

# Yet now be strong O Zerubbabel (Quality Good)

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Date: 20 November 2003

Preacher: Wood, Clement (1920-2010)

- [ 0 : 00 ] In dependence upon the Lord for all needed help, I venture to draw your prayerful attention to Haggai chapter 2, verses 4 and 5.
- Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedek, the high priest, and be strong, O ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and walk.
- For I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts, according to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you.
- Fear ye not. Lord, we have before us this evening, in the word of God, words of reproof, words of exaltation, words of encouragement, and words of promise.
- As I try to pray, may there be much heart-searching, an earnest prayer for spiritual profit, for growth in grace, for reviving of that work of grace in our heart.
- [ 2 : 13 ] The key words of this prophecy came, the word of the Lord. Five times do we read, the word of God coming through his servant Haggai, and all in the space of three months, and about twenty-four days.
- His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour. The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.
- Then again, another word that we have here is the Lord of hosts. May faith be given in all the upheavals of the world today, and in the church, and around us, to look up to the Lord of hosts.
- Then another gracious word for our thoughtfulness tonight is this word consider. And not just a passing thought, it's laid deep to heart, examine it very closely.
- I shall not be long or spent length of the background which is known to you. You remember that the Jews were being carried into captivity for seventy years.
- [ 3 : 53 ] Then under Cyrus, there was a return to Jerusalem. And then in the early days of that return, the foundation of the temple was built.
- Remembering the temple of Solomon was destroyed. But when that foundation was laid amidst joy and sadness, joy among those that were the younger generation, to see the hand of God appearing and the beginnings of another temple, a sorrow with the old saints that remembered the first temple as they could not compare the beauty of it or the glory of it to the one that was going to be built.
- Then opposition arose. wherever God's work is begun and progressing, whether collectively in a church, a family, or individually, there would be opposition.
- An opposition that was so strong, it was supported by the king that the work had got to stop and the people therefore stopped.
- But it is evident that whilst they did not say, no, we will not continue in the work, but one day we might, there was an indifference, there was an unconcern, as you have, as we've read it in the prophecy tonight.
- [ 5 : 32 ] Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your sealed houses and this house be liveways? He didn't say that they wouldn't go back, but the time wasn't ready.

They had no inclination to go back. The difficulties were so great that they felt, no, we cannot do anything, we're so weak, we're so insufficient. But God raised up both Haggai and Zechariah to awaken by the word of God the people and to stir them up and to encourage them to return.

Go to the mountain, bring wood and build the house and I will take pleasure in it and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Putting the world first, self first, leads to impoverishment.

I say, I know there might be financial gain, but it will not profit. We have here the effect of the withholding of the rain and the Lord says, you look for so much and you brought in so little and then there comes a question with just one word.

Why? May that lay hold upon us tonight, personally. Search our hearts and try us in our own personal state and condition.

[ 7 : 11 ] Mine house is laid waste and ye run every man unto his own house. Now you may say, surely that is not applicable to us. Look at us, we've come here tonight.

It's the weeknight service. Yes, beloved friend. But whilst that is a great mercy and shows diligence and God will bless it, I've been thankful that I don't boast of it, but I've not neglected the weeknight services or prayer meetings since I was baptized.

And I've been blessed in it. Spiritual profit in it. Encouraged in it. Never been the poorer for it. But my friend here, he says, look, the heaven over you has stayed from dew and the earth has stayed from a fruit.

I call from drought. He said, you came and you looked for so much and why? There was nothing in it. As he says, you earned money and it's like putting the money in a bag with holes in it.

You came to gather much and you wanted to eat and you weren't satisfied. Not enough to drink. You were cold because your clothes weren't sufficient and so forth.

[ 8 : 25 ] Now, who is this employed spiritually or providentially in our paths? If we put self first entirely and neglect God and his ways, we shall be impoverished thereby.

Spiritually. if not literally. My dear friend, may God help us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness that all these things may be added unto us.

But, here comes the Holy Spirit of God. Here comes the Lord of hosts speaking. Here comes the awakening call. Here comes the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message.

Here comes to speak the word of God. And here's the promise of Almighty God. I am with you, Seth, the Lord.

And the Lord stirred up the Spirit. Now, that's what I feel I need, perhaps you do too, to pray for. We've got to be careful.

[ 9 : 34 ] We don't want stirring up the Spirit in our own way. By that I mean in a kind of way that, oh, I can do things, or self-sufficiency, or the flesh, or innovation.

My beloved friends, what we feel, I feel like, I put it myself, the need is that stirring up of spiritual exercise, constant prayer, waiting upon God, watching his hand, that reviving influence of the Holy Spirit of God.

And we read that the people did fear before the Lord. They were led to be moved in the love to God, in the concern as they saw how they'd been neglecting the word of God, how they had sought the comfort providentially of their life.

One has said wealth withheld from God will surely lead to poverty, poverty spiritually. My friend, may grace be given to us to rise up afresh in confession of our sin.

Oh, the danger of being indifferent and unconcerned about their sinfulness, the coldness of their heart, the prayerlessness.

[ 11 : 10 ] Though, looking at ourselves, wouldn't think anything was wrong. We're all here tonight. I say this lovingly. And I would take it that you're all well, physically.

But what about your soul? What about mine? Are we spiritually healthy? I'm speaking lovingly. At least, I feel to need it myself.

I'm reviving and reviving, but let us not despair. You see, the people really almost got to the point of despairing. Yes, they hadn't given up the thought that they would go back and build the temple, but everything seemed to be against them.

And they don't, well, it doesn't seem to say they prayed, it doesn't seem to say that they were waiting for God to appear or washing his hand until the Lord sent his servant. And then that stirred them up.

And then you find that they did come and did walk in the house of the Lord of hosts their God. That is, not only was it Zerubbabel and Joshua, but the people and they had a mind to work and come in the house of the Lord.

[ 12 : 27 ] Now, 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?

I cannot help but say this. I wasn't here in the days of Mr. Gibrose. Chapel was full. Not now, is it? That is general, isn't it?

Largely speaking. But, my friend, we must not despair. The vital thing is not so much the chapel full, as much as we love to see it, is the work of the Spirit.

There can be more spirituality and God's work among a few than a multitude without spiritual exercise. Don't misunderstand me there.

We long to see others gathered in. Long to see the work of the Spirit. But, my friend, the vital thing is this, that we should not because here is the word of this.

[ 13 : 30 ] Yet, now, it's that word that lays hold on me for a moment. You're ready to give up. You're ready to despond. You say, how can we stand up against this? Look at all the evil in the world.

Look at all the error. Look at the state of all the churches in the country. Look at the power of Rome. Look at all the eastern religions. Look at all the terrorism and everything there is.

Yes, we do. But, my friend, we must look up and now, however dark, however difficult the way may be, however despondent we may be, may God give us that grace to take courage.

Thank God and take courage. Because, I'm going to turn right aside for a moment, Titus, Paul said, I, for this cause, left I thee in Crete.

What did that mean? You read what it was in Crete. A most difficult field to labour in. You must turn it up if you want to read it when you get home. You were in his place there, but he was to labour there and set things in order there.

[ 14 : 45 ] By the grace of God, moved by the Spirit, may we be helped thus to awaken and be strong.

And this strength is not, I'm going to do it, I'll soon put matters right. It would be nothing of I, it would be all of God.

And we pray that the Lord himself will appear for us and in us and that we may say, out of weakness, made strong.

Who, yet, now be strong. And it's, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord, and be strong. O Joshua, son of Josach, the high priest, and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work.

So it's not only, we may say, pastor, or preacher, or deacon, or members, but all. And you may say, well, how can that word be applied in the word work?

[ 15 : 50 ] I feel this spiritual exercise, spiritual hunger, spiritual thirst, continuing at the throne of grace, praying for the blessing of the Lord in your own soul, the blessing of the Lord in our midst through the word of God, confirmed with signs following, the evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit of God, seen in the conversion of sinners, seen in the gathering of those lost sheep, seen in the restoration of the backslider, seen in more spirituality in our preaching, in our praying, seeing an increased appetite as we turn to the word of God, seeing how we pray earnestly that it may not be just a casual reading of the scriptures, but that it may be, it may be, sorry,

I've lost my head, lost my mind, casual reading of the scriptures or just a word of prayer, my friend, that there may be spirituality in it, may be the Spirit of God in it, yet now be strong, and be strong, all ye people, saith the Lord, and for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.

This is the secret, and this is the decision, it won't to us, if it's I'm doing it, what it is, it's I'm nothing, but Lord, use me, help me.

You may say, yes, that's all right for the minister, and the deacons too, yes, and you might say, for the members, yes, but what about you, if you fear God? Your life should be a life of witness, a life of usefulness, a life that speaks of Jesus, a life that is seen that as you labor on, you have before you the coming of the Lord.

I may have mentioned to you some time ago, travelers in Switzerland, they went through, passed an estate with the most beautiful garden.

[ 18 : 19 ] The gardener was working, and they admired it, they said, oh, and he said, oh, the owner was away, and they said, well, I suppose he's coming back tomorrow by the way that you've got it already, he said, I don't know, I don't know when he's coming, it's always ready whenever he will come.

I've often thought of that. We might say, oh, well, he's not coming for a month, so I need to worry too much about it. But here was a man, zealous, what we need is this continuing day by day, and to pray day by day that the Lord may use us and help us and make use of us.

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedek, the high priest, and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts, according to the word which I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt.

Here we plead what God has spoken, but I want to come particularly to this last clause. So my spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not.

Look for a moment at their own spirit. It was selfish, a wrong spirit, it was worldly, it was idle, they were faint-hearted, and much more could be said.

[ 20 : 12 ] But my spirit, there was then a change wrought. We see obedience, we see humility, we see sincerity, we see the fear of God, we behold the unity of them as they labored together.

My spirit remaineth among you. Let us be very clear, when the Lord begins the work of grace in a sinner's heart, the new birth, death, that work will be performed, the Holy Spirit will never be taken utterly from that favored soul.

But there can be the withdrawing of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit can be grieved, the Spirit can be quenched.

we need to be more sensitive to this. You know, if we, well, husband and wife, if there's real love between husband and wife, there will be a desire never to quench that love or grieve one another.

Why? Because you love one another. Now, if we say we love the Lord, if we say that we love the Lord Jesus, then should there not be constantly that concern in our heart, am I grieving the Spirit?

[ 22 : 12 ] Am I doing that? Some will say, well, your sins are all forgiven, and therefore why worry? My friend, that is a great danger, there's a false rest.

If we have our sins again, there should be love so intense, burning constantly with a desire that we might do that which is right in the sight of God, and walk more tenderly in the fear of our God.

Speaking of the work of the Spirit, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, the Holy Spirit moving in a heart dead, trespasses and sin far off from God in darkness.

God said, let there be light, and you have equipped who were dead in trespasses and sin, and the Holy Spirit works, and brings spiritual life.

I turn now to John chapter 3, which is the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning the new birth. Let me just read it correctly in your hearing as the Lord speaks to Nicodemus.

[ 23 : 28 ] that which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Here is the new creature, here is a new creation, here is spiritual life.

Without that, it's all flesh. Mind you, whilst there is the new creation, still there is the flesh, still that will be with us to the dying day, but this new creation, this spiritual life, will stand and live.

And as the dear Lord says, marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again, the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou canst, here is the sound thereof, thou canst not tell whence it cometh, whether it goeth, so every one that is born of the Spirit, likened of the wind, that you cannot see it, but you feel it, and you know it, and you can see, yes, even in the tree, even if the faintest bruise, there is just a little movement, I need not enlarge the Spirit's work, oh my dear friend, how vital this is, now what does the Spirit do?

Convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and this is the mighty work of the Spirit, a true conviction of sin, and yet, mercifully, we are not left in that state without the way of salvation, because the Holy Spirit leads into truth, leads poor sinners to Christ, takes of the things of Jesus, and reveals the things of Jesus to a poor, seeking, trembling soul.

My Spirit remaineth among you, and so here again the love of Christ is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit of God, and that's a beautiful word in the epistle to Romans chapter 5, I think it is, where we read of the sweet operation of the Holy Spirit that sheds abroad the love of Christ in a poor sinner's heart, and how is this made known?

[ 25 : 43 ] I love that which follows my meditation on this word this afternoon, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us, and how is it revealed?

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, for as they for a righteous man will one die, yet better venture for a good man, as some would even dare to die.

But God commandeth his love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Oh, Holy Spirit, do lead us to the Calvary, lead us to the Saviour, open our eyes, pour in the love of Christ, oh, as they'll just bring us to our knowledge of our sinnership, as we've grown under our sin, oh, bring us afresh, lead us to the cross, lead us to the dear Saviour, shed abroad that love in our hearts.

My Spirit remaineth among you. And the Holy Spirit also confirms and strengthens our faith, the sealing of the Spirit, that whereby we say, I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he's able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

my Spirit remaineth among you. Again, as we meditate on this precious word, there's the fruit of the Spirit.

[ 27 : 25 ] We only know too well and painfully the fruit of the flesh. Where's fruit? Where's the fruit of the Spirit?

to be seen in our life that speaks of the grace of God in our heart. Oh, as I think of it, we turn into the epistle to the Galatians, I think it is, where we read of the fruit of the Spirit.

Just read first of the alternative. idolatry, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedations, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such the like.

That's where we would be but for the grace of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love. Love to the Lord, love to one another, love to even to pray for enemies, love to the truth, and long suffering, to bear patiently that which is hard to bear, gentleness.

That's not a sacrifice to truth. That's contending earnestly for the faith once delivered of the saints, but there's a gentleness. Again, joy.

[ 29 : 04 ] You may say, I don't seem to know much about joy. Why is it, why is it that there's a lack of joy?

There's a hindrance, isn't there? Yet there are times where we know a little of that joy unspeakable and full of glory.

joy. And then it goes on to say peace. That peace, we do say, yes, I know that time when the Lord has come and spoken peace to my poor heart.

Oh, how sweet it is, but peace through the cross, peace through sins forgiven, peace between God and the sinner, and then, and I must not tarry, but no, and goodness and faith.

My friend, these fruits brought forth to the praise and honor and glory of our God. Then, the gifts of the Spirit, my Spirit remaineth among you.

[ 30 : 11 ] And here we see the sovereignty of God. I shall not dwell at length on this because the time is gone. But to be faithful in what God has set us.

And my friend, that talent whether it's ten, five, or two, or one, to be used for the honor and the glory of our God. The gifts of the Spirit.

And if we are also reminded that we walk in the Spirit, that makes manifest that new birth. If we are a newborn creature, a babe in Christ, being taught to walk, as it were, we walk in the Spirit, guided by the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit.

My Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not. Though all seem to rise against you, all seem to go against you, fear ye not.

Seek grace to be faithful even unto death, to hold fast, to look alone unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

[ 31 : 29 ] I don't feel I've got on very well tonight. The Lord pardon my poverty. Thank you. okay pewpeep pause pause pause pause