

Overcoming the Power of Spiritual Defeat

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon emphasizes overcoming spiritual defeat through reliance on God's mercy and strength.

Duration: 56:47

Scripture: Zechariah 1:16, Zechariah 9:9, Zechariah 9:17, Romans 1:21-22

Topics: "Spiritual Defeat"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Zechariah and specifically looks at the symbolism of four horns mentioned in the text. These horns represent powers that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. The preacher emphasizes that these powers are a constant warfare that believers have to fight against every day. However, God promises to raise up his people and defend them, empowering them to overcome these powers and be filled with strength and refreshing.

Transcript

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Now thus saith the Lord, verse 16, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies. My house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a lion shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad, and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And the Lord showed me four carpenters.

Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head. But these, that being the carpenters rather, are come to fray

them, and to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah, to scatter it. Now you have to understand the context of how Zechariah is speaking.

He is one of two prophets that have been raised up after the first group of exiles have returned from the land of Babylon, which of course is now Medo-Persia, because Babylon had been conquered by the Medo-Persians. People of God had been careless, and because of their carelessness, they had gone into captivity. It's not like God didn't warn them.

There were prophets raised up both in the northern and the southern kingdoms of Israel, and they warned clearly the people. Isaiah was there, Jeremiah was there, there were others there, warning of the days that were coming, because of the careless handling of the word of God, the careless handling of the very presence of God and the purposes of God for His people. Because of this, in three separate stages, the people were conquered, they went into captivity, and the northern kingdom was assimilated, conquered by Assyria, and all but disappeared.

There were people from the northern kingdom who sought the Lord, and the scripture said earlier on, before this captivity, they went into the southern kingdom called Judah, and they began to worship there. So there was no loss of any tribes in Israel because of these captivities. Judah eventually went into captivity in three separate stages, and then following the 70 years that God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, he decreed that I'm raising up powers as it is, and these powers are going to take and chastise my people, so that they will call out to me one more time.

Folks, God's love for you and for me is so that He will do whatever He has to do, that our hearts might turn towards Him again. It's better that He chasten us as sons and daughters if we are straying from Him, than we should continue on our straying path and end up with a completely convoluted perspective of who God is, a twisted, distorted view of God, and that's really where Judah was, and that's where they were heading. God allowed them to be brought into captivity, and they were chastened by different nations.

Now, after the 70 year period that Daniel had spoken about, they were allowed by Cyrus, who was the new king of Medo-Persia, the final conquering nation. While they were in Babylon, they were allowed to come home to their homeland, and 50,000 in that first exodus back into what was really a destroyed Jerusalem came back to rebuild. There was really literally nothing but ruins.

The armies had come in and destroyed the temple, they destroyed the wall. You know that Nehemiah later on, if you understand history, came back to rebuild the wall. Ezra came back to reestablish the law and the sacrifice once the temple had been rebuilt.

But these first people, the first 50,000, came back under a governor and a high priest called Joshua, and they came back to rebuild again what had been destroyed. And that's, I guess, in measure where you and I are. And we came back when we found Christ.

Thanks be to God with all my heart, and I hope that you're thankful today, that irrespective of where we were and how captivated we were, God issued a decree through his son Jesus Christ that whosoever will may come. And we heard, and we headed out of these places of captivity and came back into the place that God had destined us to be in himself and began to build. Now the people began rebuilding the temple with great zeal.

And just like you and I do, we come into the house of the Lord, we come into the kingdom of God, and with great zeal we begin to rebuild this new life that God has promised us. We lay hold of the promises, we begin to walk in them, we put our hand to the plow as it is. But then we begin to find out that there's an enemy that opposes us.

The devil himself and all the powers of darkness at his disposal begin to come against us. And he comes against us with everything he has to discourage this rebuilding of the dwelling place of God. And of course in the New Testament it's us who are rebuilt by God himself, because he comes to dwell right in the midst of our heart and in the midst of our lives.

And yet we have another enemy, it's our own frailty, our own hearts, our own minds, our own reasoning as it is, or lack of proper reasoning, that quite often will cause us to look down at what we are in God attempting to accomplish and become very, very discouraged. The opposition and the awareness of their own frailty soon brought the work to a standstill. They came back, they laid the foundation of the temple, there's great rejoicing.

Then the people who had occupied this particular land at the time came and stood against them, and they stopped building. And that's where many, many people are today in the church of Jesus Christ. Come in with a great zeal, lay a foundation as it is of basic understanding of who we are in Christ.

And then because of the opposition said, this is far enough, we've gone as far as we can go. And they begin to turn and focus on other things. And of course this is when God raised up Haggai and Zechariah, who began to speak to them about where the power would come from to finish the work that God had destined them to do.

You know the famous scripture where God said, It's not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. The Lord showed them clearly through these prophets that the work that I have begun in you, I'm going to complete. Later on, Nehemiah in chapter 4, verse 10, he speaks of the mindset of the people of God when they become discouraged.

And Judah said, he says in chapter 4, verse 10, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there's so much rubbish that we're not able to build a wall. And this is how many people stop growing in the knowledge of Christ. By the grace of God that is given through Jesus Christ.

Just look in the mirror, and there is just so much rubbish. We come into the kingdom of God, and we seem to have been impressed upon as it is. You remember the coin that was given to Jesus one time? And he said, whose image is on this coin? In similar ways, we are pressed by our culture.

We are pressed by our heritage. We've been pressed by words that have been spoken into our lives by people who may not have had our best interest at heart when they spoke them. And so many come in, and there's just so much rubbish.

People come out of this mountain of humanity as it is, and all of human frailty and sin that happens without the life of God within us. And they begin to want to live a Christian life, but there's just such a mountain of rubbish. And they become discouraged.

And they say, God, I don't know how to get this rubbish out of the way. I don't know how. I've started building, and I've trusted you for the strength to build.

But oh God, I'm facing so much opposition. And inside of me, there's just so much rubbish that has been impressed in me, on my mind, on my spirit, my life. I seem to be plagued by limitations in my own mind.

I'm hearing voices that are coming against everything that you have ever promised to me. I'm finding enemies that I thought were my friends. People turning on me.

God, I'm weary now. I'm tired. I don't want to do this anymore.

And you see, the people in Zechariah's day thought, well, we built the foundation. Let somebody else finish the work. And they headed off to do other pursuits because they got so tired of the spiritual defeat that they were experiencing, and the opposition that was going on.

You see, the spiritual defeat starts in the mind long before it becomes a physical reality. But God came to them in measure through the prophet Zechariah. And in chapter 1, verse 16, he says, Therefore, thus saith the Lord, I have returned to Jerusalem with mercies, and my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

Now, God said through Zechariah to the people, and it's a type, and it applies to you and I today. I have turned to you with mercy. I brought you home, and my dwelling place in you shall be built.

This is something God said. God said, I'm going to do this. If I can just find a heart that will believe it.

If there be one person out there that says, God, what you say takes precedence over everything that I'm feeling, and all the rubbish around me, and everything that everyone else has said, and all the lies the devil is sending my way. You said that you've turned towards me with mercy. You are merciful to my failings.

You are merciful to my struggles. You are merciful to my trials. You are merciful to my inabilities.

You are merciful even to my confusion about who you are. But God, you say you've brought me home, and you are going to build in me a dwelling place. It's no longer an Old Testament dwelling place where people will come in for periodic appearances of God.

But you are coming into me in full measure to live in the power of the Holy Ghost within the very inward parts of this physical temple. And you are going to be glorified in this earthen vessel. He said, also a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

Now, a line in the original text speaks of a predetermined measurement of what it shall be. In other words, God is saying, I have already designed it in my mind. I already know what it's going to look like.

I already have the dimensions. If you go into the next chapter, this is all outlined. God says, I know what your life is going to look like.

I already see it. Yes, it isn't, but I don't go by things that are. I call things that are not as if they are.

I see something. I see something in you. I see what I'm going to do in you, and I see what I'm going to do through you.

I have a predetermined measurement of your life. I've already laid out a line. This is what you're going to be.

This is what you're going to do. We're going to walk together. It's not going to be you doing it.

It's going to be me doing it, says the Lord within you. It's not by your might or by your power. It's by my spirit, says the Lord.

I'm going to come and do a marvelous work in you, and people everywhere will have to stop and consider the reality of God because of what I will do through your life. Jesus said in Matthew 16, in verse 18, in the latter half of that verse, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will build it.

If you are part of the church of Jesus Christ, he spoke this about you. He said, I will build your life. I will build you if you're in my church.

I will change you from image to image. I will build you line upon line, precept upon precept. You will go from strength to strength.

I will renew your mind. I'll give you a brand new heart. Now, this statement was made on the basis of Peter's revelation, of course, that Jesus was the Christ.

And interestingly, this word line, when he says, a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem, also means a musical string. I love that. He means, I see it this way.

Forgive me if it appears light. It's not, but it's like the Lord is saying, strike up the band. There's going to be a song in your life.

Tune up the string. You've got a song in you. I've determined to plant within you a new song and people will see it and they will begin to glorify me.

Look at Zechariah chapter nine. Very quickly with me. You see, Zechariah chapter nine, verse nine is speaking about Christ and he speaks about what he will do for those who trust him to finish the work which they have called upon him to do.

Now, this is about Jesus Christ. He says, rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem.

Behold, thy king cometh to thee. He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass and upon the colt, the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem and the battle bull shall be cut off.

Now, as the Lord is saying, I am going to give you victory over all of your enemies. You're not going to have to defend yourself. I'm going to defend you.

I'm going to be the strength that's in the midst of you. He shall speak peace to the heathen and his dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, verse 11, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

God says, not only am I going to give you strength and defeat your enemies. He said, but I'm going to take you out of the places where there's no water. The places where you have been held captive.

And he says in verse 12, turn to the stronghold. Now, Christ himself is the stronghold. He is the high tower.

He is the place of refuge. He is the provision of God. He is God's mercy.

He is God's redemption. He is God's wisdom. He is God's righteousness.

He is God's sanctification. He is God's future. He is God's hope.

He is God who sits at the right hand of all authority and power. Turn to the stronghold, he says, you prisoners of hope. Even today do I declare that I will render double to you.

I will give you the double portion. I will give you the portion of the firstborn son. I will give you everything that Christ has won for you.

On Calvary it will become yours. You will have a new mind. You will have a new heart.

You will have new courage. You will have new spirit. I will come and be God to you.

I will come and be God in you. I will raise you up and you shall be my church on this side of eternity. When I bent Judah for me, verse 13, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up my sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

And the Lord shall be seen over them. In other words, God says, I'm going to raise up my people and they're going to be mighty. And I'll be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as lightning.

And the Lord God shall blow the trumpet and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. The Lord of hosts shall defend them, verse 15, and they shall devour and subdue with sling stones. And they shall drink and make a noise as their wine.

And they shall be filled like bowls and as the corners of the altar. In other words, this is my people, God said. There'll be a shout.

There'll be a continuous refreshing. They will be filled and filled and filled again. Their strength will not diminish.

Those who wait upon me will be renewed. They'll mount up with wings as eagles. They'll run.

They'll not be weary. They'll walk and they'll not faint. Hallelujah.

And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people. They shall be as stones of a crown lifted up as an on sight upon His land. Oh, how great is His goodness, verse 17.

How great is His beauty. Corn shall make the young men cheerful and new wine the maids. In other words, God says, I will be all of the provision that my people are ever going to require.

Hallelujah. Back in Zechariah again, chapter one. Verse 17.

We're speaking now about supply. He says, cry yet. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, my cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad.

And the Lord shall yet comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem. In other words, God saying, my dwelling places through the supply that I will give them shall be made known everywhere. People will know these are the dwelling places of God because there will be a provision given them not found anywhere else in the world, but in Him.

And you are a city, Jesus said, set upon a hill. Hallelujah. You and I are set upon that trust in the provision of God through Christ.

And we cannot be hidden from this world. Now, Zechariah goes on. In verse 18, he says, Then I lifted up my eyes and saw, behold, four horns.

Now, the word horns is powers. Four respective powers. And I said to the angel that talked to me, what be these? And he answered me and said, these are the horns or the powers which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.

They're symbols of power. These are instruments of captivity. Now, in this instance, they were allowed by God to take his people captive, to chastise his own people.

But they didn't go to sleep. These four powers are a type of a warfare that you and I have to fight every day, all day. We have to trust God for the power to overcome these powers that come against the work of God in his people.

Now, there were four kingdoms. It's generally understood that the four horns represented four kingdoms. There are others out there that have various theories.

But the accepted theory is a historical one. They're the kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt and Babylon and finally Medo-Persia. Kingdoms that came and captivated and enslaved the people of God and brought them ultimately to a place, at least where they were then dwelling, of spiritual defeat.

Now, Assyria being the first kingdom, the first horn, was a nation of assimilation. Now, their policy when they conquered another people was to assimilate them. They didn't let them keep their culture.

They didn't let them dwell where they used to or were familiar with. But they would take people and take them on very brutal forced marches. And they would take them into other areas.

And they would scatter them and resettle them and take other peoples and bring them in and intermix them so that they will intermarry and ultimately lose their identity and lose their culture. It's an amazing thing. You see in 2 Kings chapter 18, the king of Assyria was fighting against King Hezekiah and the children of God.

And he sent messengers and they came to the city. And the messengers said, now give up the fight. I'm paraphrasing this, but this is essentially what they said.

Give up the fight. Don't let Hezekiah convince you that God is able to deliver you. None of the gods of any of the other nations have been able to deliver them out of our hands.

And they said, now you come out and we will take you to a land just like your own. A land of milk and honey and corn and wine and increase. Now, this is the captivity of Assyria.

It's a land like your own. And it's a spiritual delusion. That's the power that's in this captivity.

A spiritual delusion to those who give up the fight and are taken captive into a land just like their own. It's the person who's here this morning and can say, I have the victory sort of. Not quite, but close.

It's I can still sing and dance and shout. But I have this inward sense that I'm not quite in the place that God wants me to be. I have a suit and I can speak the language of the scriptures and I go to church and I've cleaned up, I guess, a lot of my life.

But I can't honestly say I have the victory. It's sort of a victory. I'm living short of what God has for me.

It's the man or woman who has a relationship with God that sort of satisfies. You don't have that testimony. You cannot come into the house of God and say I'm filled, I'm full, I'm complete.

I have hope. I'm moving forward in my God. Let me tell you what God did for me this week.

No, it's it's another place. It's a spiritual deception. It's a delusion.

It's falling short. It's giving up the fight as it is and kind of moving into a sort of victory. It's the man or woman who says, well, I'm almost in the will of God.

I can almost touch it from here. I'm not there, but I'm almost there. And becomes content to live there, becomes content to dwell in a place of never being fully satisfied, of never knowing deep inside that they are in the will of God, given up, really given up the fight and moving into this acceptance of another place that is sort of like what God intended for me.

Folks, you don't have to give up and dwell there. You don't have to go to church and play the game. You don't have to look holy on Sunday.

You don't have to go there. It's another place. It's a Syria.

And many of the people who are captivated in this place are assimilated into the society around them. They think like the world. They walk like the world.

They talk like the world six days a week and then come to church on Sunday, put on their holy face, put on their holy suit, grab their holy Bible. But they're assimilated. They're assimilated.

The people in your workplace don't even know you're a Christian. They know you go to church. But then again, so does everybody else go to church.

You have no testimony. You cannot say I'm living in victory. You cannot say I'm walking in the will of God.

You cannot say I'm fully satisfied because you've settled for this other place and moved into this spiritual deception. It's a power that comes against every child of God that is attempting to rebuild the life that Christ has for them. Folks, one of the first things you're going to find out when you come to Christ and you determine that your life is going to honor him is that you are not on a Sunday school picnic.

This is a war. You have real enemies that will fight against your soul. Now, Egypt is another power of captivity, a type of what can happen to any Christian.

It happened physically to God's people in the Old Testament, but it's a type. And I'm speaking on these things as types of what can happen to somebody in the New Testament. Egypt, you know the history of it.

It's a place that initially welcomed the children of God. Joseph went there first. And then, of course, his father and brethren came in.

And I think about 70 of them altogether came into Egypt. And Pharaoh opened his arms wide and said, welcome. Here are promises and provision.

Everything you're going to ever need is found in the land of Egypt. And, of course, it was followed by enslavement. And that's what false promises and false security will always do.

It's the voice of the enemy. It says, hey, you don't have to go to this extent to be a Christian. Why not just come over here? Just take a little detour to the right or to the left.

And you're going to find provision here. You're going to find promises here. They're not aware that it's going to bring about 400 years of enslavement and bondage and finally producing them a cry for freedom.

And it's the power that false security offers. Folks, you don't have to settle for false security. There is a real security in Christ.

There is a real Holy Spirit who gives the believer the power to cry out, Abba, Father. You can know that you're a child of God. You don't have to settle somewhere halfway between where Christ is and where you used to be.

And then Babylon figuratively means confusion. Babylon gets its name, which is Balal, and it refers to the confusion that arose at the Tower of Babel. Now, you remember Babylon was infamous in the scriptures for its seeming desire to acquire knowledge.

Even when the king of Babylon captivated Judah, he told some of his officers, seek out young people who have an incredible and unusual wisdom and bring them before me. I want to hear what they have to say. Of course, among those were Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that were taken in.

And they were the only voices really that spoke for God in this entire empire. Babylon is the power of false wisdom, the power of human reasoning, the power of human thought apart from God. Babylon is a theology that says, well, I think God is like this.

I feel God is thinking this. Babylon turns away from the word of God and moves into the realm of human reasoning and human thinking. And, folks, you cannot fight the devil on that ground.

You're going to lose on that ground. You're going to go into captivity. You have to be able, as Christ did, you've got to know this book inside out.

And when the enemy comes against you with even false scriptural reasoning, you have to be able to look him in the eye and say, thus saith the Lord. This is what the word of God says. This is what I will choose to obey.

I will not be drawn into the power of false wisdom. This is what Jeremiah said had brought the people of God into the dominion as it is of Babylon's captivity in the first place. In Jeremiah chapter 8, verse 9, he says the wise men are ashamed.

They are dismayed and taken. Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord. And what wisdom is in them? In other words, they're taken.

They're made captives because they've rejected God's word. And, folks, I can't help but wonder how many professing Christians are being captivated now by this power of false wisdom. How many are sitting under

ministries today where supposed prophets are closing the book and saying, now let's see what God is saying, and speaking issues out of their own heart, delusions out of the human nature, the human flesh, and leading the church into this mysticism, making Christ to be some kind of a mystic who speaks in just whispers and little sentences to his people.

They, of course, become the only interpreters of what God is saying. When God has left his word that every child of God can read from Genesis to Revelation, and you don't need an interpreter. The Bible says I'm giving you an interpreter.

He's called the Holy Spirit, and he will make known to you the things that I've written to you. Paul says in Romans 1, 21 and 22, Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, and neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

Oh, folks, there is no wisdom apart from the wisdom that is in Christ that is found in this book. There is no guiding. There is no light for our path.

There is no lamp for our feet apart from the word of God. Don't be drawn in to false wisdom. Don't be drawn in to the new trends that say society is changing, and we must do this, and we must do that.

We must present Christ this way. We must present Christ that way. Folks, present Christ as Christ presents himself in the word of God.

Now, Medo-Persia is the last place of captivity. Now, Medo-Persia was a rather benevolent conqueror. It was a kingdom where the king Cyrus said to the people of God, Well, you can stay or you can go.

It's a place of peaceful coexistence. We won't bother you and you don't bother us. You see, Medo-Persia really represents the true power of spiritual defeat.

I heard an illustration one time of a dog who had been so long in a cage that a kind man came along and opened the door and said, You can leave, but he had just been there so long. He was defeated. He didn't know what freedom was.

He didn't know the head extended towards him would feed him and care for him and take him home. He had no knowledge of this. He'd just been in the cage for too long.

And you see, after all of these kingdoms that many of God's people had passed through, they're finally beaten and defeated. And even those who got up and headed back, well, many of them don't finish. That's the power of spiritual defeat.

Many just won't go back. They're convinced of their defeat before they even start. They've been just so long under these dominions and kingdoms, so long in these schools of false thought, so long oppressed by their backgrounds and their own natural minds and their own voices and their own cultures and everything else that comes that is not God, that when freedom comes, they can't embrace it.

When God comes and says, I'm going to rebuild you and I'm going to dwell in you, they literally can't believe it. And they just don't move. And that's what the enemy wants for all of God's people.

Get us to a place, get God's people to a place where freedom is made available, but they won't move. Cyrus issued a decree. Hundreds of thousands now are in Babylon, perhaps even more.

Only 50,000 have the courage to get up and make the journey back. It's really only a remnant of the number that were actually in Babylon, who have the courage to get up and go back. And even those initially don't finish because the power of spiritual defeat has gotten into them.

Spiritual defeat is contrary thinking to the word of God. It's fear instead of faith. It's unbelief that says God is able to do this sort of.

And then when opposition arises, as Christ said in the New Testament, many are offended and they turn away from the word that was sown within their hearts. Zechariah, again, chapter one and verse 20. He says, I'm I'm going to send four carpenters to you to fray them and cast out their power.

And the Lord showed me four carpenters. And then I said, what come these to do? And he spake, saying, now these are the horns. Now, of course, he's going backwards initially in verse 21.

He's talking about these four kingdoms. These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man could lift up his head. In other words, these are the powers that came against my people and so caused them to drop their heads in discouragement that hardly a man can lift his head anymore.

He said among my people. But these these are the carpenters are come to fray them and to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it. The Lord says, I'm going to do something.

I'm going to send four carpenters. It seems kind of feeble, doesn't it? Really? Four empires come to produce this sense of not being able to lift the head or believe God. And you would think that four empires would have to come in a sense to counterbalance it.

I see four men heading down the road. There may be two men, two women. I don't know.

And they're carrying a toolbox and they're given a skill by God. The closest I can give you to this is Michael Bean, say, for only two or three years, sitting in church in Texas, hears that there's this great need in Central America and shows up at the pastor's office on Monday morning. And he said he had a toolbox in his hand and he only knew how to do plumbing and different odd jobs on the side.

But he said, I believe God's sending me there. The pastor wasn't there. So he said to the person at the church, when he does come, tell him I've gone.

He had heard a missionary. He'd heard about the need. He said, tell him I've gone.

And if you were to look at the natural, here's this area in Central America that is at war. There are guerrilla rebels massacring people. There's the drug trade is flourishing.

Societies are perishing. There's people in the mountains living in abject spiritual poverty and ignorance. And what kind of a force would you send into that area to make a difference? I see a man getting off a plane with a toolbox in his hand.

And if you know his story, arrested as it is or stopped by guerrilla soldiers brought into buildings where they were going to execute him. And all he would say to them is, can't we have a coffee together and talk this over before you shoot me? God would protect him. And now today, through this man and through his wife and family is one of the greatest miracle transformations that I'm aware of in a particular culture or society today.

Education has come. Medicine has come. A sense of law and order has come.

There is running water. The people know how they now have an industry, no longer drugs. But there's a natural industry happening among the people.

The provision of God has flowed in. The prosperity of God has come in. And now various secular magazines even want to do articles on this because it is really a modern day transformation.

How did it happen? A carpenter showed up, got off a plane with a toolbox in his hand. Three years in God. No professional training, but a deep imbibing confidence in the God who had sent him.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. That's why the scripture says you must consider your calling.

Not many mighty, not many noble are called. Not many wise, not many strong. But God has chosen the weak things of the world and things which are despised to bring to naught things that are.

Oh, folks, not only does he call us, but he equips us. We're not called just to survive. We're called to build.

We're not called just to win small victories. We're called to be conquerors in our Savior. Hallelujah.

In Second Chronicles, chapter two, when Solomon built the first temple, the scripture tells us that the Lord sent to him cunning and skilled craftsmen. And these craftsmen came throughout all the land at that time of Israel. And they began.

They were skilled in what they would do. And there were iron workers and there were carpenters among them. There were people who could work in silver and gold and brass to build this temple of the Lord.

But above them all, Solomon had sought out a man, a master craftsman. And this master craftsman came from the land of Tyre. And Solomon, I'm only assuming in the scriptures, but it appears that Solomon placed him over the workers because he was seeking out a master carpenter.

I find it interesting that in Zechariah, in chapter one, verse 20, he says, The Lord showed me four carpenters are coming to turn back the tide of all of this captivity. Four carpenters walking in. And through these four carpenters, the Lord says, I'm going to break the yoke of Assyria, Medo-Persia, Babylon and Egypt off of my people.

Not only break it, he said, I'm going to scatter them. I'm going to cause them to be afraid and they're going to start fleeing from you. They're going to flee from your minds.

Hallelujah. It's amazing when you see it. Now, the only New Testament type I can see of this are the five foundational ministries in the church.

In Ephesians, chapter four, verse 11, he gave some apostles and prophets and pastors and evangelists and teachers for the perfecting of the body. Their purpose is to minister to the saints, to bring us to the measure of the knowledge of the stature that we're supposed to have in our Christ. But why then, if this is a type of the New Testament church, and I do believe that everything in the Old Testament does point to Christ and his church.

If this is a type, then why just four carpenters? And I was meditating on this and that's all it is, is a meditation. I want to just throw it out to you. Could it be that the master carpenter was not yet born? There

was a fifth carpenter that was coming.

I always wondered, God, why was Jesus a carpenter? Why was that his trade? There had to be a significance. I've heard all the theories about how he could take wood and fashion it. And there's a lot of truth to that.

But scripture interprets scripture. It's not just God flipping through the Rolodex and saying, well, what will my son do for a living? As if he had to do anything for a living. He's the master carpenter that is set over all the other carpenters who are going to build the temple.

And they're going to build the temple because they're going to have a supernatural empowerment of God. They're going to have wisdom the world doesn't possess. They're going to have strength the world knows nothing about.

They're going to come with the word of truth and an empowerment of the Holy Spirit. And they're going to put to flight all of these weapons, all of these captivating powers that have found a dwelling place in the minds and hearts of the people of God. Now, Zechariah 12:1 says that these carpenters will fray the powers of captivity.

And the word fray means to shake or to terrify. It means to cause to quake as in an earthquake. In other words, there's going to be this incredible shaking.

These carpenters are going to walk into the scene and everything of hell is going to begin to shake. Everything of captivity is going to be set on notice. There's going to be a power in them because they're not walking in their own strength.

They're walking in the strength that the master carpenter has given to them. Hallelujah. They are skilled, all of them, in the skill that God has given to them.

And they're walking in the divine order of that skill. And as they go in, the powers of hell that have been entrenched in the minds and hearts of God's people begin to tremble. And they begin to shake and they begin to be terrified by the simplicity of God working through a church in Jesus Christ.

Oh, Paul said, I fear that your mind should be converted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Matthew chapter 27, I'm going to close with this. Verse 51, speaking about the master carpenter, he says it this way.

Verse 50 says, Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. Verse 51, and behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain or torn in two from the top to the bottom. And the earth did quake and the rocks rent.

And the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose. And came out of the graves after his resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared unto many. Now, when the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, truly, this was the son of God.

Remember, these carpenters are going to cause a shaking. They're going to cause people to be powers of evil, to be terrified. They're going to cause them to quake as in an earthquake.

The veil of the temple was rent to the earth did quake and the rocks rent. And the graves, and I see this as the places where the powers of captivity had placed people. The power of death would put you in a grave long before you're dead, folks.

Spiritual defeat is a grave. It will put you in the grave and roll a stone over you and then walk away, saying, well, we've got this one. He's been just so long in this condition, no chance he'll even try to get out.

So we'll just leave him there till he's dead because he's already dead anyway. I can see the devil and all his evil cohorts just walking away and going on to battle with the next one that looks like they might be rebuilding something on the foundation of Christ. But the Scripture says that after Jesus cried, after the rocks and the earth began to quake, graves were opened and the bodies of the saints, many bodies of the saints which slept arose.

Hallelujah, folks. I do believe with all my heart that when you fully see Jesus and what he has done for you, when you fully let his word get into your heart, when you fully abandon yourself and begin to hear the voice of God one more time, just like these who had given up, but the voice of God came to them through Zechariah and through Haggai, they recognize it was the voice of God. They had no more promises than you have today, but the promises they had were as powerful as the ones that you have.

They came back and they began to build again. And in short measure, the temple was finished. And folks, this was the temple that Christ himself bodily came to.

Thank God for that. The graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept arose. And I believe in God with all my heart that that's going to happen this morning.

I believe it's going to happen throughout the day today. The graves are going to open and some of you that have gone to sleep, you're going to get up again. Hallelujah.

You're just going to get up and you can say, God, I don't understand it all. But like Lazarus, I hear you calling me. I hear you calling me to something deeper, fuller, farther than where I am.

I hear you calling me out of death and into your life. I understand you have a purpose for my life. You have a plan for my life.

And God Almighty, I've failed. But I see in your scripture that mercy is going to rebuild my life. You will not hold me to the things that I've done.

You are willing to forgive if I confess my sin. You're faithful and just to forgive my sin and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. I will rise up.

I will get out of this place of death. Many of the saints which slept arose. This is an hour where the church of Jesus Christ has to rise up and receive her calling one more time.

This is a grave hour. It's a dark hour. This is an oppressive hour when all of humanity is moving quickly into rebellion against God.

It is a season where the church must come out of the grave one more time. The scripture says they went into the holy city, the place where God dwells, and appeared unto many. They rose up.

They went in to where God's people are. Hallelujah. And they appeared, which really means they were made manifest.

The reality was that Christ had raised them out of the grave. They were brought out of despair. They were brought out of defeat.

They were brought out of limitations. In spite of education, in spite of language, in spite of culture, they had become skilled craftsmen. They took their place in the battle in the house of God.

They knew how to keep rank. They walked in the gifts that they were given by God. And great glory came to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ through them.

The message that God gave me this morning is for those who have given up, or you're close to giving up. You feel powerless. You feel worthless.

You feel hopeless in becoming what God intended you to be. You feel like you've fallen to the floor, and you're of no value. You could never be used of God again.

Once I was in the Master's hand, but I've fallen. I've failed. I'm just so limited.

I have hardly anything left of value. Now, this may seem odd, but the Lord gave me a poem to go with this message. I wrote it a couple of days ago.

You remember the scripture where the crumbs which had fallen from the Master's table became a source of faith for a woman who needed deliverance for her home? Now, when I read this, I'm not calling you a crumb, so please don't misunderstand that. What shall become of the handful of crumbs gathered from the Master's table? A strong hand does embrace them. Alas, some have fallen, the floor with the lowly they're calling.

Yet what shall become of these crumbs? Unworthy, unlovely, fallen, despised, says one filled with hate. Fainting surprise. Their pitiful condition is just plain to see.

These crumbs, every one, are for me. The dogs start to gather, lips smacking with glee, when a woman of faith says, these crumbs are for me. With tender compassion, the Lord says, you may.

The devourer once more slinks away in dismay. Yet what shall become of these crumbs? Though feeble and faltered, they all start to see. Through them, healing flows, meeting deepest of need.

A mother, a daughter, a family set free through things once discarded like you and like me. Though often we've wandered from where we should be, the mercy of God continues to lead. Forever, the blind, the maimed, and the dumb find new life in Christ through a handful of crumbs.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. If you feel like giving up, but yet you hear the voice of God calling you, would you meet me here? Would you let God touch your life again? Could we just pray together? Could we just believe that one more time you can go back in God's strength, and not only be rebuilt, but be a vessel of healing in the name of your Christ? Would you stand in the annex, please? You can go and stand between the screens, if you will, in the main sanctuary. Please come and join me here if the Holy Spirit is calling you.

And we're going to pray together. And we're going to believe God. We really want the people here who have felt like giving up, the people who have given up.

In some area of your life, you just said, it's hopeless, I'll never have the victory. You bought the lie, and you've given up. We're going to pray today, and you're going to overcome the power of spiritual defeat.

You will not be defeated. You will not be defeated. Hallelujah.

I was watching just a few of you as you came down the aisles today, and I could see the struggle. I saw one person come partway, stop, come a little more, stop. It's been a struggle just even to get here.

You just came a few feet at a time. And the whole time, the enemy is trying to pull you back, saying, it's hopeless, it's hopeless, it's hopeless. But God says, I've returned to you with mercy.

No matter what you've done, or where you've been, or how you've failed, I've come back to you with mercy. See, folks, you couldn't hear this today if God wasn't for you. It wouldn't make any sense to you.

You'd be completely unmoved by everything that you've heard today. The fact that you have come shows that you can hear. And if you can hear, you must hear this.

God says, I've come to you with mercy. Mercy. Mercy to cover your failure.

Mercy to cover your failing. Mercy to take the shattered remnants of what you have as a life and put it together into something that will truly glorify God. And he says, my house shall be built in you.

I'm going to live in you. Now, if you're a Christian, he's already there. If you're not, he will come when you confess your sin and your need of him and determine in your heart that you want to walk away from sin and live for God.

He will come. But he says, I'm already there. And I am, my house is going to be built.

Be built in mercy and I'm going to live there. And he said, I've stretched out a line already over your life. I already know the borders of your life.

And if you will just open your heart, I'm going to make you into somebody that is so different from anything you've even thought or imagined. There will come a shout of glory into your heart that the band could be off key, the choir could be out sick and it won't matter to you. You will be shouting and dancing in the house of God.

You will know that it's the hand of God that has changed you. You'll move away and you say, no longer am I going to live in spiritual defeat. I'm not I'm not embracing the theology of defeat.

I'm not going to a halfway place in my God. I'm I'm moving into everything that Christ bought for me and everything that God has determined my life to be. I'm going to trust him to do it now.

God says, I will do it. I will do it. He's not a man that he should lie.

The scripture says he cannot lie to his people. And the things that he said he will do, he will do. Now, Father, I thank you, Lord, for faith that has arisen in the hearts of so many who are discouraged and giving up.

The Lord is in Zechariah's day. People began to build again. And you weren't angry because they stopped.

You understand the frailty of our condition. You encouraged them and they started again. And a magnificent temple was built.

Oh, God. I ask you, Lord, that the people have come to this altar today and the people who are here in heart that magnificent temples be built. Magnificent.

That the angels of heaven would look down and see the work that you alone can do, Jesus. And they would look into our lives and say, magnificent work of God, a magnificent temple has been raised. God, thank you.

God Almighty, thank you. Pray with me, Lord Jesus. I come to you in all of my frailty and all of my fear.

But today I've heard you and I trust your voice. And I believe in my heart that everything you said that you would do for me and through me, you will do. Thank you today for giving me courage one more time to rise up and begin to build.

To begin to study and pray and believe that you are well able to do in me everything you have promised for my life. I believe that in me you are going to have a magnificent temple. God, thank you.

I will sing. I will shout in your house. I will dance in your presence.

God Almighty, thank you. Now, thank him. Just thank him with all your heart.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! This is the conclusion of the message.

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