

(Rebuilding the House of the Lord) 2. Rebuilding the House of the Lord

by Roy Hession

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of personal revival and restoration through the grace of Jesus and the centrality of the cross in rebuilding our relationship with God.

Duration: 47:28

Scripture: Leviticus 25:2, Ezra 3:1-3, Psalm 85:10, Haggai 2:9, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Rebuilding"

Description

The video shown in the sermon was a documentary made by a television network in America, showcasing testimonies of people who had been reached by Jesus. The speaker was deeply moved by the revelations shared in the film, witnessing the transformation and grace that had reached these individuals. However, the sermon also highlights the danger of looking back and being obsessed with the past, rather than embracing the new things that God is doing in the present. The sermon then transitions to discussing the period of restoration after the captivity of the Israelites, emphasizing God's continued purpose of grace despite their failures.

Transcript

We're continuing with our study of this interesting period when, after the land had been ravaged, the temple burnt with fire, and the walls of Jerusalem broken down, and the people taken captive, God showed that their failure was not final with Him. He still had a wonderful purpose of grace, and as the hands on God's clock ticked, and the seventy years drew to a close, the impossible began to happen. Cyrus, king of Persia, was moved to get a vision for that ruined temple, and he issued the edict, and allowed a remnant to go back to rebuild and restore that which their folly had caused to be broken down.

And we saw yesterday that that was a picture of revival. We saw that the Lord's people are intended to be a temple, a habitation of God through the Spirit, fitly framed together, and with the Lord filling his house with his glory. We saw too that with all of us, in one degree or another, a catastrophe has happened, due entirely to our own foolishness and sin, and God has had to chasten his people, and the Lord's house has been laid waste, and in one degree or another has been left little more than a smoking ruin.

We don't always see it as that because we've got used to it. We've never known much else than that. We've been born when the tide was out, and we've got little conception of what it ought to be when the

tide's in.

But when the tide begins to come in, here or there, we begin to see what God first intended and how far short things are with us. This is the age of the Spirit, the age of reaping our harvest, but so often it doesn't happen. And so we saw yesterday, the house of the Lord lying waste, that which should have been a habitation of God through the Spirit, and in one degree or another, friend, it's true of us individually.

And he is going to be most blessed who's quickest to admit that fact about his own life, about his own experience, about his own situation. But we've seen this wonderful undeserved grace of God, planning restoration, rebuilding, revival. And I would make it clear again, if I may, that revival is not a beautiful temple being made more beautiful.

It's a temple in ruins. Being rebuilt by the Lord Jesus. Revival is not a good Christian being made a better Christian.

It's a Christian who admits he's a flop, and a failure, and a sinner, who's in all sorts of entanglements. He doesn't know how to get out. It's revival as grace reaching that man, and putting back, and rebuilding, and restoring all that his sin has robbed him of.

And I say again, he is most obviously the candidate for revival who is the most ready to admit that's his condition. And so that's what we got pictured for us here. Now I want you to turn to the book of Ezra then, chapter three, and begin to look at this phase by phase.

Once you start looking at this portion of history from this point of view, seeing it illustrating these truths, the material is so abundant, that it's really embarrassing. And I tell you, these are the times when I covet to be the pastor of a church, when instead of giving five talks, we give ten, and go on and on, Sunday by Sunday, because this word is so rich, and has so much to teach us. Now we're going to read from Ezra three.

Chapter one tells us of this edict, how God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to make it, and then how God stirred up the spirit of the Jews there to accept it and to go back. The chapter two gives us the genealogy and numbers of the people who did avail themselves of the offer, a remnant of some 50,000 Jews and their servants. In chapter three, they've got back to their decimated land, they've camped down in it as best they may, and now we read of what their first activity was when they got back.

And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. Then stood up Joshua, the son of Josedach, and his brethren, the priests, and Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to burnt offerings thereon, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God. And they set the altar upon his bases, for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries, and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, even burnt offerings morning and evening.

They kept also the feast of tabernacles, long since forgotten, but they're getting back to the old original. They're turning the old parchments, they see it all down there, and they're reinstating the old feasts. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offer the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the covenant custom, as the duty of each day required, and afterward offer the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord, that were consecrated, and of every one that

willingly offered a freewill offering unto the Lord.

From the first day of the seventh month, began they to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord. But the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid. They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters, and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Sidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon, to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus, king of Persia.

Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedek, and the remnant of their brethren, the priests, and the Levites, and all that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem, and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of the Lord. Then stood Joshua with his sons, and his brethren, Cadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God, the sons of Hanadad with their sons, and their brethren, the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord after the ordinance of David, king of Israel.

And they sang together by course, one to another, two choirs, answering one another, in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Israel. Apparently their anthem that day was Psalm 136, where you have that phrase oft repeated, giving thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice. And many shouted aloud for joy, so the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy, from the noise of the weeping of the people. For the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

Now will you turn to Haggai, and he is the third book from the end of the Bible. And he was one of the prophets, who came in at this point, and had a most important word to say to them, at this particular stage. Third from the end of the Old Testament, third from the end of the Old Testament, Haggai, and chapter two.

In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying, speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedek, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying, who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory, and how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes, in comparison of it, as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel. Don't listen to the people who talk about the good old days. There's some great days coming, Zerubbabel.

And be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedek, the high priest, and be strong, because if you start looking back and mourning, you'll get paralyzed. Don't you listen to the old boys. And be strong, O ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord, according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt.

So my spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not. Verse nine, and he goes on to say, the glory of this house shall be greater than the glory of the former house, which some are mourning, saith the Lord of hosts. And in this house, this new house, this new precious visitation from God, this new revival, in this place will I

give peace.

And there's our text on the side of the wall, and that's where it comes from. Now the exiles have come back to face a terrible situation. Their field's all overgrown.

The land has kept her Sabbaths for seventy long years, and not known the till. Their city is a ruin, no walls, and only charred embers mark the place where once Solomon's proud temple had stood. On the seventh month, they'd gotten themselves dug in, I suppose, as best they could in the villages.

They unanimously seemed to come together to Jerusalem. The seventh month was the holy month. It was the month where most of the feasts of the Lord were concentrated.

The feast of trumpets, the feast of the great day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. And so this was the great month, and they all came together. And the first thing they did was to set up the altar of the Lord upon its bases.

There was rubble all around, but these people, rightly guided, started at the very center, and they put the first thing first, they put up there the altar of the Lord. And they instituted all the old time sacrifices and feast days which Moses had instituted. And they did so, it says in verse three, we're going back in Ezra of course, you understand that now, Ezra three, for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries.

They were surrounded by people who wished them no good. They didn't want these folks coming back to that land, they'd made good use of it and come in as they wanted to. And they were frightened of these people who were opposing them.

And they felt the one thing that they must attend to before anything else was their relationship to God. And the only way they knew themselves, sinners and needy people that they were, that they could be in relationship to God, was by the altar, and by the burnt offering upon it, which would go out continually to God as a sweet savor. And they felt that that would maintain, as indeed it did in Old Testament times, their relationship with God.

That was the first thing they did. It reminds me of another revival story, of the revival on Mount Carmel in the days of Elijah. And you know the first thing he did before he ever prayed for the fire to come down from heaven? He repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

That was the first thing. And this is always the first thing in the mighty blessed recoverings that God gives failures like ourselves. This is always the first thing in any movement of revival in a life, in a family, in a fellowship, in a church, in a nation.

The Lord leads people to put Calvary, the cross of our Lord Jesus, the altar of the Lord, central. And the reason is this, we can't expect God to take a hand in recovering the mess that we've made unless our relationship with him is right. It's no good rushing around trying to put this thing right and that thing right.

The thing is, it's all happened because my relationship with God has been wrong. And the first thing I must do is to see that my relationship is right with God once again. And that is only possible by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

And that was always the leading element in any blessed moving of God to revive and restore and recover. Douglas Brown, a Baptist minister of a generation ago, in an unusual way was called of God from his Baptist church in London to take some meetings in Leurstadt. And in those meetings he hardly expected it.

He discovered that the set time had come for God to favor Zion, at least in that part. And the Holy Spirit was poured out in deep conviction on the people of Leurstadt and upon the fishermen. And he didn't stay for a few meetings, he stayed for months and months and months.

And there was a gracious ingathering and revival there. The jubilee of it was celebrated by certain articles recently, you may remember, in the Life of Faith. And Douglas Brown was asked during that time to come to Keswick to give the Bible readings.

Well, no one could really describe them as Bible reading. It was like a bomb going off in the middle of Keswick. This man had come from seeing grace do something that needed to be done everywhere.

And I've read the book, the little book that contains those addresses, what reading. And I remember one thing he said, he said, revival is not going down the street with a big drum, it's going back to Calvary with a big sob. Because that's the only place where mercy is ministered and grace.

Mercy there is great and grace is free. Pardon there is multiplied for me. And what you and I need, first of all, is pardon.

Don't worry about power. It's pardon. Full stop.

You didn't worry about power, you got that, everything else follows. But some people are trying to get power without pardon. And the center and heart of every moving of God to restore and recover a life or a group of lives is always the cross of the Lord Jesus, not Pentecost.

And not the gifts of the Spirit. I wouldn't discount them. But they don't bear in their body my sins on the tree.

They don't deal what's really wrong with me. And it is possible to seek to covet unusual gifts and bypass the real thing that God's after. What God's concerned about is sin.

And nothing but the blood of Jesus can wash away sin. People don't get right with God at Pentecost, they get right with God at the cross. I'm not necessarily discounting those things.

I perhaps for myself, I'm so busy going back to the cross and finding such release there, I don't find myself coveting much else, perhaps I should, I don't know. But I find He fills and satisfies my heart. But I don't deny it because this is a phenomenon that's happening today.

But let's get it straight. Calvary's the center and every spirit-taught man, if he even has these gifts, if his spirit taught us, he will say, Amen, brother. Amen.

Let's keep it there. There's a lovely old chorus called, Get right with God and do it now. Get right with God.

He tells you how. Oh, come to Christ who shed his blood and at the cross, get right with God. And I remind you that the state, the things were still in an awful state.

They were in an awful state, but there was this change. They were right with God through the burnt offering. And friend, your life, my life, my situation may still be a mess.

The wife, whoever, or the husband may still be antagonistic to me. They may still be holding grudges against me for what I've done. I may still be in a tangle.

Don't worry about that. Get this first. And at the cross, get back to the cross, get it all out into the light.

And you can afford to do so because that's the place of mercy. Friend, if you really own up and get to the bottom of the rotten business and confess it, nothing's going to happen to you except you're going to be forgiven. And you're going to be relieved of the guilt of it and given peace.

Any objection to that? And to see that is perhaps the biggest inducement we can have to start repenting and getting back. And there is our righteousness. And I remind you that what they offered was the burnt offering.

And of the five offerings that Moses instituted, the burnt offering was the greatest, even greater than the sin offering. It was put first. And it's called a sweet savor offering.

The sin offering was no sweet savor. It was a foul stench. And the body of the sin offering was burnt on the refuse heap outside the city, but not the burnt offering.

That went up as a sweet savor, roast beef. And it was something designed to give God pleasure. And what went up from Calvary was a sweet savor.

It went up as a result of him bearing my sins, but the disposition he manifested in so bearing them, the meekness, the bending of the neck, which is so foreign to me, offered to God that which he'd never found from man. And those glorious merits that go up from Calvary, the brokenness of the Lord Jesus, are the basis of my acceptance with God. And that's what they had.

They couldn't profess too much, but there was a sweet savor. Ah, that's how it is with me. Jesus, it says, gave himself an offering and a sacrifice for a sweet savor to God.

But fornication, let it not be once named among you. Yes, the wolfiness of stench from us, but the sweet savor from Calvary. And as I repent of my sin and do what the Old Testament saints used to do, lay their hand upon the head of their burnt offering, those excellences are counted to me.

You've got to lay your hand, mind you, on the head of the burnt offering, that betokens repentance, if ever it does. You know what laying the hand means? It means identification. They laid their hands on Paul of Barnabas, the church did, and they said, we are identifying ourselves with you, Paul, as you go to the heathen we go.

That's all that laying of hands meant. And when a man laid his hand upon the head of his burnt offering, he identified himself. He said, this death is mine.

This that this lamb is going to have is what I deserve. How many a time I've had to lay my hand upon the head of my burnt offering. My faith, says an old hymn, would lay her hand on that dear head of thine, while as a penitent I stand and there confess my sin.

It says Leviticus, he shall lay his hand upon the head of his burnt offering and it, it shall be accepted for him. And when I know what it is to go back to Calvary with the big sob perhaps, though don't worry if you haven't got too much of a sob, it's the act that matters. It, Christ, the lamb, is accepted for me and I can't have a better standing with God than what the lamb gives me by his blood.

Oh here's the beginning. I know the situation may be in a mess. Get this right then.

This first. And will you please notice it was all done as it is written. One of the wonderful things about revival, when God works and does something sweet and precious, even in areas which are not within our orbit, who haven't heard our teaching, it's always according to the scriptures.

I've known those who've gone out to East Africa with as wobbly a theology as you could want. Missionaries that were unsaved and completely liberal. But the day they came under conviction of sin and laid their hand upon the head of their burnt offering and were born of the spirit, their theology came right overnight.

That's the test. And you'll find the converted hippies, they're bang on all the way down the line, taught of the spirit. When the spirit works, of course, it's always according to the scriptures.

Sometimes enthusiasm may cause things to be put unbalanced and that's why God needs to raise up from within any such movement revival leaders who can help from within. You won't help from without. Never.

You've got to be one of them. You can help from within. On the other hand, it's not true to say that an evangelical orthodox faith founded on the scriptures is revival.

Revival is always according to the scriptures but you can have all the form of sound words but without revival. The thing that's shaken me in recent years is discovering one area of the world. The greatest opposition to revival has come from a fundamental mission.

And they had so much with which to resist. They knew the Bible. But the poor old wobbly liberal mission, very mixed, it had no defense.

It couldn't quote the Bible against revival and they'd been blessed more than those who made their glory in the Bible. This is the word to the wise. Think it deeply.

This is fact. Well, there's the first thing. They instituted the old time sacrifices and they set up the altar of the Lord.

The second stage was, of course, the laying of the foundation. But the foundation of the temple, verse 6, was not yet laid so they proceeded right on to that. And they got the carpenters of the masons together building the foundation, clearing the rubble, digging the foundations, and putting the essential blocks in.

And that's the second thing with us. Not only do we seek Calvary Central now, all our hope and peace, but if we're going to experience the recovering grace of God in our hearts, lives, circumstances, and churches, there must be the foundational acts of repentance and foundational experiences of the grace of God. It's not only enough to have a new conception of the cross and of the blood of Jesus.

I must be willing to have the foundations laid. There are a whole heap of things that have got to be dealt with as sin, which I've got to confess, and at which point I'm going to discover Jesus anew as all I need.

The foundations, those foundational acts of repentance, things that have been left all too long, unconfessed, unrepented of.

And when you begin on one thing, then he shows you the next, and after that the next. And this is always the beginning of new life, revival in a heart of a Christian or in a group of Christians. First the cross and then the foundation of that which is going to prove very soon to become a habitation of God through the Spirit.

But in laying these foundations, we must sure we go deep enough. Do you remember Jesus told the story in Matthew 7, is it, about two houses? They both look equally good. The decorators had been in, stucco was on, plumbing was in, beautiful.

But there came some tremendous rains and storms, and the houses were a bit near the river, and the river flooded. And one of those houses collapsed in ruins. Now the other remained where it had been built.

What was the reason? Why, the reason was that the one hadn't, they hadn't got deep enough with their foundations. If you please have dug a little bit and built the foundations on earth, on sand. All right, if there wasn't a storm.

But of course, the tremendous flood that came just washed the foundations away. Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast wind it in either direction.

All right, if there wasn't a storm. But of course, the tremendous flood that came just washed the foundations away. Well, the first one went up much quicker.

You said it, you are taking your time. Not a brick, no, we're going deeper. Well, we're halfway up.

They hadn't started building up, they were digging down. Down and down they went until they got to rock. And in laying the foundation of new life in my life, I've got to go deeper than perhaps I have been.

Mine is not enough to be a superficial repentance and a sort of half-hearted I'm sorry. You know, here is building on the sand. If I've done anything to hurt you, please forgive me.

Now that's sand. Those are the sort of apologies you sometimes get in Parliament. We must be grateful that people do sometimes apologize.

If I have misled the house on this matter, I regret it. Listen man, you have misled the house. Misled the house.

Say so. But if, let's cut out this. Brother, I was wrong.

Get down to the rock. We need to get down to the real us. And when you get down to the real nasty you, you find the real Jesus.

Sometimes we repent in a way that suggests, so sorry, it's not really like me to be like that. But forgive me. Now that's sand.

It is exactly like you. Shall I tell you what it is like to build on the rock? Brother, I want to tell you, I was jealous. It just shows what sort of a person I really am.

Ah, that's better. We're getting beyond the sand. We're getting to rock.

And I want to tell you, if I'm real with Jesus, Jesus will be real with me. And I'll be building on the rock Christ Jesus. And I get down to that level.

Let me go a little further into this question of building on the sand. How can we build on sand? Here's some suggestions. By perhaps trying to put right day-to-day things.

But turning a blind eye to something in the past that's never been put right. I was never been so surprised when a vicar's wife years ago at Clevedon, who I think sat in the team meeting, she was repenting of this and praising for that and giving her up-to-date testimony. And then one day God brought her under conviction of sin.

She was a kleptomaniac. For years, unknown to other people, she'd found her biggest kick by going out of Woolworths and other things with things in her bag. We'd taken her as a real sister-in-law.

And she was so concerned about her husband. He hasn't seen this way. Doing this, all these day-to-day things.

She was only building on sand. There was something in the past. And when God showed it to her, was she in distress? She says, I can't get right with God.

Oh, grace made it possible. What a story it is. What release that woman knew.

And she was willing to penetrate from sand to the rock, the real thing. Wonderful story, which I can't stay to tell now. That's one way of building on sand.

Or it could be the other way around. I may be repenting of my more open and obvious transgressions in the past. I've got a testimony, but I'm not repenting of things in the future, in the present.

That's as much building on sand as the other. What's the use of telling of how God dealt with me over there when I'm not seeing my irritation or irritability or my sharpness with my wife? I do have those things sometimes, I'm ashamed to say. And God says, no good, you're giving a testimony way back.

There's something there. Just talking about the past is building on sand. You get on the rock.

And sometimes rock means a willingness to face up to things right now as they go wrong. Or it can be building on sand, putting things right with God, but not with man. We find it pretty easy sometimes to confess things to God.

But some of those things have affected somebody else. Oh, we can do a lot of wonderful things in the presence of God, but sometimes an apology is owing to another. Sometimes we've got to put things right with another.

Oh, we do the one but not the other. I believe that's sand too. Of course, it could be equally sand.

To be putting things right with other people, but not with the Lord. And we can do that too. Like a game of chess.

If I say I'm sorry, he'll say I'm sorry. But the thing's never been dealt with before God. And therefore it's all false.

You see how we've got this foundation of revival. It's got to be on the rock. I was most moved when Bert Osborne told us about this new revival in Rwanda.

Rwanda has been synonymous with revival, but we who know Rwanda of recent years have been in despair. I want to tell you quite frankly, and the secretary of the Rwanda Mission and the chairman is here and they'd agree with me, the House of the Lord's been in ruins for some years. But do you know, the time to favour Zion, even the set time has come, and the unbelievable's happening.

Among the schoolboys and girls has come the most lovely, precious outpouring of the Spirit. And they've been saved and they don't need older people to tell them. They are their own evangelists, just as in California, so among the young people of Rwanda and Burundi.

And what touched me so much was when Bert said, and now they're going deeper, they're beginning to repent of disrespect to elders. Who in the world's heard young people repent of that? And disobeying teachers. I said to myself, my, they're getting down to the rock.

May God help me to do the same. That's it. That's it.

And so then is the first thing. The second thing, rather, the foundations. Then there's a very interesting bit, you know, when they had this ceremony, they got the foundation laid, they had a great ceremony, trumpets and cymbals, and great songs of praise, and the people shouted, hallelujah, revival's begun, here we are, praise the Lord.

But there are others who went. They were the old people who'd seen Solomon's temple in all its glory. And nothing could ever match that.

And the foundations of this one, it looked so poor. And you couldn't tell the difference, what the noise was, either weeping on the part of some, or shouting on the part of others. And I believe it's right in a mid-hour shouting to have a little weeping.

Some time ago, Stanley Boak and I had the opportunity of meeting, along with several others, with some of the Jesus people who had come over from America, and who were working for the Lord amongst our own, desperately needy young people, and hippies, and junkies. And they showed us a film which a big television network had made in America, and had shown all across the country. It was the most sympathetic documentary.

And testimonies were given of the people who'd been reached by Jesus. I didn't know whether to weep or to shout for joy. The revelations that were made, the sort of lives they'd been living, the self-destruction they'd been posing upon themselves.

I didn't know whether to weep or to praise the Lord that grace had reached that man. But there is a wrong looking back, because very often it's so easy to be obsessed with the good old days. It might well be true.

In Rwanda, the older people are looking back to 1930 when the revival first came, and now it's all disappeared. And they're not praising for the new thing that's come amongst their children and grandchildren. It's very interesting to know that revival invariably begins with young people.

Not always so. But grace doesn't leave out those of us who've got stuck in our ways. But all my friends, this is the hope.

And it's so easy for us older ones to be a little suspicious of what God, the new thing that God does among young people, and to think of the good old days. Though, as I say, I believe there is a right mixture. Now, it was at this point that Haggai came in.

And here we come to the last part of our talk. Haggai, the third book from the end of the Old Testament. Because he had something to say to this situation, where some were weeping for the loss of the old, and not rejoicing for the new thing that God was doing.

Haggai chapter 2 verse 3. Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? How do you see it now? They were the old men. Why? They'd been in captivity 70 years. So if they were 15 when they left, they must have been 85 by now.

But they could still remember. Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? And really there was ground for saying that. Maybe the very dimensions of this temple might not have been as big as Solomon's, I don't know.

And certainly the foundations didn't look very much. And then, realizing the discouraging effect of all this upon the leader Zerubbabel and his colleague Joshua the High Priest. God says, Zerubbabel and Joshua, don't you listen to what I'm going to give you is encouragement.

And I want to tell you in this great matter of revival, what you and I need is encouragement. We'll get plenty of it from the devil. And the books of Haggai and Zechariah, who spoke at this time, they're devoted to one thing, building up the morale of those who've begun on the way of revival.

Encouraging them, that's what I need, that's what you need. And sometimes those who talk about former days can discourage us. Even the stories of former revivals can make everything seem beyond our reach.

We get a false picture very often. Where he says, is it not in your eyes as comparison of nothing? Be strong, Zerubbabel. You work, for I'm going to be with you in this new thing.

I'm on the side of the optimist. I believe God always is. He's on the side of the optimist.

The man of faith is an optimist. And God says, you're more likely to be right when you're an optimist than when you're a pessimist. I'm the great optimist.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take. The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy and will break, with blessings on your head. I believe the man who says the time to favor Zion is just now, is more likely to say, I don't think so.

I can't see any evidence. Oh God, it's the God of hope. The God, very like the great optimist.

And Haggai knew that the backward look, which discounts present activity, could paralyze them. And so he poured in his word of encouragement. And he says in verse nine, the glory of this latter house, which looks so feeble, such pathetic beginnings, shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.

And in this place will I give peace. And he says, why? Because one day, verse seven, I'm going to shake all nations and the desire of all nations is going to come. And I will fill this house with glory.

Man, he said, listen, you're building bigger than you know. Bigger than you know. One day, the desire of all nations going to come, you're going to walk those pavements you're trying to lay.

And you're going to fill this house with glory and the glory of this latter house is going to be greater than you've ever seen before. Oh, what a word. This is grace.

Jeff said last night that grace is giving us twice as much as what we lost through our sin. And I want to say for your encouragement, you've begun. You've gone back to the cross.

The foundations of repentance have been made and grace is gained to restore all that's been lost. And I want to tell you, God's going to make something better out of the mess than what it was before the mess occurred. I was saying to a man last night, yesterday, who was telling me something about his life.

Been an unhappy life. Things have gone wrong, as he told me, largely through his own fault. I said, brother, your best days are yet to come.

The glory of the new thing grace is going to do for you in your life is going to be infinitely greater than that other thing which sin has spoiled. It happens on small matters and large matters. Sometimes a relationship with another goes wrong.

There's a difficult situation, but, oh, God gives a spirit of repentance and grace and there's a healing. And that relationship becomes better after grace has reached you than it ever was before sin came in and spoiled it. There are those that I'm close to today, very close.

But, oh, there's a story. That closeness hasn't come naturally. It's come from Calvary.

There were times when we weren't close. There were things between us. But just because we've been to Jesus together, grace has done something better and the glory of the latter thing has been so much greater than the glory of the former thing.

And this is characteristic of the undeserved grace of God. He's generous is our God. He's open-handed.

There's just nothing he won't do for the broken and the contrite heart. The glory of this latter house is going to be greater. What an incentive to get moving.

Dear friends, listen. We are building bigger than we know. I believe in Cleveland.

We're building bigger than we know. We could be easily discouraged. What is it? He loves to tell us the glory of the latter house, which is in process, which I'm building, doesn't look too much now, is going to be greater than what you knew before.

The same is true in your church. Has God begun? Have people begun to go back to Calvary? Have the foundational repentances been done? And are they continuing? You little know. What glorious habitation of God through the Spirit is being built.

And though some of us can look back to wonderful days which had all been spilt, I want to tell you the thing that grace does after repentance is again and again sweeter, better, more glorious than the thing that sins for it. That's how it is in heaven. God will have nothing to do but to praise and praise and praise.

But all this, listen, has got to be continued. They got the altar set up, they got the foundation, they were singing the song of praise, and they had this wonderful encouragement, haggai, but they'd only got the foundation. They had to go on in this great work, in this great path of revival.

And tomorrow, we'll discover how they didn't. How they lost the vision for no less than 13 years. And for 13 years, all that was to be seen was only the foundation.

And we shall see tomorrow the story of how God helped them to begin again. Frankly, my friends, I can't wait till tomorrow. It's the most intriguing bit of the whole story.

And if I'm not mistaken, you say, well, you know, that's just me. I've begun, but I got stuck, just like they did. Indeed, a dear brother, minister of the Church of England, who was deep in us in the early days, he was at the cross along with us, he was in our teams.

And then he slipped out. And as I was passing his city, going through, we made a detour, Pam and I, and I think I can humbly say somehow, it could be said, as Paul said, God, who comforted those that are cast down, comforted me by the coming of Titus. And our very coming, caring enough to pop in and see him, did something for him, as he afterwards told us.

And he wrote to me, he said, Roy, he said, those old days, 17 years ago, when I was on those teams, and I fought against it ultimately, but at the time, I want to tell you, I look back, they were my sweetest moments. How foolish I was to pull out and fight. And so, a few months ago, we were having a team conference in a parish in the Midlands.

And my dear brother was with us. He said, he said, in his letter, he said, if you ever have another team, where you want a group to take meetings together, count me in, if you can, as a very junior member. Well, he came, and he told the people, he'd been 17 years in the wilderness.

But all praise the Lord, the whole boonies going on again now. And so that's what we're going to think about. But there's the beginning, the altar, the burnt offering, Calvary, Jesus accepted for me, as I come back to him.

And the foundation of getting down to the real things that are wrong, and letting Jesus forgive me and cleanse me. And the shout of joy, and all the encouragements, you and I are on something bigger, more extensive, more far-reaching than we've ever realized. One person going back from Cleveland to a dead and needy church, is the beginning.

And there's going to be a greater house, a rise out of the ruins, than ever was before. How encouraging is this wonderful message of mercy and grace from heaven. Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, thank you for telling us that the glory of the latter house, that at the moment looks nothing, and we're so feeble just coming back to thee, is going to be greater than the former house. And thank you for telling us that in this new house, you come, the desire of all nations, and fill it with glory. Thank you Lord, and we ask thee to interpret all these things to each one of us, individually, to our own situation and heart's needs.

We ask it in thy dear name. Amen.

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