

# God's Way of Doing Things

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala emphasizes the necessity of relying on the Holy Spirit for the work of God rather than human strength or resources.*

**Duration:** 36:40

**Scripture:** Zechariah 4:6-10, Matthew 28:19-20

**Topics:** "God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses a vision that the prophet Zechariah had, which is a message to Zerubbabel and to all believers. The vision includes a solid gold lampstand with seven lamps and two olive trees. The angel explains that this vision represents the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, emphasizing that the work of God cannot be accomplished by human might or power, but only by the Spirit of God. The speaker applies this message to believers today, emphasizing the importance of preaching the gospel and expanding the kingdom of Christ, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit rather than human resources.

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## Transcript

There's three books at the end of the Old Testament that are called post-exile books. They are Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. All the other prophets prophesied to the people of God in the land of Israel, but before they went into captivity, because they had worshiped idols and not served God, because they rejected the call of the prophets, the word of the Lord that came to them, which said to the people, turn back to me, serve me, don't serve false gods, don't break my commandments, serve me and it'll go well with you.

People didn't want to listen. First, the northern kingdom of Israel went into captivity to the Assyrian empire, and then almost a couple hundred years later, the southern kingdom, the cousins, hadn't learned at all, and the prophets plaintively cried to them, don't do this, don't turn away from God, but they did, and then God foretold through the prophets that they would go into captivity as a form of punishment and discipline. They would be taken out of the land of Israel.

Sure enough, the Babylonian empire surrounded, under Nebuchadnezzar, surrounded not just the southern kingdom, they surrounded Jerusalem. They cut off food. The people were reduced to eating human flesh.

Horrible things happened, and they finally broke through the walls, and they came in and burned the temple to the ground, and looted and plundered, and the brightest, youngest people, the up-and-comers, were sent throughout the Babylonian empire. Divide and conquer was the idea. Don't leave people there who can ferment revolution and trouble.

So the land was left desolate for 70 years. There were a few people there to tend things, but Jerusalem was in ruins, the walls broken down. Well, just when the 70 years was coming to an end, God made it possible for people to return, to rebuild the temple, and rebuild Jerusalem, just as he foretold.

I'll send you away as punishment, but in mercy, I'll bring you back. So a cry went out, or an edict went out, under the Persian empire and Persian emperor that said, whoever is Jewish, Israelite, wants to go back, you can go back. But they were hundreds and hundreds of miles away from Israel.

They had been away for 70 years, so some of the younger ones had not even known what the land was like. But just about 50,000 brave souls, a remnant, trekked hundreds of miles westward from the Persian empire or wherever they were. They left their trade, their business, the way they were making money, and they brought their children and said, we must go back to the land of promise.

So that they did. They arrived in Israel, and it was a mess. It was desolation.

They started to first rebuild the walls so there would be safety. But from the very beginning, there was trouble for them because north of them were the Samaritan people. The Samaritans were kind of, to the Jews, a half-breed, low-life type of person.

You remember, Jesus was accused because at the well, he spoke to what kind of woman? A Samaritan woman. And Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. The Bible tells us they had this difficult task of rebuilding something that was broken.

You know, brothers and sisters, listen, the work of Christian ministry is hard because everyone is, we're trying to see Jesus rebuild broken lives. When you have a lot, and it's empty, and you can lay a foundation and build, that's easy compared to taking a building that's all broken down and fixing it up. Something that's messed up is much harder to put back together than just bare earth where you can build as you see fit.

Well, now they're back in the land, only 50,000. The rest of the people just said, look, I don't want to go back. I don't care.

I like where I live now in the Persian Empire. I'm making money. I open to dry cleaners, or I run a bodega, or whatever they were running.

And well, no bodegas then, but they were carrying on. What happened was they started building their houses, and we learned a few weeks ago that God had to raise up the prophet Haggai because God said through Haggai, what's going on? You're rebuilding your beautiful houses, but my temple is lying in ruins. How do you not honor me? You build your houses, but you don't build the temple.

And we learned that God is still building a temple today, but not a physical temple. God's not interested in any physical building. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Amen? Every time a person becomes a Christian, you can look at it two ways. The church is the spiritual temple, know you not, plural, that you, plural, are the temple of God. The spirit lives within you, or you can look at it individually.

God takes broken lives, like you'll see in the rescue, and he makes them temples of the Holy Spirit. Through Haggai, the people started to not care so much about their homes. They started to build the temple.

Now, Zerubbabel was the leader who went back, who was the governor. There was a high priest named Joshua, religious affairs, and then there was Zerubbabel, who was the governor, and he was in charge of, let's get this thing done. But look at me, everybody.

It's so hard when you do God's work, because whenever you do God's work, the devil will attack. There's no such a thing as easily building anything for God. The nature of what Christians are up against today, pastors, churches, that want to expand and preach the gospel is, the moment you step forward, forces come against you.

How many understand what I mean? Sure enough, as Zerubbabel tried to get the people to build and get the temple rebuilt, it was slow going. It was discouraging. And prophets were sent to encourage the people to do what God told them to do.

Not only were the Samaritans messing with them, the Samaritans first had an interesting strategy. They said, come, let us help you build. Let us work with you.

But they knew better. You can't trust these people. They're not the people of God.

They don't have the same intentions as we have. They don't want to glorify God. How can two walk together unless they be agreed? Then when the Samaritans were pushed away, they went and made trouble politically.

They went and sent a message back to Persia and said, you know, these Jews, they're troublemakers. They're rebuilding that temple. They put down your gods and they worship their own unique God.

So there was just trouble, man. It was just so hard. Zerubbabel had a lot on his hands.

And now, Zechariah, a contemporary of Haggai, comes on the scene. And now God raises up Zechariah, who has a number of visions in this long book called Zechariah. And this is one of the visions he has.

And it's a message to Zerubbabel, but it's a message to us for all time. Let's read it now. Then the angel who talked with me, Zechariah 4, returned and he woke me up like someone awakened from sleep.

And he asked me, what do you see in this vision? I answered, I see a solid gold lamp stand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it with seven channels to the lamps. Also, there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left. I asked the angel who talked with me, what are these, my Lord? He answered, do you not know what these are? No, my Lord, I replied.

So he said to me, this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord Almighty. What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel, you will become level ground. Then you will bring out the capstone to shouts of God bless it, God bless it.

Or really it could be in some translations, beautiful, beautiful, the end of the temple being built. Verse eight, then the word of the Lord came to me. Verse nine, the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this temple.

His hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. So let's get this picture and see what it means to us.

We get the context, discouragement. Zerubbabel has a task, but it's tough sledding. There's enemies, there's discouragement.

The temple looks so puny when they start building it compared to the Solomon's temple that had been knocked down. So Zechariah has this vision. And in this vision, he sees what we call a menorah.

He sees a seven pronged candlestick. Look, one coming up from the base here, and then three on either side, making for seven candles, all of solid gold. But then he also sees that, and this is where the commentators disagree.

The Hebrew sounds a little possibly confusing. For each one of the candlesticks that gives light, there has to be oil so that the light will keep burning. So for each one of these candlesticks, they're connected.

Not just one, each has a conduit to where the oil is. There's a big bowl of oil on top of these candlesticks, speaking to us that there's an abundant supply, the light will always keep burning because there's a bowl of oil. But not only is there a huge bowl of oil on top of it, there's either one conduit to each of the seven, or, which seems more likely, but it's a strange vision, there's seven conduits to each of them.

Seven times seven is 49. And there's just vast supply, vast things to transmit the oil, so that the candles will never go out. The flame will always be burning, there'll always be light.

Not only that, next to the bowl, as if the bowl isn't enough supply, there's two olive trees, as if to say there's a never-ending supply of what you need to keep that light shining. Now we know that oil in the Bible is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit. Water, wind, oil, those are three.

So, the prophet sees this, and he goes, what is this? He says to the angel, what does this mean? Big bowl on top of seven candles, conduits going, tubing, conveyors of the oil going all over the place, back up, and then in case the bowl ever got empty, two huge olive trees. And what's strange is when he asked the question, what does this mean, the angel doesn't even answer him. He delivers the word of the Lord, which is what I want to now briefly focus on.

So he says, don't you know what this means? Here's the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel. You know how you're going to finish the temple? You know how you're going to get through over every difficulty? You know how all opposing forces will be brought down? You know how I'm going to accomplish my purpose through you? It will be not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. My spirit will be your power.

My spirit will be your energy. My spirit will overcome every obstacle, for it's not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. And then he goes further and he says, who are you, O mountain, to stand as an obstacle before Zerubbabel? You will come down and be literally, the Amplified Bible has it, you will be a molehill.

You ever hear people say, he's making a mountain out of a molehill? Well, God takes a mountain and makes it a molehill. Who are you, O mountain, to try to block what God is going to do? By my spirit, I'll reduce you to nothing. And don't you despise the day of small beginnings, the word of the Lord comes to Zerubbabel, because what you're doing is precious work.

God is watching it, and he will supply during those difficult days when the going is tough, and the work is just starting. Now, one other definition before we apply it and close. For it's not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.

What is God saying? It's not by any human resource that my work will get done. I will perform my work. My spirit will do what it can do, he can do, through my servants.

But that sounds like, almost like a repetition. For it's not by might, nor by power. What's the difference? Those words are closely related in the Hebrew, and the one distinction seems to be this.

It's not by might. That speaks of plural power, plural forces, armies, many people, all the power of numbers, or maybe lots of money, or maybe lots of energy, or lots of influence. God says it won't be by that.

It won't be by might, nor will it be by power. That speaks of more individual. It won't be by any human ingenuity.

It will be by nobody's brain power. It'll be by nobody's human talent. No, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.

The temple will be rebuilt. My purpose will be fulfilled, but it won't be because of what humans can do. It'll be because of what I can do, saith the Lord.

So don't have confidence, and don't look to the arm of flesh, because it'll fail you. Don't depend on your own brain power, or your own talent. Don't say, I can't do this because I don't have it, because it's not by might, nor by power, nor by what you have, or anyone else have.

I'm going to do it by my spirit. Come on, let's put our hands together. Say amen.

Word closes and says this, the day will come, saith the Lord. When Zerubbabel, the one who doesn't seem like he can do it, he will do it. And when the temple is done, and he puts the last stone on it, the capstone, people will be shouting either grace, grace, or beautiful, beautiful, or oh, blessed, blessed.

It's a very hard word to interpret from the Hebrew to the English, and different translations have different renderings. I like this one. When it's all over, people will say beautiful.

God did a beautiful thing. And God will get all the glory, because it's not by might, nor by power, nothing human. God's work can't be done by human resource.

So now let's apply. The same is true today, God is building a temple. Jesus said, go into all the world and preach the gospel.

When people hear and believe, my kingdom will expand, my temple will get larger. That's my goal, that's our goal, that should be all of our goal. How many want to see the kingdom of Christ get bigger and bigger, more people? Lift up a hand, come on.

We want to see more and more. Why? We want to tell people the gospel. How can they believe unless they hear? But here's the warning God gives us.

My kingdom cannot be built by anything human. It's not by might, nor by power. It doesn't matter how she sings.

It matters that my spirit anoints her to sing. It doesn't matter how good the people are on their note. My kingdom will not be built by good singing.

My kingdom will be built by anointed singing. It doesn't matter how long the minister studies, or how clever a communicator is, or what kind of personal charisma he has. My kingdom is not built by human talent, human energy, human intellect, figuring things out and just mapping everything out.

No, no, it's not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit. If the preacher isn't anointed by the Holy Spirit, he fails in his task. All he can do is entertain.

All he can do is be clever and make people laugh. All he can do is work the people up into some emotional frenzy through music or tricks of the pulpit, of puppeteering. But my kingdom can only be built by the power and work of the Holy Spirit.

Come on, let's say amen to that. Only that way. Only that way.

For it's not by might, nor by power. You can map out things. You can strategize.

You can make out a year plan, a six month plan. You can do whatever you want to do. I'm not saying these things are not helpful in some way, but that's not how God will build his kingdom.

No, no, no. My temple will only be built not by might, not by anything human. No human force is what builds my temple.

My spirit will do my work. My spirit working through people who long for my spirit. Believe in the Holy Spirit.

Let the spirit flow through them unhindered. Get rid of junk that blocks the flow of the Holy Spirit. People, men and women who yield to the Holy Spirit.

Churches who pray for more of the Holy Spirit. Churches and people who go out anointed by the Holy Spirit. That's the only way the church can be built.

That's the only way my temple can be built. My work cannot be done by human forces. I am building something spiritual.

How could something human build something spiritual? How could something human build anything spiritual? Humans can build human things. They can make a CD. They can put on a Broadway show, but they cannot build the kingdom of God.

God is not interested in celebrities. I do not use celebrities. I use the spirit of my own presence.

That's what I use to build the presence, the kingdom of God. Now, if a celebrity gets converted and the spirit is working through him, then I can use him, but no celebrity will build the kingdom. No wealthy people will build the kingdom.

My kingdom will be built. In fact, God says in 1 Corinthians, I love to choose the weak things and the things that are not, the foolish things, the things the world laughs at, because then when I use them, people will know, it's not by might nor by power, but it's by God's spirit. That way I get all the glory.

Listen, no minister can walk around and strut around. No church can have its branding and be talking about this and this is my brand. We do it this way in our church, away with that.

If anything good happens, it's got to be the spirit of the living God working among his people. That's so primitive that it's laughed out of the arena of discussion nowadays. I go to pastors' conferences.

I speak at them all over this country and all over the world. What I just spoke to you, which is so obvious from my understanding, not two ministers out of 10 believe it, they're going to use software. They think that by human training, they're going to do the work of God.

Teaching, training has its place, but unless God comes, it's such a waste of time. Unless the wind of God is blowing, what are you going to do? How are you going to dislodge sin out of people's hearts? How are strongholds going to be broken except by the spirit of God? If somebody's here today and they're addicted to smoking weed or crack cocaine or addicted to some perversion or whatever kind of thing, illicit sex, whatever, how are you going to break that by human talent? How is music going to break that? Just be reasonable. How can anything satanic be broken except by the power of God? It's the anointing, listen, it's the anointing that breaks the yoke.

It doesn't matter how the preacher dresses, in a suit or with skinny jeans and his shirt out, these uniforms that everyone has. What does that mean? Well, you've got to relate. Just be who you are because it's not by how you dress that you're going to build your kingdom or a certain kind of music.

It's not by might nor by power, but by my spirit. I'm not talking about fanaticism. I'm not talking about yelling and screaming and saying, oh, because it's loud, the spirit is there.

No, sometimes it's loud and the spirit is nowhere nearby. How many have been in meetings? It's loud, but the spirit is nowhere there, nowhere there. And it's not being quiet and put a tear in your voice.

And it's not by that kind of psychological, emotional trickery. No, God has said, I will only build through my power. But let me tell you about his power as I close.

That power is so strong that mountains become molehills. The things that block you are reduced to nothing when God's power is flowing through a church or a person. The word of the Lord came to Zerubbabel and said this, who are you, oh mountain? Who are you to try to block my servant? You will become level ground.

You will become a molehill. Because when my spirit is working, saith the Lord, mountains become molehills. Problems become nothing.

Big, gigantic, I can't, it'll never happen. They're reduced to nothing when the spirit of God is let loose into the situation. One personal note, I once had a mountain, I've had many mountains, but I once had a very big mountain facing me.

Because we were in our previous campus and we were starting other churches and trying to reach more people and my oldest girl was away from the Lord, was killing me. Two and a half years, nightmare. I was

just with her this weekend, singer, just reminded me now.

Of course, she's written a great book called *Girl in the Song* and she's a pastor's wife and doing great work for the Lord. But my heart was broken. I would stand in front of the church in our previous campus and oh, you know, I'm struggling a little bit, but not much with my voice today.

But week after week, my heart was just so crushed and wounded and I didn't know what to do. How do you pastor? How do you preach? How do you start other churches? How does the mother write songs and direct a choir when your oldest girl, the apple of your eye, the model child that you raised is just running wild, so hard, so hard. So I would cry all the way from my house.

I lived in Queens then. I would cry, I'd turn on the ignition and cry all the way to Flappish Avenue, 290 Flappish. I would cry, and coming a block or two from the church, I would say to God, God, pull me together, please.

Please pull me together. I can't walk in there and cry in front of the people because I want to minister to the people. It's not about me.

It's about the people. You didn't call me for me. You called me for the people.

So one day when I was at my very lowest, because this thing was like a mountain, the more I tried to talk to her, the worse she got. Then I started to pray. Have you ever had a situation like you prayed and it got worse? How many ever had one of those? Like, I thought, I got to stop praying.

If I keep praying, this thing's going to explode. Devil whispering all kinds of things. So I called a day of prayer.

I called a day of prayer in the church, and I said, we're going to start. I think we had three services then. We're going to start the day, and we're not going to leave the auditorium.

I won't leave the auditorium. You can come and go as you want, but we had one service into the next service into the next service, and I never left the auditorium. People just stayed with me who wanted to pray through the day.

So this mountain, but I didn't talk about it because I wanted to do my work as a minister. What a mountain. Oh, I lived with it.

I would shower in the morning, and that mountain would be there laughing at me. Devil. How many have ever had the devil just attack you and laugh at you? Come on, lift up your hand if you know what I'm talking about.

I'm not being melodramatic. I'm talking about what happened. So I called this day of prayer on a Sunday, and I was sitting in the front row.

I don't know. People had stayed, and then they kind of left, and other people were coming in, and there were maybe, I don't know, 50 of us scattered at the altar sitting in different places. We're praying in between the services right to the next service begins, and I'm sitting there.

I wasn't very vocal. I just had my hands like this just praying, God, when will you change this? When will this mountain? I can't stop this. God, I'm losing hope.

I'm being very vulnerable now. I'm being very transparent with you. It's a battle, but you've gone through battles, right? You don't look down at me, do you, for going through battles? No, we all go through battles.

Don't ever think ministers don't go through battles. They go through bigger battles than you think. So I'm there, and there was a man.

I heard him praying behind me in a suit, very dark skin, seemed African to me with his accent as he was praying behind me, but not real loud. But I don't know, something just, his voice went in my ear, and there's maybe two other people in the front row, and I just put my head in my hands, and I just look down, and I go, oh God, what are you going to do? Please help me. Suddenly, this man, and I say this, I'm not given to sensational sentences.

I'm not sure he was a man. Maybe he was sent by God, and he was angel. I don't know.

I never saw him before, never saw him after, but the way he prayed, he jumps up out of his seat, and he walks out, and he comes, and he stands right in front of me. My head is in my hands, and now there's total strangers standing in front of me, and he yells out so that everybody can hear, and the word of the Lord comes to you, Zerubbabel. Oh, mountain, who are you? Imagine what those words meant to me.

Who are you, oh mountain, to try to block my servant? You will come down. You will come down to the ground. You will be nothing, and everyone just exploded because when someone prays, and they're anointed by the Spirit, it lifts everybody else up.

Sometimes people pray and lead out, and they're not in the Spirit. It drags the meeting down, and when he said that, oh, my heart just exploded, and what he spoke came to pass because when God comes on the scene, mountains become molehills. Listen, whatever is blocking you today, whatever blocks a church, whatever blocks a family, whatever blocks a marriage, whatever, when the Spirit of God comes, that mountain is coming down.

The Spirit of God takes mountains and reduces them. The thing that you said I could never do, listen, if God is going to do it, we're talking about Almighty God. Your complex, your fear, your messed up mind from how you were raised, and my messed up personality from how I was raised, all of those things come right down.

I can't. I can't. If only I was younger.

If only I was older. If only I had more education. If only I had more money and to a pastor.

If only I had a better congregation. If only I had more money. If only I had a nicer building.

All of those things just come down like rubble, and God shows you, you can do it. You can do it. I'm going to do it through you.

So whatever that mountain is, it'll come down before you today. If you open yourself up to the Holy Spirit, and you recognize and you tell God, God, it ain't going to happen unless you do it. Excuse the bad grammar.

It ain't going to happen unless you do it, God. Let me say amen to that. One last word, and we'll pray for somebody here toward the front of the church.

You're saying in your mind, I know, but if I step out to do what I think is in my heart, it seems so insignificant. I'm nobody. I'm just a member.

I'm a deacon. I'm a whatever. I'm just, you know, it's not like big, and it's grandiose.

Here's what the word of the Lord is to you wherever you are. Don't despise the day of small things. You start.

You take that first baby step, because the only way you're going to learn to walk is by taking a step, and when you take that step, God will be with you. He'll help you take that step, and then there's going to come a momentum from God. He sees your faith.

His work will become stronger and stronger. You're going to move forward. You know my granddaughter Charlotte.

She's six months old. She's just learning to crawl, but the crazy thing, she only can go backwards. I never saw a baby like this.

She only goes in reverse. I'm trying to get her in drive. She's either in idle, or she's in reverse.

The little thing can't go forward. God's going to help you go forward. I said God's going to help you go forward, and listen.

Listen. When we see her crawl, and we see her take those little steps, nobody looks and says, that's not much. No, it's beautiful.

It's beautiful. Are you kidding? It's beautiful. Before you can run, you have to learn how to walk.

Before you walk, you have to learn how to crawl. So to somebody here who says I can't, you can, and don't despise the day of small things, because all big things start with small things, and God honors small things as much as he honors so-called big things. How many believe the word of the Lord today? How many believe with all your heart, not by might, come on, nor by power, but by my spirit, say it the Lord.

Close your eyes with me. You're just hungry for the Holy Spirit to lift you to that next level that you know you're supposed to be at. If you want to see the mountain come down in front of you.

If this sermon has touched you, it's for all of us. It's for me. It's for everyone, but if it's touched you in a special way, I want you to get out of your seat and say, pastor, I needed to hear that today.

Oh, man alive, I needed to hear that today, because I get shy, I get afraid, I get discouraged. This crazy mountain has been in front of me, blocking me. It's either in you, or it's around you.

Just get out of your seat and say, no, God's going to bring that mountain down. I'm going to fulfill the calling of my life. It won't be because of me.

It won't be because of what I've learned. It won't be because of my skill or my talent. It's going to be not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, say it the Lord.

We're trusting you, God. Thank you for your word today, Lord. It is not by might, nor by power, nor by IQ, nor by money, nor by celebrity, nor by human talent, nor by music, nor by oratory, nor by emotionalism, nor by high intellect.

No, it is not by might, nor by power, but it is by my spirit, sayeth the Lord. We yield to your spirit today. As a church, we humble ourselves and we say, send oceans, rivers, more of your spirit in us, through us, out of us.

In every individual life that you've spoken to, Lord, let no one despise the day of small beginnings. And O mountain, who are you, O mountain? Who are you to stand before the servant of the Lord, the daughter of the Lord, the son of God? You will be reduced to nothing, but not by us doing it, but by the power and the presence of God doing it. We thank you, Lord, that what you've begun in our lives, you're going to finish.

Doesn't matter what detour we sillily went off on, some wrong road, we're back now. We're back on the road, Lord. We're back on the road, Lord.

We are back on the road, Lord. We are back for every individual, Lord, who walked away on some detour, they're back. Blessings aren't on detours.

Blessings are on the right road, Lord. We're back with you, holding your hand, expecting your blessing. Let all of us bless each other now, as we dismiss in the name of Jesus Christ.

This we pray in his name. And everyone said, turn around and hug a bunch of people. Come on, hug somebody.

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