

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 September 2019

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Zechariah chapter 4, if you could have that open in front of you then, that would be helpful.

I want to begin this evening with the question actually that's posed to Zechariah in the vision. We find it in verse 10 of the vision. Zechariah is asked the question.

Who despises the day of small things? Who despises the day of small things?

And that was part of the word of the Lord to Zechariah. Zechariah was living in a day of small things. At one time, the temple of God was a building that was spectacular.

It was glorious. It was impressive. Everybody who saw it couldn't fail to be impressed by the wonder and the majesty of this building.

[1 : 11] But now it was rubble. At one time, Jerusalem, the city of God, was a place of great majesty.

A place where God's glory was revealed. But again, it was rubble. The glory had departed in many ways.

That's what people would have said. And the danger for God's people was to let discouragement set in. The danger for God's people, who once had been far away in exile, but now were actually back in the place that God would have them be.

The danger for them at this point in time was to despise the day they were living in. And to look back at better days and say, if only we were back then.

If only we lived in a different age. If only things were different. If only we experienced something of the revival and the glory of what people in past generations experienced.

[2 : 22] And the danger was that they would become discouraged and give in, spiritually speaking, in this day of small things. But the word of the Lord came to Zechariah.

And the word of the Lord came through Zechariah. To challenge that. To encourage God's people. Back then.

And also now. Because this is a letter not just for them. It's for us. We live in a day of small things, don't we?

I think we would generally be in agreement, spiritually speaking, that we live in a day of small things. Nationally. The country of Scotland.

It was once known. As the land of the book. It was once known for that spiritual vitality. That was in this land.

[3 : 23] But now the book is all but being closed. In every public place. It's being removed from these places where the book undergirded everything in the past.

Generations. Education. And health. And the legal framework. It's all built on the Bible. But it's been removed from the public square.

It's one of the reasons our country is such a shambles. Everyone is now doing what's right in their own eyes. We're back to the days when the judges ruled. These islands.

If we take things a bit closer to home. These are islands which people come to because they've read of amazing revivals in times past.

But now we've become somewhat sleepy. And even if we take the focus a bit closer still.

[4 : 26] Even as we look back at the last communion weekend. No one came forward. For the first time. To profess Jesus Christ.

As their Lord. And Saviour. It's a day of small things. But we must not despise such a day. We must not become discouraged.

In such a day. And so with Zechariah 4 open. We. Along with God's people of that time. Are given encouragement. In this day of small things.

Four encouragements from this vision. And the first encouragement. The first point. Is. It's an encouragement to stay awake. It's probably a good point to begin a sermon with.

To stay awake. If you fall asleep. Thank you Stuart for opening that window. It is too warm. If you fall asleep. In the sermon.

[5 : 32] And you wake up with a start. And you see that on the screen. You're really going to have a fright. But that's the first encouragement. That's the first word of instruction in the vision.

Verse 1. Zechariah writes. Then the angel who talked with me returned. And wakened me. As a man is wakened from his sleep. Sometimes we need that.

Sometimes we need just that. That prod to keep us alert. And the Lord gives it to us. Not usually through angels. Jesus. Usually through his word.

And that's the experience. I think of. Of everyone who's a Christian. We can speak about times. We can think about. Occasions where. We have been reading the Bible. And you. You almost go into a glazed.

A glazed over mode. You're going through chapter after chapter. And it's not really. Having. A particular impact. And all of a sudden. Certain verses. In the middle of a chapter.

[6 : 31] It's as if they jump off the page. And God takes them. And he speaks. Directly into our hearts. And our lives. And we're woken up. With a start.

Or sometimes we can be in church. Listening to someone preaching. And. We can be drifting a bit. I know that happens.

And then. It's as if. All of a sudden. Everything. That focuses in on us. And the minister. Who may not know anything. Of our circumstances.

The minister. Who may be visiting here. Totally disconnected. From our lives. All of a sudden. Seems to. Start speaking. With a message. That seems to be crafted. Just for us.

And when that. When that hits us. It can be alarming. We're woken up. The world will never wake you up.

[7 : 35] The world. The flesh. The devil. Will. Cause us. To go into. A spiritual sleep. And that's why we.

We need to. Whether we feel like it or not. We need to be in the word. We need to have our Bibles open. If your Bible has been closed.

For a long time. You probably are in a state of insomnia. It's when our Bibles are open. That we get these encouragements.

These. Prods on the ribs. Spiritually speaking. To wake up. That's where we need to be. At the means of grace. And. Young folks. That's just a. It's an old fashioned word. For saying.

We need to be in the places. Where. Where the Bible is open. Church. Prayer meeting. Sunday school.

[8 : 34] YF. Scripture union in school. It's in these places. Where God's word is. Is open.

That we will be encouraged. Through these prods. Of the Holy Spirit. To stay awake. So that's the first point.

In terms of encouragement. We have an encouragement here. With Zechariah. To stay awake. Second encouragement. The second point. Is. We're encouraged to see.

The angel. Here. The interpreting angel. Says to Zechariah. What. Do you. See. He wakens him up. From this state of.

Of sleep. Which is a bit of a head bender. Because he already is sleeping. Remember. This is night time visions. Zechariah is sleeping. And in his sleep. He's given these visions.

[9 : 29] And in this vision. He seems to have gone to sleep. And he's woken up. From his sleep. Although he's still sleeping. And the angel says. To Zechariah. He says to him.

Now that you're. Now that you're awake. Now that you're alert. What do you see? There's an encouragement here. To see. God has given us. This world. The majesty.

Of all that's around us. So that we will see him. So that we'll. Ask the question. As we stand back in awe. As we look at the mountains.

And the skies. And the hills. And all that's around us. These things are signposts. So that we'll see God. God has given us his word.

He has given us his son. Jesus. The word made flesh. In order that we will see. He's not a God. He's not a God. Who blindfolds us. He's not a God.

[10 : 26] Who hides himself. From us. He's the God. Who reveals. Himself. To us. And he reveals. These. Spiritual truths.

To us. In order. That we will see. We can't see everything. Some people can fixate on. Mysteries. Within scripture.

Doctrines. Election. Predestination. Things like that. And fixate on these things. And delve deeper and deeper. Into them. In order to see. And there's some things. Which are mysteries. The secret things.

Belong to the Lord. Some things we have to leave. To one side. Our minds. Are not. Big enough. To grasp the wonder. Of God. And his schemes.

But there are. Other things. That God has made plain to us. And he's made them plain to us. So that we will. See. The visions of Zechariah. Are not here to. To frustrate us.

[11 : 24] They're there to help us see. And the angel. Like a good teacher. Says to Zechariah. What do you see? It's an encouragement here.

To see. Young people in particular. Maybe this relates more pointedly. To the young people. But it relates. In degrees to everybody.

We need to be aware. That the people. That we listen to. And the people. That we follow. On all these apps. That are on our phones.

The people. Whom we allow to speak. Into our lives. The people. That we allow to. To teach us. They will have an effect. On what we see. If you follow people.

On social media. And if you listen. To everything. That they are saying. You'll start. To see the world. In the way.

[12 : 23] That they see the world. If all our friends. And our influences. Are this worldly. Then this world. Is all that we'll see. God wants us to see more.

Than this world. We're only here. For a short while. Then there's eternity. There's heaven. There's hell. God wants us to see that.

He wants to give us. Spiritual vision. But in order to have. That spiritual vision. We need to take. Time with him. As we sang. In Psalm 130. We need to wait. Upon.

The Lord. That's a discipline. It's a daily discipline. Flick for a second. To Luke chapter 10. Please. Because in Luke chapter 10.

We get a. We get a good example. Of. How we're to be. Luke chapter 10.

[13 : 27] And at verse 38. Here we have an example. Of somebody. Who is determined. And disciplined.

In her waiting. Upon. The. Lord. Luke. That's a chapter 10. And at verse. Thirty eight. As Jesus.

And his disciples. Were on their way. He came to a village. Where a woman. Named Martha. Opened her home to him. She had a sister. Called Mary. Who sat. At the Lord's feet.

Listening to what he said. But Martha. Was distracted. By all the preparations. That had to be made. She came to him. And asked. Lord. Don't you care. That my sister. Has left me.

To do all the work. By myself. Tell her to help me. Martha. Martha. The Lord answered. You are worried. And upset. About many things. But few things.

[14 : 22] Are needed. Or indeed. Only one. Mary. Has chosen. What is better. And it will not be taken. Away from her. You know.

It's a picture. Something that happened in history. But it's a picture for our teaching. We have an encouragement. To see. And how often.

In this life. We are so busy. That we end up only seeing this life. I mean. Think about this. Martha. Had God the son. In the next room.

Jesus. In the next room. Wanting. Her to spend time with him. And yet. All she could see. Was the dishes. But Mary.

As she took time. To be with Jesus. She was unable. To see more. And more of the glory. Of Jesus. She was. Inable to see more.

[15 : 22] And more of the will. Of Jesus. For her life. And we need to be like Mary. Day by day. Take time. With the Lord.

Asking that he will open our eyes. So that we will see him. That we will see. The world. As he wants us to see the world. That he will see people. As he sees people.

So there's the encouragement. To stay awake. There's the encouragement. To see. And the third thing here. Is there's the encouragement. To understand. Thinking about seeing.

To pick up the. Picture that we're given. In this vision. Most of us. At some point. Have been at a. Has been at the optician. For a sight test. You sit in the chair.

And. The charts on the wall. And the optician. Will say to us. Well what do you see? Can you read the top line? Can you read the next line?

[16 : 29] What about the third line? Are you getting on okay with that? What about the fourth line? What about the fifth line? What's the smallest. Letter that you can actually see? And the angel. Says to Zechariah.

Here. What do you see? And it seems that Zechariah. Has pretty good vision. Still verse two. I answered. I see a. A solid gold lampstand. With a bowl. At the top. And seven lights in it.

With seven channels. To the lights. Also there are two. Olive trees by it. One on the right of the bowl. And the other on its left. Zechariah can see. So when he's asked the question.

What do you see? Seems he has pretty good vision. And he. He tells the interpreting angel. All that he's able to see. In this vision. But Zechariah. Zechariah wants to know more. He wants to know.

What does this all mean? I can see it. But why am I seeing it? I asked the angel. Verse four. Who talked with me. What are these my Lord?

[17 : 25] He answered. Do you not know what these are? No my Lord. I replied. And there's a really good practical point for us.

When we don't know. We actually had it illustrated this morning. With one of the wee ones. I asked the question about. What's pride? And one of the wee.

Guys down here. Said. I don't know. He didn't try and come up with an answer. That he. You know. That he wasn't sure about. He didn't know the answer.

So he just said. I don't know. And that's actually. A really helpful thing. For us. When we don't know. Or understand. What God is saying to us.

Or showing us. Or doing in our lives. The best thing we can do. Is tell him that. Don't you know what these are?

[18 : 23] Says the angel. When the tone of that. To me. Sounds like. It's the kind of question. I would be tempted to ask. And say. Answer and say. Well. Yeah. I think. I think I know.

But Zechariah. Hasn't got a clue. So he admits it. No. I. I. I don't know. He says. I don't know.

What these things mean. I don't know. What these things are. And having admitted that. The meaning. The understanding. That he needs. Flows from this.

Verse 6. So he said to me. This is. Is the word of the Lord. To Zerubbabel. Not by might. Nor by power. But my. By my spirit. Says the Lord.

Almighty. What. Are you. A mighty mountain. Before Zerubbabel. You will become. Level ground. Then he will bring out. The capstone. To shouts of. God bless it.

[19 : 20] God bless it. Then the word of the Lord. Came to me. The hands of Zerubbabel. Have laid the foundation. Of this temple. His hands. Will also complete it. Then you will know.

That the Lord. Almighty. Has sent me to you. Now who was Zerubbabel. He was the governor. Zerubbabel was the one. Who was charged. To oversee. This rebuilding project.

Which was a hard project. It had been a hold. For a long time. They suffered a lot. Over it. They faced a lot. Of opposition. Over it. He took a lot. Of political heat. Over this thing.

It was something. That would have troubled him. And so the word of the Lord. Comes to Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel. The governor. To encourage him. And the word of the Lord.

Comes to Zechariah. And to all the people. To encourage them. To persevere. In the work. That God had called them to do. And the pictures.

[20 : 15] That Zechariah saw. Illustrate that. The olive oil. Which filled the bowls. Which in turn. Kept the lampstand.

The light. Within the lampstand. Going. Was an illustration of God. The spirit at work. Without the oil of the spirit.

There could be no light. There could be no energy. There could be no progress. But because this. Lampstand that Zechariah. Is seeing.

Which represents. God's people. Because it had a constant. Supply of olive oil. From the olive trees. On either side of the bowl. The light would shine. That's what he's seeing. The work.

Which had stopped. For so long. And I was just. Beginning to restart. Zerubbabel. Is being told. This work. Would go on. It would continue.

[21 : 17] It would reach. A completion. And Zerubbabel. Himself. Would see it. And would be instrumental. In this. But. Although he was. Instrumental.

In this. The work. The progress. The completion. It would not be by might. It would not be by human power. It would be by God's spirit.

And because God was behind this work. The task of rebuilding. Which seemed to be such a mighty mountain. It would become level ground.

The rubble. Would be cleared. The capstone. Which was the final stone. That was set down to mark completion.

It would be laid. And God's blessing. Would be known. That was the promise. That was the picture. That was the encouragement.

[22 : 20] In this day of small things. Weerspeak. The commentator says. With their limited resources. Completing the temple. Must have looked to these Jews.

As impossible. As moving a mountain. But God told Zerubbabel. That he would. By God's power. Level the mountain. And make it a plain.

Jesus told his disciples. That exercising faith. Like a mustard seed. Small. But alive. Could move mountains. And that's the vision.

That's the understanding. That Zerubbabel. Is given. Through Zechariah. Through this vision. That comes from the Lord. And what a picture.

Of encouragement. This was for. The flagging. Zerubbabel. I want to ask the question. Tonight.

[23 : 19] Is there any. Zerubbabel's here. I want to ask for a show of hands. You've probably never been asked this question before. You'll probably never be asked it again.

Any Zerubbabel's here tonight. Anyone here tonight. Who as a Christian. Is feeling discouraged. Anyone who's feeling tired.

Is there anyone here tonight. Who. For all the brave faces. That. You put on. You're worn down. You're worn down. And you're facing obstacles.

That you just cannot. Fathom. How you could possibly. Ever get over. Is there anyone who is. Wrestling in the midnight hours.

With tasks in our minds. That just seem too much for us. my expectation is there's a lot of Zerubelis in this room tonight I'm one of them often and this is a vision for you and for me how can we be energized if we feel like we're flagging how can we be made bright again when our vision and our witness is dulled the answer not by might not by power but by my spirit says the Lord Bentley the commentator says many churches today are busy faithfully preaching the gospel yet few people come to faith in Christ why is this?

[25 : 22] sometimes the teaching is not the pure gospel sometimes the preaching is not watered by prayer sometimes there may be weeks passing by where no unbelievers are present but sometimes everything has been done according to God's word and still unbelievers are content to sit and listen to the gospel and remain unsaved that's the problem that the commentator expounds here and then he comes to the answer what do we need to do?

he says how we need to pray for an outpouring of God's spirit upon his church and its witness today not by might not by power not by methods not by techniques not by our clever ideas but by my spirit says the Lord so what do we do?

what do we do when we grasp this message and when we understand the essence of this vision? we should be encouraged to pray and pray and pray that God would pour out his spirit that he would be at work in us and through us the encouragement to understand that Zechariah is given in this vision and finally there's an encouragement here as we finish to serve the final part of the vision is see Zechariah just thinking a little bit more about what he's already seen and in verses 10 there to to to 14 well let's read it these seven are the eyes of the Lord which range throughout the earth then I asked the angel what are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand again I asked him what are these two olive trees branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil he replied do you not know what these are?

no my Lord I said so he said these are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of the earth it's God by his spirit who's at work that's clear but the amazing thing is that God is promising through this vision to work through his people and so his people his anointed ones are being encouraged to to serve Zerubbabel Joshua all God's people are being given encouragement in this day of small things when heads were down to serve the Lord God reassures them in verse 10 he's still watching he gives encouragement in this final section that he's still working he's still working in the power of the spirit and he's working through his people the olive trees from which the oil flowed symbolized the spirit of God as I've said already but the spirit of God would work in and through those who were anointed to serve the Lord

Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest that's how God promised he would work in Zechariah's day through this vision and that's how God still works in every day the work of salvation has been done that's finished as we sang in Psalm 22 he Jesus has done it it's finished it's completed it's perfect but the work of evangelism the work of shining the light of the gospel into a dark world Jesus calls us to that service James Philip says the candlestick represents the people of God who sit in the midst of the world to be a light this was God's calling for them this was their vocation in the world if you're a Christian that's actually all you need to know if you're a Christian what is your calling what is your vocation whether you're a social worker or an office worker or in a leisure centre or in the police or in the medical world or in the warehouse the canteen the croft the fishing boat the pulpit our calling is to be a light in this dark world

[30 : 54] Jesus has promised he will build his church but he will do it through his people who when we are filled with the Holy Spirit will be enabled to do the work of his kingdom so the encouragement to finish with is the encouragement to serve we heard it this morning we heed it again this evening the work of the disciple is not to be served but to serve to pour out our lives in such a way that people will see something of Christ in us it may be the day of small things but God is still at work so don't be discouraged don't give up be encouraged to serve him we'll pray heavenly father we thank you for this vision which spoke into the life of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest and

Zechariah and Haggai and all of your people in that day and we thank you that this is a vision that still speaks into into our lives and in this place on this day and we pray that you would help us to hear to believe and to be moved to respond in faith and in obedience to all that you call us to help us we pray if we are your people to to serve you in the work of the gospel wherever you allow us to be and for any here tonight who are not yet your people we pray father that you would enable them to see and understand the danger of the place that they are in as those who are still in sin and the urgency and the opportunity that there is to come to receive the grace of Jesus we thank you that he has done the work of salvation we thank you that the doors of his church are still open salvation is still offered and we pray that any such who have not yet received it would do so even this evening as they respond we pray in faith and we ask this in Jesus name

Amen we will sing to finish mission praise seven hundred and I thank you to hago