

Blessed Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church
Adult Sunday School
25 February 2018

Visions of Zechariah
Zechariah 4:1-14 (KJV)

¹ And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, ² And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which *are* upon the top thereof: ³ And two olive trees by it, one upon the right *side* of the bowl, and the other upon the left *side* thereof. ⁴ So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my lord? ⁵ Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. ⁶ Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. ⁷ Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it. ⁸ Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ⁹ The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. ¹⁰ For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth. ¹¹ Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof? ¹² And I answered again, and said unto him, What *be these* two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden *oil* out of themselves? ¹³ And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be*? And I said, No, my lord. ¹⁴ Then said he, These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

(1) VISION 5: THE CANDLESTICK AND TWO OLIVE TREES

¹ And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, ² And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: ³ And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. ⁴ So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? ⁵ Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. ⁶ Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Do we serve God by doing much without praying? I know that it is shamefully true of me oftentimes. But in the apostle Paul, we find a man who is not only astonishingly active, serving his Lord all over the Gentile world, but also a contemplative and real model of intercessory prayer.

We can see how he combined these two important aspects of his spiritual journey. We can see through Scriptures how this man remembered in prayer so many people, even praying in depth for believers he had never met. I am challenged from the example of this passionate, prayerful Christian leader.

This 5th vision of Zechariah was meant to help the builders to be labourers together with God and not rely on their own strength. Zechariah was asleep when he was awakened by the interpreting angel. The angel was nudging him to rehearse what he saw. Zechariah saw a candle-stick of gold with a bowl on the top, having seven lamps, and each lamp furnished with seven feeding tubes, making forty-nine channels in all, and two olive trees standing beside the candlestick. From the two crowded branches the clustering olives were pouring a constant supply of golden-coloured oil into tubes that led into the bowl. This makes the lamps self-sustaining.

The prophet inquired about the meaning of this vision, and after some delay, was told that it conveyed the truth that in carrying on the work of rebuilding the Temple, it was not by human power, but by the strength of God. The delay heightened the curiosity of the inquirer.

This is a picture of the source of strength for Christian service: *“not by might nor by power but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts”* (v 6).

I must walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Help me, Lord, to rely on You this day to fulfil Your will for my life.

(2) NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER BUT BY MY SPIRIT

Zechariah saw a special candlestick, which the Jews call the Menorah. It is of solid gold and very precious. The candlestick had seven branches. This 5th vision signifies the completion of the Temple. The Manorah is a significant furnishing in the tabernacle and temple. It is to shine forth as light and witness to the world of the living and true God. Israel is to be the light of the world by their worship of Him, reflecting God’s light, just like the Church today.

Every church is symbolized by a lamp into which God puts the light which is to be reflected and spread abroad. Holding forth the word of life is the sacred mandate of every local church. The Holy Spirit is the power that energizes the church in her efforts of missions and evangelism.

The candlestick is lit by the oil supplied by the two olive trees, the lifeline to keep the light burning. It is to give constant light. The olive tree takes a long time to mature but will become very profitable. It symbolizes a provision of continuous supply. Olive oil is thus a beautiful emblem of the rich and ever fresh presence and grace of the Spirit. The two olive trees describe the two leaders Joshua and Zerubbabel (v 14) in which the Holy Spirit abides and energizes for every God-honouring endeavour. Through them, God equipped His people to complete the rebuilding, despite shortages.

May we be a fit temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, shining for our Lord. The fresh graces of the Spirit will shine forth unhindered. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but I will remember the name of the Lord my God.

(3) VISION 5: WHO ART THOU, O GREAT MOUNTAIN?

⁷ *Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.* ⁸ *Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,* ⁹ *The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.* ¹⁰ *For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.*

The question in verse 7 is rhetorical, filled with irony. The mountain of life, any big obstacle that threatens to undo us, is no match for the Holy Spirit that fills and leads and guides us. With God's Spirit in us, no obstacle is too great. The people's lethargy and weakness would soon give way to the Holy Spirit, and the mountain would become level ground. The last stone called the capstone is placed by Zerubbabel on the completed Temple to shoutings and crying of jubilation, "*Grace, grace.*" The fundamental application of the word grace is "an unmerited favour or regard in God's sight." They were not rejoicing for their own abilities or national might that brought the Temple to its completion, but the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. This is the same spiritual power that filled the frightened disciples to become bold preachers of God's Word at Pentecost (Acts 2).

Zechariah saw in the vision Zerubbabel holding the plumbline for the labourers as they set the final stone in place, squaring it with the rest of the structure. The people who saw the pitiful foundation being laid were the same ones who rejoiced when at last the final stone crowned the second temple. The seven eyes on the stone seen earlier in Zechariah 3:9 were the watchful eyes of God that presided over the building efforts to its completion. Ezra 6:13- 15 describes the completion of the Temple.

The advancement of God's kingdom will not be hindered but will receive His watchful care until His Kingdom is established. This is the lesson for us today. Believers responding to God's call in any area of service can take comfort in this vision of encouragement. The Holy Spirit works in tandem with His good and comforting words which God gives encouraging them to press on till victory.

They travel lightly whom God's grace carries. Help me, Lord, to be dependent on You today, and every day.

(4) THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS (1)

"And You Visited Me" is a book that contains testimonies of God's blessings on the Prison Fellowship organized by Louise Purvis.

This ministry is well described by J.D. Miller (1904) when he wrote, "Christ is building His Kingdom with Earth's broken things. Men want only the strong, the successful, the victorious, the "unbroken," in building their kingdom: but God is the God of the unsuccessful, of those who have failed. Heaven is filling with earth's broken lives, and there is no *bruised reed* that Christ cannot take and restore to glorious blessedness and beauty. He can take the life crushed by pain and sorrow and make it into a harp whose music shall be all praise. He can lift earth's saddest failure up to Heaven's glory."

An inmate Alan Fraser testifies, "On a November night in 1978 I made the biggest mistake of my life. I was out 'on the town' and drinking quite heavily, as usual. Then I ran out of money. But it didn't matter because I knew how to get more – and I didn't care how I got it. Walking down a dark street I saw someone coming towards me. On the spot I decided I was going to take his money. I was carrying a knife so I set upon the man and stabbed him severely. There was so much hatred in my heart for everybody that I really didn't care what happened to me. But the laugh was on me – the guy didn't have any money. The only thing he was carrying was a Bible – and he offered it to me. I threw it back at him in disgust. Later that night I was arrested and the next day charged with 'possession of an offensive weapon' and 'attempted murder.' I was sentenced to eight years

imprisonment. In the courtroom, Kenneth spoke out. ‘I’m sorry you’ve got such a long sentence,’ he said. ‘I’ll pray for you.’ I started my sentence in Aberdeen and later transferred to Perth for three years. Later on I was moved to Dungavel prison. And this was where I began to recognize that God had an interest in my life.”

God never puts anyone in a place too small to grow in. Lord, I realize that afflictions are but the shadow of Your wings.

(5) THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS (2)

Alan Fraser continues his testimony, “I started to go to the meetings, but I was often quite disruptive. Sometimes I said terrible things to the Fellowship leaders, but in the end I realize that they loved me anyway. I couldn’t understand it – I had never known or been shown that kind of love before. I went back to the dormitory and felt deeply troubled within myself.

One Friday evening I told Pat (a leader of the Fellowship) everything that had happened on that November night back in 1978. It didn’t change the Christian love that showed in her face. The only thing I can remember her saying was: ‘You know enough, Alan.’ I knew what she meant. I went back to the dormitory but I never slept a wink that night. The next day I went down to the chapel, still deeply troubled within myself. I couldn’t understand why I suddenly felt so dirty. ‘Oh God, help me,’ I whispered. ‘Make me clean.’ And He did! Deep inside I felt an instant sense of release – release from the past; release from guilt; release from my own thoughts about myself. As I sat there I had a wonderful feeling of actually knowing Jesus and experiencing a relationship with Him. There was no doubt in my mind that Jesus had saved me and I knew that He is still alive. Tears just poured down my face and I felt no fear or anxiety at all. Next day I saw the mate who had told me about the Fellowship group. ‘I’ve become a Christian!’ I said excitedly. ‘Jesus has forgiven me! And He’ll forgive you too...’

Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel, the governor, were the leaders of the building project. They were entrusted with the task of rebuilding the spiritual life of Israel. It began with the completion of the Temple where worship was to be restored.

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.” Thank You, Lord, for this new life in Christ.