

Teamwork

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[0 : 00] Zechariah chapter 1 and we'll read from verse 1. In the eight months of the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, son of Berechiah, the son of Ido.

The Lord was very angry with your forefathers. Therefore tell the people, this is what the Lord Almighty says. Return to me, declares the Lord Almighty, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty.

Do not be like your forefathers, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed, this is what the Lord Almighty says. Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices. But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the Lord.

Where are your forefathers now? And the prophets, do they live forever? But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants, the prophets, overtake your forefathers?

Then they repented and said, the Lord Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do. On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shabbat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, son of Berechiah, the son of Ido.

[1 : 24] During the night I had a vision, and there before me was a man riding a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown, and white horses.

I asked, what are these, my Lord? The angel who was talking with me answered, I will show you what they are. Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, They are the ones the Lord has sent to go throughout the earth.

And they reported to the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace. Then the angel of the Lord said, Then the angel of the Lord said, Lord Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you are going angry with these seventy years?

So the Lord spoke kind and comforting words to the angels who talked with me. Then the angel who was speaking to me said, Proclaim this word.

This is what the Lord Almighty says. I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, but I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they added to the calamity.

[2 : 43] Therefore this is what the Lord says. I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt, and the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem, declares the Lord Almighty.

Proclaim further. This is what the Lord Almighty says. My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We'll sing again to God's praise. We'll sing this time from Psalm 103.

Again, Psalm 103, and we sing from verse 3 to verse 10 of the psalm. All thine iniquities who doth most graciously forgive, who thy disease is all in pains, doth heal and be relieved, who doth redeem thy life, that thou to death mayest not go down, who thee with loving kindness doth, and tender mercies cry.

Down to the end of verse 10, and we stand to sing to God's praise. All thine iniquities who doth most graciously forgive, O thine iniquities who doth most graciously forgive, who thine iniquities who doth most graciously forgive, forgive, God, God, God, who live with love and kindness of untended mercy shown, who with abundance of good things, that satisfy thy blood, so that in us the evil stage reneweth his life.

[5 : 30] God, righteous judgment executes for all of blessed ones.

His ways to Moses, he is that made known to Israel's sons.

The Lord our God is merciful, and he is gracious.

Long-suffering, and so to run in mercy plenteous.

He will not chide continually, nor keep his anger still.

[6 : 53] With us he dealt, not as we sinned, nor did we quite count it.

Just as we turn back to God's word, let's again unite our hearts in a moment of prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the words that we have sung, that you are the God who has not dealt with us as we sinned.

So we recognize, Lord, that our sin was not overlooked, but our sin had to be dealt with. But you did not deal with us over our sin, but you dealt with your son over our sin.

We thank you that Jesus is the one who came and who stood in the place that we deserve to stand. He is the one who took the punishment for our sin upon his shoulders.

[8 : 11] And we thank you because of all that he has done, and because of who he is, we are given hope. We are offered grace. We are offered mercy. And Lord, we pray now that as we turn to your word in the book of Zechariah, we ask, Lord, that you would help us to understand, even though these words were written almost 3,000 years ago, we ask that you would speak directly into each one of our lives, that we would hear and know that you, the living God, are speaking to us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And we pray that as a result of our study this evening and in subsequent weeks, and if it be your will, we pray that we would be brought into a closer walk with you. And if there are any here this evening who are not yet walking with you, who are still strangers to you, who are still in their sin, we pray that they would hear the call of Christ to come, to be forgiven and to be reconciled with God.

So hear our prayers and help us as we cry out to you. For we do so in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen. Just a wee check, first of all.

When I say young people, I'm not talking to the sort of, you know, the youth, I'm not patronising you, but for the younger people here tonight, does anyone here recognise this scarf?

Put your hand up if you recognise this scarf. Jono, you recognise the scarf. Which team does this scarf relate to? Harris FC.

[9 : 57] Harris football team. So these are the colours of the newly revived Harris football team. We've got one of the players here at least.

And I thought I'd start with that because the first point we come to as we look at the book of Zechariah is teamwork.

Teamwork. I mean, it's good to be able to watch a game of football. It's good to be able to put the scarf on and stand down at the park there and watch the players on the field.

But for the players to be effective, they have to work together. They can't just be individuals. They have to work as part of a team. And if they work together as part of the team, then they win a game.

And then if they win one game, they may win two games and three games. And eventually, if there's enough games won, we begin to see some of these trophies that have been in Lewis for far too long making their way back over the Cretion.

[11 : 00] And the flag gets held up high. But the thing is, a team is made up of different people. Whether you're talking football or volleyball or hockey or whatever.

A team is made up of different people. Different ages, different levels of experience. And a football team, different positions, different skills. But they're all working for the same goal.

They're all working to the same end. And that just takes us into the first point here, which is teamwork. I'd be interested, I can't do this tonight, but I'd be interested to ask the question, what do we know about Zechariah?

If we were to take five minutes and try and get a picture of how much we know about Zechariah, I don't think it would even take five minutes. Because he's not one of the most well-known characters in the Old Testament.

But Zechariah, without going into much history this evening, he was a man whom God called to follow him and serve him. But he was one man.

[12 : 10] But although he was one man, he wasn't on his own. He was one of a team of prophets that God took hold of and began to use over the years. You can think about Isaiah.

You can think about Jeremiah. You can think about Ezekiel. You can think about Daniel. These are the major prophets. Zechariah is one of the minor prophets. And Zechariah, even at this point in time, which is about 520 years before Christ was born, Zechariah wasn't working alone.

Zechariah was working alongside another prophet called Haggai. And in the previous book to Zechariah, you see a short letter, a short book called Haggai.

I'm not going there tonight. But Haggai and Zechariah, God took hold of them at the same time, roughly. And God called them to the same work.

Haggai was an old man, likely with grey hair. He was long in the tooth. He'd seen a lot over the years. Zechariah was a young man.

[13 : 29] Not exactly sure how young. But he was a young man. But together, they were called to serve God. And that's a picture of the church still today.

Young people. It's good to see a big number of you tonight. And old people. And the in-betweens. Coming together to worship and to serve God.

That's a picture of the church. Sometimes I hear it said. And probably sometimes it's been said to some of you. Well, the young people are the church of tomorrow. The young people are not the church of tomorrow.

The young people are part of the church today. And sometimes I hear it said from the older people. Well, you know, I've done my bit.

And I'm going to let the young folks take over from now. But Haggai teaches us, actually. No, you haven't done your bit. But as long as you and I have life and breath in us.

[14 : 38] Never mind how many grey hairs we have. Or how many few hairs we have on the top of our heads. The years roll on. Our bodies start to deteriorate. But as long as God calls us to be on this earth.

He calls us to serve him. To be part of his church. If we're trusting him. To come together as we do tonight.

To work together for God's glory. As Zechariah and Haggai did. As part of a team. Young and old.

Working together as God called them. For a work of his glory. Teamwork. Now just before we move on. I want you to note that.

Although. Zechariah and Haggai were called to do the same thing. Although they were both called to. To bring God's word. To God's people.

[15 : 40] At a particular time. They had really different ways of doing it. Because everyone is different. We have.

I'm going to pick on a couple of people here. Just now. Before you all fall asleep. With the heat in this place. If I pick on E&A.; And if I pick on Gordon.

And I've got one other person on my mind. Do you know if I see her? Just now. Margarita. Is Margarita here? Maybe she's not here. But I'll still use her anyway. If I was to ask Gordon.

And E&A.; And Margarita. To describe the same scene. You'd have three very different accounts. Of the same scene. Gordon.

Is a policeman. So if you ask him to describe a scene. The language would be very formal. It would be very legal. The kind of stuff that would. That would fit very well into a courtroom.

[16 : 36] If I was to ask E&A.; E&A; is a. He's a journalist. By trainer. And his way. Of recording. A scene.

Would probably be a bit more. Descriptive. It would probably give us. A bit more of a sense. Of the look. And the feel. Of the place. The kind of thing you'd expect. To read in a newspaper article. But Margarita.

She's an artist. So if you ask. Margarita. To give a. A good description. Of a scene. She probably wouldn't use any words. She'd just. Paint a picture.

And in some course. Of time. You'd see the picture. Of the scene. In a gallery. And. If we think about. Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai.

You could say. It is a man. Who. Who. His book. Is a bit like a report. It's. It's a book. That's. That's.

[17 : 30] It's a bit like a newspaper piece. It's a. It's a bit like a. A courtroom report. Haggai. Is somebody. Who's very straight. Talking. It's very direct. He's very clear. It's almost painfully clear.

And. Blunt. On occasions. Zechariah.

Zechariah. Young. Zechariah. He's more of a painter. And. In his book. As God.

Meets with him. One night. And. Speaks to him. In his sleep. In dreams. Zechariah. See's pictures. And.

In his. Book. Here. What he does. Is he. He shares. These pictures. He shares. These visions. He paints. Across. The pages. Of this book.

[18 : 29] These striking. Visuals. Which prompted. God's people. To think. And reflect. About. Where they were. And where. God was. Called them. To be.

So we have. Two very different. People. Zechariah. Young. Zechariah. And. Old. Haggai. They're different.

Ages. They have. Very different. Styles. Of writing. They have. Very. Different. Ways. Of. Doing. Things. But they're. They're. They're. Called. To the same. Message. They're. Called. As part.

Of a team. To bring. God's word. To God's people. And again. It's a picture. Of the church. God's people. Different ages.

Different stages. Of life. Different backgrounds. We think differently. Each one of us.

[19 : 28] Probably. Approaches. A task. Differently. But we are being called. If we are Christians. To play. Our part. As part.

Of the same team. So if you're calling. Tonight. It is to. It's to preach. YFs. And Sunday schools.

And that kind of thing. And to share your testimony. When you find yourselves. In fellowship. Do that. As God gives you opportunity. If that's your calling. If you're somebody.

Who can visit. And who loves to visit people. Then. Then go out. Into people's homes. And show them Christ. And share Christ with them. If you're someone.

Who's practical. You know. Crafty. You can use your. Your hands. Then. Use your hands. Use your skill. Use your. Your muscle. For. For Jesus sake.

[20 : 25] If you're sporty. Then. Head out. To the. Football field. And.

Remember. As you do so. You're going there. As an ambassador. For. Christ. See. Zechariah.

And Haggai. Two. Individuals. But part of the. The same team. They were. Given a message. From God. To share. And remember.

We. Have been given. A gospel. Message. From God. The son. To share. We're to go out. Into the. Whole world. And tell people.

The good news. About the life. And the death. And the resurrection. Of Christ. And we must work together. Young. Old. Middle aged.

[21 : 23] We're called to work together. To bring. To bring. This gospel. Into the world. So that gives us a kind of. A flavor. Just of. Who Zechariah.

Was. And who he was working alongside. And I want to move now. Into the actual. First few verses. Of the book. The first.

Six verses. Of the book. Really give the introduction. To us. In the book. And. The point. I would. I would give.

To. To this section. Is. What's the message. That Zechariah is bringing. He's given a message. He's bringing a message. Which can be summarized. As. Turn from sin. The first point.

Teamwork. Zechariah. Haggai. Teamwork. Second point. Is the message. That Zechariah. Is called to deliver. And the message is. Turn from sin.

[22 : 17] He's speaking to God's people. And he's saying. Turn from your sin. Verse one. In the eight months. Of the second year. Of Darius.

The word. Of the Lord. Came to the prophet. Zechariah. Son of Berechiah. Son of Aydin. The Lord. Was very angry. With your forefathers. Therefore.

Tell the people. This. Is what the Lord. Almighty. Says. Return to me. Declares. The Lord. Almighty. And I will. Return to you.

Says. The Lord. Almighty. Do not be like. Your forefathers. To whom the earlier. Prophets. Proclaimed. This is what the Lord. Almighty. Says. Turn from your evil ways. And your evil practices. But they would not listen.

Or pay attention to me. Declares the Lord. Where are your forefathers now? And the prophets. Do they live forever? But did not my words.

- [23 : 15] And my decrees. Which I commanded my servants. The prophets. Overtake your forefathers. Then they repented. And said. The Lord Almighty. Has done.
- To us. What our ways. And practices deserve. Just as he. Determined. To do. To do. To do. To do. To do. It's a very striking introduction.
- God says. So clearly. To his people. Through. Zechariah. Turn. From. Your.
- Sin. The book. The book. Starts on. A note. Of God's anger. And you might say.
- Well. What was it. That was causing. God. To be. Angry. With his people. At this point. And what was it. That had caused God. To be angry. With the previous. Generations.
- [24 : 10] As very clearly. He was. As. As made clear. In verses. Two to four. Now. Were they. Were they living. As criminal. Masterminds. What was it.
- They were doing. That was causing. The Lord. To be so angry. Were they running around. Robbing banks. And causing a disturbance. No. They were.
- Actually living. Very. Ordinary. Lives. Some of them. Were in Babylon. Which was. A place. That was.
- Everything. That God. Was not. Babylon. Was the place. The. The center. Of sin. Remember Daniel. Daniel. Daniel. Was captured.
- He's taken from. The land. That God. Had called him. To be in. He's captured. He's taken into Babylon. And. And they try and. Brainwash him. Into. To. To not believing.
- [25 : 05] Anymore. In the. The one. True God. They change his diet. Or they try to. They do everything. Possible. To. To try and drag him. Against. The faith. That he had.
- In God. Well. Many of God's people. Were in Babylon. See. Fifteen years. Before this was written.
- I won't go into detail. But the door. Was opened. From Babylon. And God's people. Who were far away. From where they should have been. Were given permission. To return back home. To the place.
- God wanted them to be. That many of them. Just couldn't be bothered. You know. They'd settled into. The way of Babylon.
- The kids were in schools. That they liked. They had neighbors. That they got on reasonably well with. They had a. Good standard of living. So even though the door was open.
- [26 : 00] Back into the place. God was calling them. And even though they had the chance. To do it. They couldn't be bothered. Maybe another day. They said. What an upheaval though.
- Not today. And now. Fifteen years. After. The door. Back into. To God's land. Had opened. God's people. In vast numbers.
- Were still. Living in Babylon. Living in the world. Quite comfortably. About forty thousand. Of God's people.
- Fifteen years ago. Years prior. When the doors were opened. Determined. That they would do. What they should do. And they returned. From Babylon. To Jerusalem. Where God. Was calling them to be.
- And once they were there. They knew that their. First priority. Must be to rebuild. The temple of God. That had been smashed down. There needed to be a place. For them to. To worship God.
- [26 : 56] So. So that was their priority. So they mobilized. They got materials. They. They. They focused. As a group. And they began to. To rebuild. The foundations. They began to rebuild.

God's temple. And initially. That went. Amazingly well. But as the surrounding nations. Saw. God's temple.

Starting to. To build back up. As the. Political. Players. Saw. God's people. Beginning to fill. With zeal again. They. They. They began to.

Persecute them. So when the going got tough. God's people gave up. And the temple.

Rebuilding project. That they began. With such. A vigor. Fifteen years previous. Was. Was now on hold. And it had been on hold. For.

[27 : 52] Well over a decade. To. See God's people. Both those in Babylon. And those who were in Jerusalem. They'd.

They'd become lukewarm. You know spiritually speaking. They'd gone to sleep. And so after a long.

Period. Of silence. God. Sounded. The alarm call. And first. He spoke through Haggai.

With these powerful. Blunt. Sermons. That came. To God's people. To call them. To wake up. And then. Two months.

After. Haggai. Began to preach. God took hold. Of Zechariah. This young. Lad. And he used. Zechariah. To call. The people.

[28 : 50] Of God. To turn. Away. From their sin. To defend. What's this got to do with us?

If I let me ask. Another question. Before we. Even get to that one. What is sin. What is it that. Caused.

God. To be angry. With his people. What is it. That God. Causes God. To be angry. With me. And you. What is this sin. That we keep dealing of.

In scripture. It. I was at a wedding. A couple of weeks back. And. In the message. I had spoken about various things.

Now. I had mentioned. Sin. And Christ. Coming to. Save us. From our sin. And one of the. The guests. Afterwards. Almost.

[29 : 49] Flew at me. She was ranting. And she was raving. That I would mention. Sin in the sermon. She says. I don't know who you think. You're talking to. I don't know who you think.

Is in this room. But. She said. I'm certainly not a sinner. Sin. My heart. Has no sin in it. And I'm offended.

That you would address me. See. She didn't understand sin. To sin.

As. Eko Tice. Puts it in. The Christianity Explored course. Is to. Is to live. Without. Reference. To God. We sometimes think.

That sin. Is just. Stealing. And killing. And brazenly lying. And all these kind of things. And these. These are part of.

[30 : 47] What is sinful. In us. You go and punch somebody. In the nose. Then. You and I are demonstrating. A sinful nature. And sinful actions. But. At the heart of sin.

It is just. That sense of. Determining. That we will live our lives. Without. Reference. To God. We will live our lives.

Our way. Apart from God. That's it. We may be very. Respectable lives. We may look.

Very moral. And reasonable people. But. If we are living. Far from God. If we are putting. Self first. Then we're in sin. You think about the word.

S. I. N. What is at the center of sin? It's I. Sin is to put I. It's to put me.

[31 : 48] It's to put my comfort. It's to put my ambitions. It's to put me. At the center. Of. My life. And the tragedy is.

That's where. God's. People were. At one time. Those certainly. Who came. From Babylon. Back to.

Jerusalem. They were determined. They would put God. And his. Glory. First. First. But now.

A few years. Down the line. They're far more. Interested. In their own. Comfort. And their own. Safety. And their own.

Plans. And their own. Bank balances. Their own. Peaceful. Existences. So even.

[32 : 47] Though they weren't. Living. Morally. Bad. Lives. They were far. From God. And they were deep.

In. Sin. And perhaps. That's where some of us. Are tonight. Living lives.

That look. Very. Decent. Living. Good. In inverted. Comma. Lives. We're not. Killing anybody.

We're not. We're not. Punching anyone. In the nose. We're not. Going and stealing. Out of people's garages. In the darkness. Hours. We're not. But we're far.

Far. From God. And we're living. For ourselves. And perhaps. Some of us here.

[33 : 43] Have never. Turn. From. Our sin. Perhaps. Some of us here. have never come to God and asked him to forgive us for the fact that we have put ourselves before him for our whole lives.

Perhaps some of us here are living tonight still with I, with me, as the centre of my universe. And God calls us to repent.

And perhaps some of us are far from God tonight because we've strayed from him.

And at one time, we were close to him. But now we've drifted. At one time we loved Jesus.

We loved to listen to him. We couldn't get enough of his word. We'd wake up in the morning. We wanted to know what he was going to say to us in the course of the day. We loved to go on our knees and pour our hearts to him in prayer.

[35 : 01] We loved to be in the place where God's people were at in church. We loved to be at the prayer meeting. We loved to be in fellowships. We loved to be in fellowships. But now we've drifted from him.

And we've settled into the ways of the world which have almost choked our faith. Maybe that's where some of us are tonight.

You know, we're hooked to love island. But we're born by the love of Christ. Certainly what our nation is that have been generations now of forefathers who have not been paying attention to God who have returned who have turned away from God.

And so what does God say to us as a nation tonight? What does God say to us as individuals in this place tonight? He says to us, repent. Repent. Turn from your sin.

That was the message that came through Zechariah, young Zechariah in 520 DC.

[36 : 19] That was the message, the first sermon that Jesus preached in his ministry in 30 AD. And that's the same message that comes to us tonight here in 2019 AD.

Turn from sin if we have never done so. Turn again from sin if we have drifted from God and into it.

Repent. And God's promise and thanks God's we're finished with it. It's given to us in verse 3. This is what the Lord Almighty says.

Return to me declares the Lord Almighty and I will return to you says the Lord Almighty.

Do you want a close walk with God? Do you want that calm and heavenly frame that we sung about? Do we want the blessedness that we've never known or we first knew but have now lost?

[37 : 48] Do we want that so refreshing? Do we want the peaceful hours that seem to have passed us by? the temple the pen says God return to me and I will return to you.

Thank you.