the son of God, who had come from the loins of this child? Did he have any idea that there was going to be a church born? You and I, actually, he was holding in his arms.

Did he have any idea that the small finish was not as small as he thought it was going to be? In the natural, we'd like to see a big finish. Abraham, I'm sure, in the natural, would like to have died with 10,000. At least it would be a little more of a shot at fulfilling the promise, in a sense, that God gave him.

But he dies with one child. You know, that helps me to understand why Esau didn't want this promise. I mean, Abraham dwelt in tents, not seeing the promise, but embracing it.

Isaac dwelt in tents. And then, of course, the next inheritor was Esau. But Esau was the kind of a man that said, I want the kingdom now.

I want influence and power and wealth, and I want it now. I don't want to live in tents with this far-off promise, being persuaded and embracing and confessing. You see, Esau was not a stranger and pilgrim to the ways of the earth.

He wanted his inheritance now. He wanted it all now. And that's still, folks, in the hearts of men, to want it now, to want to be successful now, to want to be prosperous now, to want everything, accolades now, influence and authority now.

That's what Esau wanted. He didn't want to have it by promise. He wanted it in his hand.

And so, when it came time to trade off his birthright for a bowl of stew, it was an easy thing for him because he'd traded it off in his heart long before. I remember the man who won me to Christ. He was a Royal Canadian Mounted Police Officer.

He came to my house for, I think, about two or three months, every Wednesday, and just kept reaching out to me, just kept reaching out and reaching out. In spite of how obstinate I was and argumentative I was and how much I scorned and scoffed, he just simply kept coming to my house and didn't give up his post as it was. And finally, after this season, he won me to Christ.

He got me to read the Gospel of John, and on the way to work one day, I pulled over on the side of the road and gave my life to Jesus Christ. I'd given him such a hard time, folks, he didn't believe it when I told him I got saved. He looked right in the eye and says, I don't believe you, because he thought it was just another game that I was playing with him.

And I remember when I told him, no, it's for real, I pulled over and I gave my life to Jesus. I remember his hands started to shake, opened his briefcase and took out these Billy Graham things called Now That You've Received Christ, and we immediately started into discipleship. And he's dead now, but I remember years later talking to him and he was lamenting.

He says, you know, you're the only one I ever won to the Lord. And he was sad about it. You know, number one, you know, that made me feel like a sort of lunch bag letdown in the kingdom of God.

And secondly, I can just see when he appeared before the throne of God and saying, Lord, I'm just so sorry. I wish I could have done more. He was a faithful man.

He stayed in the same church from the time he was saved till the time he died. He served there faithfully. And I can see him standing before the throne of God saying, Lord, I had such plans and dreams and ambitions.

And I had so wished my life could have done more. But you see, I only led one guy to you. And the Lord says, no, Norv, it's much bigger than that.

You don't understand something. You see, the man you led to me led a few others, and a few others led a few others, and a few others led a few others, and a few others led a few others. It goes like this, folks.

You lead somebody to Christ and that person leads two, and those two lead four, those four lead 16, those 16 lead 32. And when you get to the throne of God, none of that would have happened had you not led that one. It's the same principle of ending up alone in a prison or dying alone on a cross or finishing with one child.

We have the impression that our whole life, it has to be about now. But the Lord says, no, it's not just about now. Everybody that you've led to Christ, all these ones that come after are all your children, your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren, your great-great-grandchildren.

And you and I bear a part of the reward for every person that comes to Christ through everyone that we won to Christ. When you get there, it's one part of a huge picture. Those who win in the kingdom of God, they finish the race not the way they might once have thought they should, but know inside that we've faithfully finished what God gave us to do.

There's a day coming of reward. There's a judgment seat, that not the ungodly, this is not the judgment of the ungodly, but the judgment of those who are believers in Christ. You and I will be there one day.

And I don't know how many are gonna be there. I'm guessing it's in the hundreds of millions. And time is no more, so it doesn't matter.

Nobody has to go to bed, nobody gets hungry. We're all in the presence of God and names are gonna be called and everything we've done will be judged on a scale of truth and will be rewarded accordingly. The Bible says some will be saved, yet their works will burn as by fire, but they themselves will be saved.

Jesus seemed to indicate in the gospels that this time many who are last are going to be first and many who are first are going to be last. He judges righteously. It's not by volume, it's not by numbers, it's not by sight, but it's by purity, motive, by trust and obedience.

The fact that we did what we were called to do on this earth, folks. Oh, what a shock that's gonna be. I've got a secret that God's spoken into my heart.

It brings me joy because it makes me know that God is just, He's true, He's holy, He's right. He does things in righteousness and in truth. If we were in a convention today and rewards were being given out, the rank and file of the church would all be sitting there and most would feel like I'm just a body that's attended here to occupy a seat.

And all the guys with the fancy suits and all the ones with the big churches, they're all gonna be called first. And they're all gonna be given rewards. Five cities, four cities, ten cities.

Now folks, I don't do what I do for reward. If God chooses to do that, then that's fine with me. That's all right.

But honestly, the thought doesn't appeal to me. I have all my hands full just pastoring this church. I can't even fathom governing ten cities.

I guess the Lord will have to give some supernatural ability if we're ever gonna do stuff like that. Now folks, listen to me. Suddenly, names start to be called in heaven.

And the angels are gonna be rejoicing. The created beings will most likely be there. Seraphims, the cherubs, all of these things will be there.

And then suddenly, the moment heaven is waiting for, names are gonna be called. And all the big players have clambered and taken the best seats. I have no doubt about that.

And suddenly the first name is called Mary Johnson from Times Square Church. Stand, please. And everybody's going, who in the world? Who's Mary Johnson? Times Square Church.

Who is that? And then all of a sudden, Mary stands. Mary, you worked in the nursery. Mary, you were given the care of a few children.

And you took it on with all your heart and you poured everything you had into these little ones. And through you, they knew they were loved and they knew they were cared about. And you prayed and you didn't let them go and you believed God and you fought for them in your spirit and you prepared.

Even though they were two, three, and four years old, you sowed something of life in these children. You've been faithful in a few things. Now I'll make you ruler over many things.

Enter into the joy of the Lord. And all the angels start shouting. All the cherubim start shouting in heaven.

And there's a stunned silence. And now, the second name, and this is going to go on for a million years, but it doesn't matter because there's no time there anymore. The second name.

Keyshawn Jones. Everybody's looking. Who in the world is Keyshawn Jones? You were an usher at Times Square Church.

You didn't even get to come into the sanctuary. You worked in the annex every Sunday and Tuesday. But you did what you did faithfully.

You stretched out your hand. You greeted every visitor. You made every sinner who came into the house of God feel special as they are in the sight of God.

You turned nobody away. You never, never made any person who came into the house of God feel like they didn't belong there. You sowed good seed in many lives.

You've been faithful in a few things. Behold, I'll make you ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord.

All heaven is silent again. Now the guys with the big suits are getting really nervous. If you can sweat in heaven, they're already sweating.

Ties are starting to come off. Collars are beginning to lose. Jackets are beginning to get unbuttoned.

People are starting to get out of the front seats and try to find a back seat. Esmeralda Smith. Who in the world is Esmeralda Smith? She's that 91-year-old senior that comes out every week and prays and believes God.

Esmeralda came through hell, had to endure racism, had to endure unspeakable slights and insults through her life, but made a choice when she came to Christ to forgive and became a person of tenderness and love and began to pray for reconciliation in the church and in all of God's people everywhere. She stood for what was right when everyone else was standing for what was wrong. She was an encouragement.

She was a hugger. She was a voice for what is right. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

Zechariah 4, 7, he says, Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it. Who is that great mountain that stands and says, In my life and this temple is going to amount to nothing. No, the Lord is going to finish the work that he is destined to do within me.

It doesn't have to be great in my sight, but one day I'm going to stand before the throne of God and there's only one thing that's going to be in my mouth, grace. Oh God, grace. God, your favor.

God, your goodness. God, your mercy. God, your comfort.

God, your power. Oh God, grace. Grace.

And so who has despised the day of small endings? Whether you have only one child to nurture. A Sunday school teacher one time had a boy at his class who was a prankster. He was virtually illiterate and he was always playing jokes and he was kind of a foolish young man.

But the Sunday school teacher got a burden in his heart for him and went down to the shoe shop where he worked, brought him outside and sat down and talked to him. And so the seed of life in this young man. And this young man turned his heart to Christ.

His name was Dwight Moody. And through his life, people all over the world, continents were changed, churches were changed, revival came through this one young man that a Sunday school teacher won to Christ. Maybe you only have one child to nurture, but don't forget, it's not over.

When you finish, it goes on. Maybe you're the only one who stands in school. Perhaps there's very few that are standing for what is right and you're a college student here today, you're a high school student, you work in the marketplace and you're the only one who stands just like Jesus Christ was the only one seemingly left on Calvary.

Maybe you only have a few friends to write to. Maybe your day and time of traveling as a missionary is over. But you still have a hand and you still have a pen.

You still have the Spirit of God and I promise you everything you write to somebody will long outlive you. Just like Paul's letters outlived him. I had a grandfather who was, at least I was told he was a judge.

He died when I was three. And it used to grieve me that this man obviously had a lot of advice for a lot of people in his courtroom or whatever he did. But he never left me anything.

And even though he wasn't a saved man, I would probably still read it today because it was my grandfather. No card, no note, no advice for life. I was three years in this world.

Did I not matter to him? Why wouldn't he have left something for me? It used to really bother me when I was, especially when I was a young Christian. And maybe that's all you can do. But it will outlive you.

And if God calls you to do it, just do it and be faithful to it. And great will be your reward. You know the beauty of this entire thing is that I don't know what it is that you do.

I pastor this church. Supposedly about 8,000 or so people. But when we get to the throne of God, we're on level ground, my friend.

Because I'm judged by faithfulness just like you are. It's not on volume. It's not on content.

It's not on how much of a public figure I was. Was I honest? Was I a man of integrity? Did I really care about you and what I was given to do? And I will be judged on the same scale that you will be in what you're given to do. And for me, that makes Christ beautiful.

It just levels the playing field. And that means there are no big people, there are no small people in the kingdom of God. We all have a piece in this little, in this great picture that God, and my piece is no bigger than yours.

And I have found freedom in this understanding. Freedom from all the pressure. Freedom from everything but just to love you.

And to see God become God in you. And to see you fulfill the calling of God on your life. And even if your part looks small and your temple insignificant, I want to remind you that it was this temple in Zechariah that they were rebuilding, that Jesus Christ the man walked into.

This was the temple. And even if my temple and yours look small and insignificant, you are the temple that Jesus chose to walk into. He's already in you if you're a believer.

And he's already walking through you on the earth. And there's great freedom in just finishing what God gave us to do. Just finish it with all your heart.

Finish it well. And keep before you the understanding that greatness does not mean largeness. Greatness is obedience.

Greatness is purity. Greatness is sowing a seed in a field and dying. And maybe long after your death suddenly that tree sprouts.

I told Pastor William we were talking recently. I said, you know, with today's technology every message we preach will outlive us by a hundred years. Should the Lord tarry.

Pastor William may be long in heaven. He may be on a cloud somewhere floating through the galaxy. And suddenly this following of William Carroll has erupted all over America or part of the world.

He won't even know about it because we're sowing into the future. We're delivered from having to see with our natural eye things now that convince us that we are a success in the sight of God. And there is an incredible freedom in this, folks.

Incredible. I don't want you to be missing. What a tragedy that that big puzzle is finished.

That big picture and you're missing. What you were given to do, you gave up. You quit.

You thought your life wasn't worthwhile. You thought your temple was so mediocre that God didn't want you. You fell for the lie.

I want to give an altar call this morning for every person who fits in that category. And we're going to just pray together and we're going to just believe that hell is going to be destroyed. And condemnation is going to die.

For every person, you just have one child to nurture, a few friends to write to, or all you need is the power to stand in your school, in your workplace. But the grace to rebuild and to trust that God is going to be glorified through your life. If this is you today, I want you just to stand as we all stand together and just make your way down here and we're going to pray together.

We're going to worship for a few moments and then we're going to pray. Don't be ashamed. Just slip out of your seat.

Let's all stand together in the balcony. Go to either exit in the annex and in Roxbury, please, if you just stand up between the screens. Thank God for deliverance.

Thank God for getting rid of the voice of the condemner. Thank God I don't have to be any more than God's called me to be. Glory to God.

Just make your way down, please, and while we worship. I want to give you a word, those that have come to the altar today. In the Song of Solomon, which I've always believed is a type of Christ in his church, the bride said to the bridegroom, Don't look at me.

I feel unlovely. I feel like I've not done what I was called to do and I've been a failure. But the bridegroom said to this bride, he said, No, it's not the way you see it.

He said, You've stolen my heart. The moment you just turned to look at me, he said, you didn't even have a chance to fully face me when I saw one of your eyes. Actually, that's what he says.

One of your eyes turned my heart. The moment you turned towards me and the bride says, I am my beloved's and his desire is towards me. And then he says to her, Come, let us go forth into the field.

Let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards. And what he's saying to her is, there's so much that I want to do with you.

You may not fully understand it all, but if you'll just get up and come with me, let us walk together and just be content to be with me and be content to do what I choose to do with you and through you. And don't let anything stop you. Praise God.

There's such freedom in knowing that you're a part of what God is doing that cannot be replaced. You cannot be replaced by anybody else in this world. You're a very unique part of this beautiful picture that Jesus is painting.

And so just get up today. That's all I'm asking. That's all the Lord is asking.

Just get up and begin to walk with him and shake off the condemnation. Shake off all of this stuff that comes from your own heart and from the devil himself. You are an invaluable part of the body of Christ in this earth and what God is doing.

Lord Jesus Christ, I ask you, you say that where your spirit is, that you will open prisons and set free those that have been captivated. God, you're bringing an understanding of some things into your church in this last hour in which we're living. And you're letting your people go from all captivity and all bondage, all wrong thinking about the kingdom of God, that we may serve you even in our wilderness, wherever it is that we live.

We realize, Lord, that our lives are not insignificant. Not one of us are insignificant to the kingdom of God. All we can ask is, Jesus, be glorified in us.

Not the way we see, but the way you see. And help us just to be faithful in what you've given us to do. It doesn't have to be big in our own sight.

But Lord, you're able to take just a small seed and you can grow a great tree from it. Give us an understanding of these things and help us to do our part faithfully. And help us to give glory to you in doing it.

And deliver us from the ways of the thinking of this world. Graft us into those who by faith saw it, even though they didn't receive it in their lifetime and embraced it. And that seeing and that embracing caused them to confess they were strangers to the ways of this world.

Oh, Jesus, we have nothing else to ask but that you glorify your name through us as your people. Glorify your name through us in New York City and wherever else we might be from this morning. Oh, God almighty, deliver your people out of all condemnation.

Let the prayer meetings begin to abound in the house of God. Jesus, glorify your name. Father, we thank you, Lord.

Thank you, God, that if all we do is win one person, it's worthwhile. One child, Lord. Whatever you give us to do, we want to do it with all our might and all our heart, knowing that you're pleased with us, Lord.

You're pleased with your people. Father, deliver us from all of the corporate thinking of this world that's gotten into the church of Jesus Christ. Bring us back to spiritual reality.

Father, we thank you for this. Oh, God, thank you, Lord. I pray that people who are here this morning begin to understand what a day is coming.

What a day when the last will be first. What a day, oh, God, when you weigh everything by truth and by integrity and honesty and obedience. Oh, Jesus, thank you.

Thank you, God. I pray you give every single mother here strength to raise her children. Give fathers strength to be godly leaders of their family.

Oh, God, give the young people strength to stand in the schoolyard. My God, my God, my God, help us not to see anything as too small or insignificant in your kingdom, for your eye looks and beholds it all. And everything is important to you, Lord.

Every child of God is important to you. Every person in this city and our world is important. Help us, Lord Jesus, to recognize it.

Help us to obey the voice of the Holy Spirit as we walk through our day, dropping the seeds of eternal life into the ears and hearts of people everywhere. God, deliver us from having to see with our eyes. God, help us to just understand and know in our hearts that you will bring the increase.

And we thank you for it with everything in us. In Jesus' mighty and holy name, hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Glory to God. Now, I want to do something before we go. Now, young lady, you never let anything turn you away from where God's calling you.

He's got something very special for you. When your name is called in heaven, you may not have been known on earth. You're probably in a better position than those who are known.

But I want to just give a practice of what it sounds like when your name is called. Not Billy Graham. Not somebody else.

Your name. John Smith, or whatever your name is. When your name, this is what it's going to sound like in heaven when your name is called.

On the count of three, I want you to do that. I want you all to be the angels and the seraphims today, okay? On the count of three. One, two, three.

Yes! Yes! Hallelujah, hallelujah! Hallelujah, hallelujah!

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