

Depending on God for ministerial success (Quality: Poor)

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[0 : 00] the portion of truth that has been upon my mind and to which I will venture to direct your attention as the Lord may help me you will find in the 10th chapter of Ezra and the 4th verse the 4th verse of the 10th chapter of the book of Ezra arise for this matter belongeth unto thee we also will be with thee be of good courage and do it arise for this matter belongeth unto thee we also will be with thee be of good courage and do it quite a portion of the Old Testament concerns the captivity the captivity into which

God in judgment brought his ancient people for their departures from him and their transgression of his will and commandment given and there are two sides to the history there is the preparation for the captivity the hardening of the heart of the people against the means that God had given to warn them of his displeasure and impending judgment my friends there was Jeremiah particularly involved in this work and there were other prophets in Old Testament time Isaiah that concerned himself in these warnings to the people the Lord sent them abundant warning of what would transpire their hearts were hard their ears were turned from such warnings and they pursued the path that eventually

God brought to pass his word upon them and sold them to the king of Babylon who chastened them for 70 years of captivity as we may look at the history of the Old Testament we may be clear upon this point that the suffering of the Israelites in captivity was just God gave them abundant warning of what would come to pass if they pursued and persisted and my friends they persisted in evil until the rod descended the desolating experience to Judah and Jerusalem came home according to God's word but the most remarkable aspect of the Old Testament history as it concerns the captivity is the deliverance the restoration now restoration always associates with God's mercy my friends we never deserve to be restored we never deserve to be restored and as always mercy

God's mercy involved in any and every restoration I'm sure that if you and I have been exercised as we pass through life spiritually in association with those sicknesses and infirmities which at times have invaded our mortal frame we have been brought to appreciate that it is God's mercy that has ever restored us to a measure of health and of strength again I repeat that wherever restoration manifests itself God's mercy is revealed to those that have eyes to see and hearts to understand well what a wonderful development of restoration unto Israel we have in the history of their deliverance from battle there they were in iron bondage helplessly subject to the greatest earthly power and my friends to all intents and purposes it may appeal to

Israel that there's no way of return there's no way of escape the power is preeminent according to the standards of men who could hope to subjugate Babylon as she sat in her mind and subjected many nations by her power the blessed be God the future of Israel did not depend upon any earthly power the future of Israel as well as the future of Babylon was absolutely hinged upon the will and purpose of the king of kings and lord of lords should it please

[6 : 37] God as it did please God eventually to overthrow the power of Babylon Babylon is overthrown and my friends it matters not what power may stand and how strong that power may seem to be and the consequent impossibilities that may associate with our subjection to that power as that power seems to be dominant when God's time comes for deliverance he commands and it is done spiritually you and I from time to time are brought into some impossible places you can't get out you can't get out the power seems so predominant that do what you will deliverance is beyond your reason when

God's time comes he commands and it is done God very wonderfully appeared for Israel in raising up through the power of Persia a way of deliverance to the overthrow of the Chaldeans the power the great power of Babylon and my friends the manipulation so to speak of history is involved in the fulfillment of God's determinate decree and God said to Jeremiah prior to the captivity that the captivity would be for 70 years and in the fulfillment of that period of time he would deliver them and so history developed according to that pattern that in the time appointed by

God God would raise up a power to overthrow the great power of heaven a sanctified understanding of history will give us a wonderful appreciation of the greatness and glory of our God God but then the time of deliverance comes and the Lord is never wanting from means to an end you might say well characters leaders were essential to the fulfillment of God's purposes in the restoration of his ancient people and the people have been so impoverished through the prolonged bondage captivity that their deprived characters are suitable to the fulfillment of these solemn responsibilities and tasks in the reestablishment of a nation on a national basis so that my friends

God can raise up men and equip them furnish them with everything necessary to his end as he will I wouldn't despise places of learning I sometimes look back and wish that I'd had the opportunity for myself to have gone to such places and to enlarge my grasp educationally but this wasn't the way of the Lord for me and yet my friends I do believe that God has no need of such place to prepare men for the work that he ordains for and such characters as Ezra and Nehemiah and

Sir Rappapal and others that were involved in the restoration whether they were educated men or not we leave obviously they were men prepared of God for the place that God is prepared for them and so sanctified were they by the spirit and truth of God that my friends in humbleness of mind and submission of spirit they applied themselves to the will of God not only for themselves but also for the nation over which they were established as overseers one thing impresses me much with regard to Ezra that is his name by interpretation means helper helper and what a help he was made to the

[12 : 36] Lord's core what a help he was made to the Lord's people and when we think of this function which associates with the interpretation of the name of Ezra we realize that he helped Israel in two particular ways and his exercise was a constructive exercise for the restoration and reestablishment of his ancient people the first way he helped them was to bring them back to the word of God and my friends there never has been a restoration spiritually considered without a return to the word of God look at history for a confirmation of what I advance you've never seen that a development of restoration in history except associated with it has been as being a return to the word of

God and how suitable was Ezra as a scribe who was possessed of great understanding in the word of God and God gave him to Israel as a helper for them in the reestablishment of the nation after a prolonged period of captivity the second thing I would notice with regard to the character of Ezra in his function in his usefulness in Israel was this that he was a man of prayer and I would establish this point to your prayerful consideration dependence upon God and constructive usefulness always go together my friends there's not such a thing as truthfulness in spiritual things with fleshly independence the more dependent we are upon

God the more prospect of fruitfulness we shall carry oh remember if it's your burden to be fruitful in the Lord's call that one of the main exercises which becomes you in the fulfillment of this desire is to get on your knees and confess your weakness and pray to God that he may make you fruitful to the honor and the glory of his own name I return to John 15 where the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of himself as the true vine and his father is the husband man and he says there's no branch can bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine no more can ye except ye abide in me without me ye can do none my friends what a lot of fruitless exercise there has been in the professing church of

Christ because people would not acknowledge the truth of the words of Jesus Christ in this particular independence of Christ and fruitfulness do not go together they cannot go together if we are to be fruitful we are to be dependent dependent upon Christ for everything now Ezra appreciated this by God's grace and he again and again is found on his knees before the Lord he has the word of the Lord on the one hand and he has a deep sense of his dependence upon God for fruitfulness and so my friends we find Ezra carrying these characteristics with regard to his useful and constructive health in the restoration of

Israel at this time of favor this time of blessing so undeserved for them to draw on to the text now when Ezra had prayed and when he had confessed weeping and casting himself down before the house of God there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children for the people wept very sore it was a great mercy to Ezra that this exercise that was upon him was also shared by others with him the blessing was not personal but it was collective and I believe my friends when the spirit of the Lord begins to work in restoring favor there is shall I say an exercise which seems to resemble the creation of pools of exercise in the hearts of many people and in the communities that may be separated into localities and these things are finding expression independently for a while and then as the exercise increases so there is a joining up together there is a uniting under the exercise in the will of

[19 : 49] God and according to the sovereign pattern of God and what a mercy it is to be under an exercise and to find that others are associated with us here more upon that point when we come particularly to the text well now the great thing that was burdening the heart of Ezra at this time was that there were so many strange marriages in Israel that the nation was defiled by the fact that so many from high places down to low places in Israel had transgressed the commandment of God and had become united to strange wives and by those wives had had strange children and so my friends the shall I say the situation was somewhat deep in its influence upon the future and necessitated a great crucifixion among

Israel if this difficulty is to be overcome and the restoration in this particular granted now this was the exercise that lay upon Ezra and others were conscious of the same thing and the Shekariah the son of Jehiel one of the sons of Elam answered and said unto Ezra we have trespassed against our God and have taken strange wives of the people of the land yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and such as are born of them according to the counsel of my Lord and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God and let it be done according to the law there is yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing what a wonderful thing that there is hope in Israel concerning this thing and my friends the hope that was in

Israel concerning this thing primarily centered in this that there is not a condition that what the Lord can deliver it just from it as it may please him however deeply involved and however deeply impregnated by reason of our departure from the will and commandment of heaven restoration is possible deliverance is possible while God lives the second thing concerning hope in Israel concerning this thing is this that an exercise is present in Israel for the favor of the Lord again to be enjoyed by the people that the people are not any longer hardly and persistently pursuing paths which they know to be contrary to God but having been chastened they are now tender and a conscious of the necessity of attending to the will of

God in all particulars as a primary concern for them oh what a mercy when the Lord makes us so tender in his fear that my friends we're ready to attend to his will we're ready even to the point of sacrifice and fleshly crucifixion to turn from that which we know to be grieving to him and inconsistent with his revealed will for us now this was another reason of hope in Israel because the hearts of the people are made tender in regard to the way of the Lord for them and there seems to be a will to work in constructive exercise for the restoration of the nation the restoration of

Jerusalem and the restoration of the temple and its worship once more in Israel you know when the hearts of the people are hard and contrary how impossible it is for any person to go forward in a gracious exercise looking for support and looking for help that brings us to the spirit of the text this was the expression of the people arise arise for this matter belongeth unto thee we also will be with thee be of good courage and do it now there was a necessity for the people to encourage

[26 : 21] Ezra in this great work and it was a great work it exposed Ezra to a goodly measure of condemnation he was asking under God for something that was so contrary to the flesh and my friends invariably a fleshy reaction is the anticipated result of a call of a people to attend to something anything which requires crucifixion crucifixion we don't mind doing something as long as it doesn't touch us as long as it as it were is at a distance from us as long as it doesn't intimately affect us but all when things begin to come close when we're called upon to attend to something which is the will of God for us that is so close that we've got to part with something that we like we're attached to it suits us it appeals to us in our natural path now these people were found encouraging

Ezra arise arise and it seems to me that necessary to this encouragement was a gracious spirit harmonizing God there was a gracious spirit in Ezra to attend to what he realized according to the word of God was the will of God and there was a gracious spirit in the hearts of those that were encouraging him in this good work now my friends have you ever been able with sincerity of spirit to say to those involved in the Lord's cause in an exercise which is so consistent with God's revealed mind arise arise follow those in

Ezra's day that discouraged Ezra and discouraged Nehemiah in the work which was so evidently the work of God for restoration heralded by a glorious deliverance from the great power of Babylon wherein God had disposed the hearts of the kings of Persia to support the Israelites in this restoration work oh but there were some that stood against them and tried to use all their power and influence to the detriment of the fervorance of this court it seems that such opposition resembles the ten spies that returned after the twelve were sent to spy out the promised land and you remember that ten came back and they said oh there were great giants in the land there were great difficulties to encounter it's impossible that we should as it were subject those nations and take possession of that place but my friends there were two faithful spies who in the fear of the law said what a good land it was and what wonderful things were there and how

God could give possession of the place and how God smiled upon those two who were found in encouraging the people of God in the way of God and in the will of God but how the Lord found the most ten spies who gave an evil report now my friends what is our regret to the work of the Lord you may say well Ezra was talking about something that was very very difficult very very close he had a problem at hand which seems to be most provocative in its nature and could split the people from top to bottom could occasion a most weakening division in

Israel soon after they come forth from the captivity and take again possession of the land which God had given them but my friends you know it's principle that matter more than circumstances circumstances should ever be subject to principles in our consideration was the principle wrong Ezra's principle was to come back to the revealed will and command of God that was the principle consequences as he attended humbly graciously to the principle the consequences he could leave in the hand of the Lord if your spirit's right and your principles right you're going forward in the tender fear of the

[33 : 00] Lord seeking to establish that which is right before God you can leave the consequences in the hand of God arise sigh and my friends to great mercy be a supporter of that which is right in the sight of God arise for this matter belongeth unto them arise for this matter belongeth unto them with regard to the ministry of the gospel is our attitude arise arise arise has the ministry our prayerful support do you afford an unqualified prayerful support to the

Lord's servants as they go forth in the work of their God is the very burden of your heart sabbath by sabbath arise you may say well the poor men are in great difficulty in these days declining congregations and much formalism attending the services of the sanctuary people so well placed in temporal things that there seems to be little need of God in daily life and so many are so satisfied with their present affluent circumstances that the things of God and truth seem to hold that 1% at the tail end while 99% of their life is devoted to the furtherance of their pleasures and their interests and conformity to worldly things but my friends is the spirit of our heart arise what a potential there is in the preaching of the gospel what a potential there is in the preaching of the gospel and I do say this my friends that never has there been a real revival but what power has been poured out upon the preached word and I believe if the Lord grants us restoration again and we must all acknowledge that we need it if the

Lord is to grant restoration again you'll begin to feel the Lord's hand in answer to your prayer working through a special power attending the preaching of the word a power that we say is wanting in our preaching if you criticize the ministry today and say well there's not the power there was years ago I say that the ministers themselves are at the forefront in this confession because my friends we feel to need the Holy Spirit's power we feel that there's a lack of application we feel that there's a lack of enlargement and the Lord is not giving through the ministry what he wants gained you might say well it's the fault of the preaching well I would be one of the first in joining hands with you in that confession but remember my friends that I can't preach nor any other man can preach but by the

Holy Ghost Paul may plant the polished water but God must give the increase it's the prerogative of heaven to bless the preached word no soul ever yet has been blessed through the mere exposition of the word man to man it's the power of God through the man blessing the word to the souls of sinners that makes the preaching effectual constructive and glorifying to God you know don't you those of you that have been blessed that it wasn't the man that conveyed the blessing perhaps you've heard him a score of times to know God perhaps you're almost inclined to leave his ministry because of the leanness in your own soul but then it has pleased God to hear the groaning of the prison and he's opened the windows of heaven and he's used that very instrument you felt despondent about to communicate a blessing to you that there was hardly room in your heart to receive you went home like

David with you cup flowing over of the goodness and mercy and blessing of God to you but it wasn't the man and it's manifest that it wasn't the man by the impotence of the man in ninety and nine cases out of the hundred we have this treasure in earth and vessels that the excellency may be of the power may be of God and not of us and not of us if there's a withholding today my friends it's a withholding of the spirit it's a withholding of the spirit and that spirit is the prerogative of God to give in restoring and up building favor to his spiritual Israel but what is your approach to this spirit are you a critic are you a critic critic of the ministry or is your sense of dependence upon God so complete that the burden of your heart is awry lord bless thine own sense servants bless the work they undertake says one of our hymns can you pray that prayer do you follow the preaching of the gospel with an arise an arise

[40 : 28] I do say this my friends with some little experience through some years now of trying to preach I love to preach to congregations of faith I love to preach where I go into a sanctuary and feel I have the prayerful support of the hearers I have an anticipation in going but you know when I go to places and I feel a kind of big formality they come on a Wednesday evening because well Wednesday evening service night and they're quite satisfied to see a man in the pulpit and to sit for approximately 50 minutes and hear what he's got to say and then they say good night I hope you have a safe journey it's been quite a nice day today hasn't it and they go off to their bed while we're travelling perhaps 40 and 50 mile on our return journey my friends I feel little inclination to go again I feel little inclination to go again you know there's so much involved in the prayerful support of hearers there's so much constructive exercise in this particular oh I trust here at Benchton that by

God's grace there's much prayerful support given until your pastor arrives for this matter belongeth unto thee to preach the gospel the Lord set you apart for it the Lord set you over us in this particular exercise arise for this matter belongeth unto thee you now I I must close this afternoon I do believe this that if the Lord establishes a pastor over a people there's a greater potential through the ministry of that man than any other man that may occupy that forcum I'm not going to say that the blessing of the Lord is exclusive to a pastor God forbid but if the Lord separates a particular man from a particular place and sets him over a people there's a greater potential through that man than any other minister that's alive and my friends it's a wonderful thing when a pastor has the prayerful support of his people and they move together in a harmony and unity constructively to wait upon the

Lord for his word in readiness to attend to it whatever the word may be arise for this matter we long it unto thee we also will be with thee be of good courage and do it Ezra had the support of the people and my friends this is a great matter in the success of the preached word you know and I must close but you know it's a very great difficulty in the ministry if the servant of God is labouring under a consciousness of the presence of people who are waiting for his forth I've been to places to preach where I felt there's an element that didn't receive my ministry and if I took a step wrong if I wasn't absolutely clear in what I was saying they could wrest a sentence from its context and use it to my disadvantage and my friends

I know what it is to be in bondage to that element you might say well the fear of man you should resist it you should well look ministers are men they're men and you must approach the solemnity of the ministry in this context but my friends it's wonderful to feel a liberty and freedom to feel you have the love of the people and the prayers of the people and you believe that though you may through infirmity fall short in clearly signifying to their minds what you want to say you know they're going to put the best possible construction on it because they love you and they would desire in all things to support you oh that brings such a freedom and liberty on the spirit under God which is beneficial to the whole community you know

I say this humbly before God I enjoy that atmosphere at Ebenezer where I preach my friends I enjoy it and I can't tell you how I can thank God for it you know I'm a free man among my own people because I feel their will and I trust your pastor enjoys the same blessing here because I'm sure that it's not only a personal benefit to the minister but it's a collective benefit to the hearers there's a liberty of love a constructive exercise in preaching and hearing and hearing for the glory of God arise for this matter that long unto them I leave the matter there for the prayer the Lord have his message you may come to 33 to 71 by mercy

[47 : 11] Lord we praise of judgment to receive for all the chitvile grace our grateful tribute brings hymn 833 June 71 71 gnira ■ Oh, my God.

Oh, my God.

Oh, my God.

Oh, my God.

Oh, my God.

[50 : 25] Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

[51 : 37] Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Oh, my God. eternal spirit be with us. Amen.