

Ezra #3: Reasons for an Incomplete Temple, Part 1

by Ed Miller

The sermon discusses the reasons for an incomplete temple, including the human impossibility of building and completing it, the enemy of discouragement, the enemy of fear, the enemy of frustration, and the enemy of emptiness and dissatisfaction.

Duration: 59:33

Scripture: Daniel 2:22-23, Micah 4:7, Zechariah 4:8, Zechariah 4:10

Topics: "Temple"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker starts by discussing the reasons why the work on the temple stopped in Ezra chapter 4. He explains that the people were forced to stop by the government, who had weapons and threatened to kill them. The speaker then turns to Zechariah chapter 4 and highlights the importance of not despising the day of small things. He references the vision of the seven-pronged candlestick and the two olive trees, explaining that these represent the characteristics of those who have come to the foundation but have not built. The speaker emphasizes that the secrets of temple building lie in understanding these principles.

Transcript

Well, good evening, brothers. How quickly these gatherings go away. Am I wired? Once again, it's a privilege to be able to open this book and to seek the face of the Lord.

I want to share a Bible verse before we pray that sort of drives home that indispensable principle, total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. And it's in the book of Daniel, after Daniel and his friends called on the Lord for help and for light, for revelation concerning that dream. And Daniel made this comment, Daniel chapter 2, verses 22 and 23.

It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things. He knows what's in the darkness. Light dwells within.

To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you've given me wisdom and power, even now you've made known to me what we have requested of you. And I like to put those two verses together because sometimes if we just take the one, we say light is with the Lord and He reveals the profound and hidden things and darkness is opened up by the Lord. But then Daniel makes this point in the next verse.

He says, you've made known what we have requested of you. God is ready to reveal when we are ready to request. And He waits for us to ask.

He waits for us to seek. He always waits for us to seek. Of course, He works it in our heart and He draws us.

But let's respond to the Lord and ask Him to show us what is on His heart. Dave, could you lead us in prayer tonight? Thank you. Amen.

And I add faith to that prayer and say amen as well. To save time and not get into a lot of review, I want to sort of pick up right at the end of where we left off in our discussion this morning. Namely, we are looking at a group we are calling the escaped remnant.

God calls them the escaped remnant. People who had certainly been set free, wonderfully saved, now set free from the chastening they had to endure because they were so resisting rest. But now that's over.

And they've said yes to the Lord and His invitation. And they're coming back. And they're on a pilgrimage.

And they've returned from the land of confusion to the city of peace. This is a people that have been set free. This is a people that have stood at the altar.

They have understood a little bit of the finished work. And twice a day, every day, they took their place as death-deserving sinners before the Lord. A humble people.

A people who were united in the will of God. They knew why they were set free. And it had to do with the rebuilding of the temple.

They, together, had laid the foundation. They had their foundation. They were sort of doctrinally sound.

But sad, terrible sadness, a but. There they stopped. The work stopped.

The work ceased. As I suggested, not for moments or for days or weeks or months, but year after long year. That's as far as they had gotten.

Set free. Then to the altar. Had a foundation.

And then the work ceased. Let me give that passage again to get it before your hearts. Ezra chapter 4, please.

And we'll be back and forth from Ezra to Haggai and Zechariah. So you might want to bookmark those. Ezra 4, verse 23, When the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rahim and Shemshai the scribe and their companions, they went in haste to Jerusalem under the Jews, and they made them cease by force and power.

Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem, and it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. And once again, for the moment, we don't need all the details. For whatever happened, the fact is it did happen.

Something happened and the work stopped. And an incomplete temple is always a dishonor to the Lord. It doesn't satisfy Him.

It doesn't please Him. Even if we've had a great start. Even if we've been saved.

And even if we've been set free. And even if we have taken a stand on the finished work. And even if we are united together in one heart to build a temple.

And even if we have a foundation. If we have not learned the secrets of temple building, then the Lord is dishonored. And so the work stopped for many years.

Now, I told you that Ezra sort of gives us the outside story. In other words, it only hints at the spiritual motives that were taking place deep inside the hearts of this escaped remnant. But God waited patiently for 15 years.

And then He opened the heavens and He spoke to His two servants. Let me get that before your heart again to refresh your mind and then we'll begin to look at our new material. Ezra chapter 5 verse 1, And now the prophets Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem.

In the name of the God of Israel prophesied they unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jazadak and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem. And with them were the prophets of God helping them.

And you see from Ezra 5 verses 1 and 2 that whatever it was 15 years down the road, whatever it was that God told Haggai the old prophet, whatever it was that God told Zechariah the young man, the young prophet, when they rose up and told the remnant, that word was enough to revive them. And according to chapter 5 verses 1 and 2 they started again on the temple. Nothing else changed.

The circumstances were the same. The political circumstances, everything that caused them to stop continued. There was no change, but something changed.

And that word from heaven, that word from God through His servants touched their hearts and they were revived. They lived again and they went back to building. And now if you will look please at chapter 6 and verse 14.

And the elders of the Jews builded and prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built it and finished it according to the commandment of the God of Israel, according to the decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes the kings of Persia. Under these two men the work on the temple not only resumed, but it was brought to completion.

And so as I suggested this morning, I don't know when you study the Bible and you read something like that, if you're captured the same way I'm captured. But when I see a 15 year delay and apathy and they're just stuck. And all of a sudden God initiates.

They didn't pray for this. They didn't ask for this. They weren't seeking this.

They didn't think they were in any kind of problem. If you would have talked to them they would say we're spiritually, we're doing fine. We have no problems.

God bows the heavens and comes down and He says to His servants, I've got something that they need to know. And that was a living Word. Oh, praise God for a living Word.

I want to show you from Ezra before we look at God's real answers. God's real revelation of what the causes of the incomplete temple were. I want to show you the outside story.

If you look carefully enough you can see the shadow. You can see the hint. To make this crystal clear, let's work backwards.

That doesn't sound like it's going to make it crystal clear. In other words, I want to start from verse 24. Verse 24 of chapter 4. Verse 24 of chapter 4. The work stopped.

So I want to back up from there. That's where it stopped. Now I want to back up and say, why did it stop? And then I want to back up again.

Why did it stop? And by starting where they stopped and backing up, I think we'll be able to see clearly the outside story and the reasons that they would give. Ezra chapter 4, 23. They stopped them by force of arms.

Well, there's a clear answer. Why did you quit? They told us to. They made us.

They had weapons. They were going to kill us. But now think spiritually.

It's a matter of submitting to the government. Because they had a warrant. They had a decree from the government.

They had a spiritual reason. And so, if you were to ask them, how come you quit? They would say, because we're honoring the Lord. We went to see Ed Miller.

And Ed Miller gave us some counsel. We said, what should we do? They've come with weapons and they told us to stop. And Ed Miller said, well, don't you know your Bible? Romans chapter 13, verse 1. There's no government but of God.

Romans 13, 2. He that resists the government resists the ordinance of God. And so, we took his advice. And that's why we quit.

I think that's what I would have said. That sounded so right. The authorities come in.

You know, you're doing this or that. Or you're at a particular march or standing up for a righteous cause. Or making a public stand.

Or meeting in a certain place. And the authorities come and say, this is not allowed. What do you do? And so, that's one thing that they did.

After I read the real reasons in the Prophets. See, I just sort of read Ezra and just fact, la, la, la. Then I read the real reasons in the Prophets and I thought, I think I'll go back to Ezra.

And take another peek. Are there any hints? Are there any shadows of those deeper things? And there are. Now, I didn't see it in Ezra.

I saw it in the Prophets. And then I took what I saw in the Prophets and I came back and I looked at Ezra. And I thought, well, oh yeah.

I can see that. Let me just set a couple of those before you. Little shadows between the lines.

The remnant would be saying something like this. We know we've been called by God to build a temple. We're one in that conviction.

We stand as one man. And we've thrown ourselves into the work. We've already built the foundation.

Now, let me state it and you think spiritually, because this is the fact, but there's a principle here. We're all in favor of a completed temple, but we are not willing to die for a completed temple. Do you see there's a principle there? It's underneath.

Because the temple cannot be built and completed with a remnant that is not willing to die. And you know how that will be developed and the Prophets are actually going to develop that. Haggai, the old prophet, picked that up in chapter 1 of his book and verses 2 to 5. This people says the time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt.

You see, according to God, that's what God says they were saying. Now, they wouldn't have come right out and said it that way, but God said that's what they're saying. They weren't resisting the Lord.

They just said, it's not time. God closed the door. We'll get back to it.

It's just not the time. Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai, the prophet, saying, is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate? Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. And written all over this record is self.

Your house or his house? What's it all? See, they wouldn't have known that. They just said, no, we've got to submit to government. They came in, and that's what we're doing.

But if you look a little closer, and the prophets will pick it up, they were busy with all their own things and their own self, and they're not ready to lay down their life, and they're not ready to die. Back up again. Chapter 4, verse 4 and 5. Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah and troubled them in building, hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose.

All the days of Cyrus, king of Persia, until the reign of Darius, king of Persia. The people of the land weakened their resolve. Say, why'd you quit? Well, here's what they would say.

I'll tell you why we quit. People. Obstacles.

Circumstances. Persecution. People got in the way.

They came along, and they said this, and they did this. We'd be very busy building if it wasn't for people. I've talked to a lot of people that have quit.

Why'd you quit? You don't know my wife. Why'd you quit? My boss. Why'd you quit? The elders in my assembly.

Why'd you quit? My neighbor. Why'd you quit? My dearest friend. Why'd you quit? Others.

It's always them. Once again, if you look a little closer, there are many occasions for what they were experiencing. The prophet doesn't pick up on people.

In the New American Standard, Ezra chapter 4, verse 4 and 5 has three verbs in it. Discouragement. Fear.

And frustration. These people get me discouraged. This circumstance makes me so frustrated.

Why'd you quit? Frustration. But see, they wouldn't say frustration. They'd say people.

But the prophet, when he touches it, he says discouragement is an enemy of an incomplete temple. There are many occasions of discouragement. And the hint is there.

And so even when you read Ezra, after you've been to the prophet, you can pick up some of these hints. Back up again. Chapter 4, verse 6. In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

Okay, spiritual brothers. Think spiritually. Do you think anybody would be hindered in the building of the temple if there was an accusation against them? Does anybody accuse the remnant? Hold that for a moment.

Verse 12. Be it known unto the king that the Jews came up and are come to us and to Jerusalem. They're building the rebellious and the bad city.

They finished the walls and repaired the foundations. Be it known now to the king, if this city is builded, the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, toll, and in the end, it'll be hurtful to the king. These enemies come in and they have an accusation.

And the accusation is in writing. And where do they get it? Ezra 4, verse 19. And I decreed and search has been made.

It's found this city of old time has made insurrection against kings and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein. Now see, you just read that and that's just the history. But once you see the prophet and what he said is the real cause, and then you come back to the history, and the prophet calls attention to an accusation where somebody has gone in and dug up something in the past and condemned them with something in the past, and they're under condemnation.

That's why they quit. See, you don't really see that in Ezra. If you just read Ezra, we quit because we're submitting to the government.

We quit because circumstances got to such a place that we just couldn't handle it. Why do we quit? They wouldn't say, because we got so frustrated. They wouldn't come right out and say that.

They wouldn't admit that. They wouldn't say, because there is an enemy and I'm living under condemnation, and he's accused me by digging up something in the past, and that thing he's holding over my head. He wouldn't say that.

But the prophet does. The prophet sees deeper, and they're going to need to hear these things. Once again, we won't take this whole Samaritan thing that happens early in chapter 3. Rather, in chapter 4, they come, they want to help.

They're sort of the half-breeds. They're mixed. There's syncretism, and they take this rugged stand.

No, we'll do it ourselves. We're not going to compromise. See, that's spiritual.

And then there was all this opposition because they took a rugged stand. They did right by not compromising, but here's where they did wrong. They said, we'll do it ourselves.

They not only ruled out the Samaritans, they ruled out the Lord. We'll do it ourselves. And the prophet picks that up, see.

But they wouldn't have admitted that. And so there's the outside view, and then there's the inside view. For the remainder of this lesson, and Lord willing, tomorrow morning, I want us to look at the liberating word that God gave to His two servants, Haggai and Zechariah.

The true causes for an incomplete temple, and the perfect cure for each of those causes. We're going to look at four of those causes. For 15 years, God let the remnant go on with their rationalizations, and with their excuses, and with their spiritually sounding reasons.

And those 15 years, according to those verbs, were marked by discouragement, fear, frustration. And Haggai adds one more. Years of emptiness and dissatisfaction.

Haggai said God had sent during that 15 years a famine of satisfaction. Sometime when God deals with us, He just sends a famine. He takes it away.

You lose the job. The finances fall to pieces. You lose it.

They didn't lose it. They had it. They had enough food, and they went there in a cupboard, and it was full of food.

And they ate it, but they couldn't get full. And they had plenty of drink, and they drank it. But they couldn't slake their thirst, no matter how much they drank.

And they were cold, and the Bible says they put clothes on them. They had the clothes. They had the covering.

And they couldn't get warm. They couldn't get warm. And they earned money.

It was like putting it in a bag with holes in it. They had money. It's not like they lost their job.

They had a job. Good job. They had a lot of money.

They just put it in a bag with holes in it. You find someone, for God's reason, you find someone who has quit building, and I'll tell you right away, I know that life. They are discouraged.

They are afraid. They are frustrated, and they are miserable. Those are the characteristics that mark the person that has come all the way to the foundation and has not built.

God says, I can't take that anymore. I have an answer for them. They're not going to ask me, so I'll initiate.

I'll give it. I want to set before your heart now the secrets of temple building. May God help us.

Now, brothers, what you're about to hear is not new. I know many of you have heard it hundreds of times. Probably some thousands of times.

One of the blessings of my heart this weekend was to see you young people here. I appreciate you coming here. You probably only heard it 50 times.

It's not new. It's not new. It wasn't new to them.

But they had to hear it in such a way that they would live again. And so I'll never get tired of proclaiming these wonderful truths, even though you've heard them a thousand times, because I'm trusting God to cause us to live again and give us a little reviving in our bondage. Now, don't put any stock on the order.

There's more than four causes of an incomplete temple. I had to reduce it in order to fit it into this little weekend. So we're looking at some of the chief causes.

Don't put any stock on the order in which I'm giving them. It isn't like cause number one. That's the first reason that people throw in the towel.

And then the second. Any one of these or any combination of these is cause to quit, cause to stop building the temple. I want you to know also, remember also, in the context of Ezra, it's not willful sin.

Now, perhaps in your life or you know somebody else who quit building because of rebellion. They're just plain old backsliders. They said no to the Lord.

I don't care what God says. I want to do my own thing. I don't care about God.

I don't care about His will, His purpose, His pleasure. I don't care about that. Now that happens, but that's not in Ezra.

Ezra's not talking about the stiff-necked, hard-hearted remnant. He's talking about the struggling remnant who wants to get it right. He wants to please God.

He said yes. He's come back. And God is writing not only their history, but a Bible.

He's laying out these truths for us. So we praise God for their history. But this is not rebellion.

This is somebody who's just struggling to know the ways of God. All right, let me state it as a truth and then try to illustrate it for you. I ask you to turn to Haggai chapter 1, please.

Let me just state the first cause of an incomplete temple. Again, first doesn't mean much. One cause of an incomplete temple.

A cause of an incomplete temple is the human impossibility of building and completing the temple. Haggai chapter 1, verse 7, Thus says the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain.

Bring wood. Rebuild the temple, that I might be pleased with it and glorified, says the Lord. Don't read that la-la-la.

This isn't just go rebuild the temple. This is go rebuild Solomon's temple. And there were some survivors who had remembered Solomon's temple.

You know anything about Solomon's temple? Some of you brothers from Brisbane have been studying the kings and so on. Some of the history books, you've read a little bit about that. When God gave the command to build a tabernacle, not the temple, the tabernacle, He raised up two men, Basaliel and

Aholiab, gave them special gifts, skilled with wisdom and power and so on.

They had an installment from heaven in order to carry on the work. 1 Kings chapter 5 to 8 tells about Solomon's temple. Listen as I read these verses.

King Solomon levied forced laborers from all Israel. This is 1 Kings 5, 13 to 18. And the forced laborers numbered 30,000 men.

He sent them to Lebanon 10,000 a month in relays. They were in Lebanon a month and two months at home. And Adoniram was over the forced laborers.

And Solomon had 70,000 transporters and 80,000 hewers of stone in the mountain. Besides Solomon's 3,300 chief deputies who were over the project and ruled the people who were doing the work. The king commanded and they quarried great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house of the Lord with the cut stones.

And so Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gabaonites cut them and prepared timbers, stones to build the house. If you do the math, more than 185,000 people worked, if you include all of the courts and the royal buildings, 185,000 people worked for 20 years to build Solomon's temple. And that doesn't take into account the men, the cost, the time that David put into the temple before Solomon got to it.

Listen to 1 Chronicles 22, Behold, with great pains I have prepared for the house of the Lord a hundred thousand talents of gold, one million talents of silver, bronze and iron beyond weight, great in quantity, timber and stone I have prepared, and you may add to them. Moreover, there are many workmen with you, stone cutters, masons of stone, carpenters, men who are skillful in every type of work. Of the gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, there is no limit, so rise and work.

May the Lord be with you. Solomon's temple was magnificent. It was breathtaking.

It was a testimony in all the earth. They came from all over the world to see this thing. The adornments, the magnificent detail, the sculpture that was in this temple, the chambers, the pillars, the gates, the porches, the bars, the courts, the building, the furniture, the gorgeous edifice.

In the Holy of Holies alone, there was more than 20 million dollars just in gold. Just in the Holy of Holies. I listened to the command again.

50,000 people just come back from slavery. Who are they? They're a bunch of nobodies. Just a handful of nobodies, a bunch of slaves that just got set free.

Now they have heart. They love the Lord. And they don't have any tools.

And they don't have any skills. And they don't have any special gifts. And there wasn't a holy among them.

There was no bazillion there. Just a bunch of people that got together to say yes to God. They're not architects.

They're not carpenters. They're not stonemasons. 185,000 people worked for 20 years to build the temple.

And they get a word. Arise. Go to the mountain.

Get wood. Rebuild the temple. And then God adds that I might be pleased with it and glorified, says the Lord.

Wow. What kind of a command is that? How would you feel if you received that word from the Lord? Go up to the mountain. Get wood.

In Newport, we have many mansions. Tourists come from everywhere to see these, you know, the Vanderbilt place and the Astor. We've got the Breakers and the Marble House and the Elms and some of these great mansions.

If one of those mansions was reduced to ashes and I got a word from the Lord, Ed Miller, arise. Go to the mountain. Get wood.

Rebuild the Breakers. All 70 rooms. I'll tell you, I couldn't rebuild the stables.

Couldn't rebuild the carriage house. I couldn't rebuild the gate. Let's say you received the word.

The word of the Lord comes to you tonight. Rise up. Go to the mountains.

Get wood. Rebuild the Twin Towers. Go to Ground Zero.

Rebuild it. See how impossible that is? And according to the prophet, they were despising the day of small things. See, that was underneath.

They didn't come right out and say, why are you quitting? But that's why they were quitting, because this whole thing was so impossible. And that's part of the reason that the older men were weeping when they had the foundation. The young guys saw the foundation.

They said, oh, this is great. But the older men remembered what the real one was like. You don't know great.

You don't know great. This is not great. This, brothers, is the real reason that earnest Christians quit.

They throw in the towel because they discover that the Christian life is impossible. It's not possible to live. You might as well try to repair, rebuild the Twin Towers than to have a forgiving spirit.

You might as well try to build the Twin Towers than to have a love for your enemies and turn the other cheek and go the second mile. Count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations. And you try to love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.

In everything and for everything give thanks. Did you ever try it? After a while it's going to come across as, go up to the mountains, get wood, rebuild the temple. That I might be pleased, that I might be glorified.

How about this? Did you ever get this command? Be perfect like your Father in heaven is perfect. I don't want to play with this, brothers. But no wonder they quit.

No wonder they quit. The realization of what the Christian life is and what the standards are. Have you seen the Christian life? Don't answer.

Have you seen the Christian life as impossible? You say not yet. You will. You will just try to keep living it.

You will. And I'm not a prophet and I don't have any prophetic gifts. But let me prophesy what's going to happen when you find out.

You're going to throw in the towel. Unless, unless, unless God has a Haggai for you. Or unless He has a Zachariah for you.

Unless He's opened the heavens, given a word so that you can go back and build. Because I'll tell you, without that heavenly secret that He's about to give, everybody who's honest has to throw in the towel. You ask an honest Christian, why'd you quit? You were doing so well.

Man, you tasted liberty. You were set free. I remember your testimony.

I heard you. I saw you when you were free. And you were the one on all those identification truths.

You stood at the altar. You believed in the blood and in the cross, in the substitutionary everything of our Lord Jesus. I saw you.

I heard you. You had a foundation. You were grounded.

What happened? And if they're honest, they'll say, look, I tried it. Honest, I tried it. It didn't work.

It didn't work. I didn't try it once or twice or three or four or five times. I tried it over and over again.

I made resolutions, thousands of them. I made vows that I kept breaking. I kept dedicating myself and rededicating myself.

Now, at this point, at that discovery of the impossibility of the Christian life, go to the mountain, get wood, rebuild the temple that I might be pleased and glorified, at the discovery of that, usually there's two kinds of Christians in the world. The first kind are those who try to solve the problem. Those who try to work their heads off and they get this idea, if God commands it, it must be able to be done.

If I must, I may. He wouldn't tell me to do something I couldn't do. And so they begin to dig in a little harder and try a little harder and surrender a little more and dedicate themselves a little more and resolve a little more and make more promises and make more vows, make more determinations and more resolutions.

They begin to run after every spiritual gift that they could ever find, every experience anyone has ever had. If I'm more sincere, if I'm more earnest, if I pray more, if I fast more, if I study more, if I'm more disciplined, if I attend more, if I associate more, if I get more involved, if I serve more, if I sacrifice more. And at the end of all of that, and I know about that because I lived that nightmare for seven years, I'll tell you, over and over and over again, trying and failing and weeping and repenting and rising and resolving again and falling on my face over and over and over again because the Christian life is impossible.

And then on the other side, there are those who say, I've seen it. It's impossible. You can't live it.

God never commanded me to do anything I can do. And therefore, for me, from now on, hands off. It's God's work.

It's God's temple. Christ said He's going to build the church. He's going to build the temple.

I can't build a temple. Just like He said one day, let there be light, He can say, let there be temple. And at His Word, in a moment of time, all the rubbish will blow away and all the marble stones will come together

like the bones in Ezekiel 37, and the temple will go up.

Hands off from me. I'm not going to try anymore. The Christian life is over.

Brothers, I tried that too. When I discovered I couldn't do it, I said, all right, let God do it. That remedy is just as futile as trying to do it yourself.

See, that's the inside picture. And it's further frustrated. The Christian life is impossible.

I can't live it. And He won't. Now I've got a problem.

And if I don't have God's answer to that problem, it's just going to be a foundation. I still love the Lord. I'm still going to heaven when I die.

I'll never build. I can't build. Because I tried it and it didn't work.

And I gave it to Jesus and that didn't work either. And so God speaks to His prophet. He says, they need a work.

They need a revelation from heaven. Let me give you God's answer to that tremendous problem. The reason people quit.

They discover how impossible it is that they can't do it and God won't. Turn to Zechariah chapter 4, please. Verse 8. The word of Jehovah came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house.

His hands will also finish it. Interesting verse. And thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you, Who has despised the day of small things.

For these seven shall rejoice and see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. These are the eyes of Jehovah which run to and fro throughout the whole earth. Verse 10.

Who has despised the day of small things. See, that's what they were doing. That's why they needed this word.

They looked at themselves. A humble people. Inadequate.

Small gifts. Small resources. Weak.

They said, we'll never build a temple. Brothers, as you know, God has always blessed the day of small things. Don't despise the day of small things.

That little baby's cry, Moses. That little baby in the basket. Changed the destiny of a world.

That little cry. The shepherd's rod. The ox goad.

The jawbone of a donkey. Child's sling. A little boy's lunch.

A widow's mite. He's always used the day of small things. Weak.

Helpless. I love Micah chapter 4 verse 7. It's one of those plaque verses. It said, I will make the lame a remnant.

And the Lord will reign over them from this day on and forever. I'll make the lame a remnant. And the Lord will reign over them.

He wants to reign over a kingdom of cripples. He desires to reign over the lame. What a marvelous, marvelous verse.

Now don't think that God's going to take the day of small things and because you trust Him, He's going to turn it into a day of great things. The day of small things will always be a day of small things. He will never take an inadequate person and make that person adequate.

He doesn't use adequate people. He only uses inadequate people. You're going to stay inadequate and I'm going to stay inadequate.

You'll be helpless until the day you die. He doesn't make the weak strong. He doesn't make the fearful courageous.

He doesn't make the foolish wise. When I'm weak, then I'm strong. Not after I'm weak, then I'm strong.

When I'm weak, then am I strong. And so what's the encouragement? If I'm looking at myself as inadequate and I can't do it, and I'm weak and I'm helpless, I can't, He won't. Zechariah 4.10, the seven eyes of God will rejoice when He sees the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

Somehow I'm not out of it. Zerubbabel's not out of it. God said, you know what my eyes are waiting to see? I'm waiting to see Zerubbabel pick up the plumb line again.

I can't, He won't. What's the secret? And the answer is this, I can. I can.

You can. He won't. But we can.

Zechariah 4.6, you know it. I told you you heard it a million times. This He said to me, this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might nor by power.

Finish it. Brothers, what a verse. Get it in its context.

What a glorious truth. By my Spirit. There's no contradiction in verse 9 and in verse 6. Verse 9 says, the hands of Zerubbabel.

Verse 6 says, by my Spirit. The Spirit of God doesn't rule out the hand of man. Luke 11 verse 20 calls the Holy Spirit the finger of God.

I love to relate that to this because the finger of God never takes the place of the hand of man. In every true work of God, you're going to find the hand of man. That's how He does it.

It's our hand. It's His finger. Zechariah at this point was given a marvelous vision.

We're not going to take time to read it. You're familiar with it. Chapter 4 verses 1 to 14.

The vision of the seven-pronged candlestick. The vision of that golden lampstand. Seven flames of fire were kept brightly burning because they had a secret supply of flow of golden oil.

Zechariah 4 verse 3. In the vision, he sees two olive trees. Two olive trees. One on the right side of the bowl and one on the left side.

In the vision, what are those two olive trees? See in the middle there's this big bowl and there's pipes to the bowl and the bowl is coming to the lampstand and the golden oil is flowing. Verse 14. These two anointed ones.

These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth. It's irrevocable. And Joshua the high priest.

The two olive trees are the leadership in Jerusalem to build a temple. Say, well, they got what it takes to keep the fire burning. No, they don't.

They're inadequate. But they found a secret. They have a supply of golden oil.

We put so much attention on the lampstand. Pay attention to make sure the wick is right and the chimney is right and the lampstand is right and we polish the shaft and all that kind of thing. God's people have spent so much time burning the midnight oil, they forgot all about the golden oil.

This is about the golden oil. This is about the Holy Spirit. I like in the New American Standard, in the margin of verse 14, these two anointed ones are called sons of fresh oil.

What's a believer? He's a son of fresh oil. Do you want to get some life back in you? Do you want to build a temple? I'll tell you how you build a temple. You discover you can't do it.

You discover he won't do it. And then discover that but together you can. And that you can be a son of fresh oil.

And the Spirit of God has come to live in your heart in order to live through you. Your hands. God's waiting for your hand to pick up the tool.

But it's not your, it's your duty, but it's His power. It's His life. And it's that secret.

I promise you, if you don't know that secret, somewhere along the line, you're thrown in the towel. But if you learn that secret, that God has given His own life, His Holy Spirit to live in me, and He's the one that's going to do the work, I tell you, you're going to start building again. That is one of the first secrets of living the Christian life.

I can't do it. He won't do it. But together, God, Christ in me, by His Holy Spirit, we can do it in union together.

Let me give one final illustration to drive this home. As you know, Joshua was a high priest. When these brothers over here, Haggai and Zechariah, received the Word, I could just see the group as, here come the prophets again, the old guy and the young guy.

And they got something to tell us. This one was frightening on the level of earth. Because Joshua became an object lesson.

And he said, Joshua, you come over here. You stand in front of these people. We're going to do something with you.

So the high priest comes over, you know. He got a word from God. What's going to happen? As you know, in the Bible, in the Old Testament, one of the things that was forbidden was the mixing of the king's office and the priest's office.

If you were a priest, you couldn't be a king. If you were a king, you couldn't be a priest. You couldn't have a crown on your head and a censer in your hand.

Couldn't do both. Saul tried it and got in a lot of trouble. Uzziah tried it and he became a leper because he tried to invade the priest's office.

So Zechariah gets this strange word from God. He says, there's your high priest. I want you to make a crown and put it on his head.

I wonder what Joshua said. Whoa, whoa, whoa. Let's not go there.

But he had a word from God. I want you to see it. It's in chapter 6, please.

Try to picture this. Verse 11. Zechariah 6, 11.

Take silver and gold. Make an ornate crown. And set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, the high priest.

Now listen to what he's to say as he does this. Say to him, thus says the Lord of hosts. Behold, a man whose name is the branch.

For he will branch out from where he is. He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is he who will build the temple of the Lord.

He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on his throne. Thus, he will be a priest on his throne. And the council of peace will be between those two offices.

Who's the branch, brothers? Even back then. God gives this marvelous illustration. And Joshua is given this crown.

And for a moment of time, God takes the two offices and brings them together. And before the people, you want to know how to build a temple? You need to see a royal priest. And Joshua stands there as a royal priest.

And he says, the branch is coming. That's Jesus. He'll build a church.

That's how it's going to be built. He's going to do it. You say, well, then my hands are out of it.

No, they're not. It's your hands. It's his life.

He's going to use you. I tell you, if you don't know that secret, very soon you're going to throw in the towel. You have to.

Because you can't do it. Say, well, I'll just let the Lord do it. He won't do it.

You can and He won't. But if you learn the secret, the branch, Christ in me, by His Holy Spirit, not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord, I tell you, you'll live again. You'll live again.

Thousands of Christians have embraced that single truth and have gone back to building the temple and going forward with the Lord. Now that's not the only hindrance. The impossibility of the Christian life, that's one.

They had others. And He had other solutions. Now because I spent so much time on this, I left myself a rather large assignment for the morning.

Because we're going to look at the other three causes of an incomplete temple and God's perfect answer for each of those. Every one as perfect as this. The Holy Spirit is God's solution to the incomplete temple.

May God work it in us. Let's pray. Father, we know that by Your Word we are sons of fresh oil.

How we praise You for that truth. How we thank You that You haven't left us on our own to do the impossible thing. But You've commanded us to stretch forth our withered hand.

And it is restored by Your power. Lord, You revive us as You caused that little boy to revive. You put life in him.

Thank You, Lord. Thank You, Holy Spirit, for life. Thank You for the Holy Spirit who now pushes out the death and causes us to live.

Will You work these things in our heart, we pray, and prepare us that we might offer You a complete temple. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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