

## City of God Part 4 - "Former Glory" (5-3-26)

**Introduction:** Reminder of Key Themes, Review Series so far, then introduce today's topic

### Key Themes

- **Temple** (Where God meets with us) - embracing what God is building and doing now, let go of expectations
- **People** (Who we are as God's people) - coming out from another culture that we are too intertwined with
- **City** (How we live as the people of God) - set apart: invite the people around us, but oppose the culture

### Series Review

- **Ezra 1-2:** The proclamation has gone out, the people have moved back to Israel, and built the altar . . .
- **Today's Theme:** Temple Foundation Laid (weeping and celebration) - grieve the loss, release the past, embrace the new season God is calling us into

### Main Text: Ezra 3:8-13

#### 1) Workmen

##### **Ezra 3:8-9 (ESV)**

[8] Now in the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with **the rest of their kinsmen**, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to **supervise the work** of the house of the LORD. [9] And Jeshua with his sons and his brothers, and Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together supervised the **workmen** in the house of God, along with the sons of Henadad and the Levites, their sons and brothers.

**Remnant** (the rest, the remainder): word is always used as a collective, never referring to a single individual

**Kinsmen:** Those with common parents, common ancestors, also describes a close friend.

**Supervise** (KJV "Set Forward"): to lead, to direct, to oversee. It is used of foremen or work supervisors

**Workmen: A combo of craftsmanship (an area of skill), and doing the work with a distinct purpose**

**Work** - to do, to make, to accomplish, to complete. This frequently used Hebrew verb conveys the central notion of performing an activity with a distinct purpose, a moral obligation, or a goal in view.

**Craftsmanship** - work, occupation, business, workmanship. This word is used for God's creative work (Gen 2:2-3); as well as for human labor (Exo 20:9-10); skilled craftsmanship

#### **Examples of workmen, workmanship . . .**

##### **Genesis 2:2 (ESV)**

And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

##### **Exodus 31:1-5 (ESV)**

[1] The LORD said to Moses, [2] "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, [3] and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, [4] to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, [5] in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.

**The church is called to this too . . .**

**Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)**

[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**Note:** We don't work for our salvation, but there is work to be done. We are His Workmanship and He has made us for Laboring in the Kingdom . . .

**The Workmen . . .****Ephesians 4:11-12 (ESV)**

[11] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

**Note:** In America and in the Church . . . Consumer Economy

- A consumer economy - prioritizes service jobs, with few specialized, skilled laborers who can build
- The Church needs a builders economy for a new season - with skilled labor, learning how to grow and work.
- Kingdom work isn't about rallying around a few workers, watching and celebrating their gift.
- It's Time to stop gathering around our favorite prophet or apostle and celebrating them and their ministry, and start realizing, we are the saints called together to work and build up the body!

**The Work . . .****Ephesians 4:13-16 (ESV)**

[13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14] so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. [15] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

**Note:** Unity and Maturity. Growing, Building, and Functioning . . . Together (interdependent) in Love!

**2) Worship****Ezra 3:10-11 (ESV)**

[10] And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the directions of David king of Israel. [11] And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel." And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

**Note:** The work has just begun, yet they stop to celebrate together!

**David** - 1 Chronicles 15-16 (Celebration at the return of the Ark, David dances - foolishly in his wife's eyes)

**vs. 11** - Likely singing Psalm 136 (a celebration of God, his rescue from Egypt, and his general faithful help)

**Psalm 136:1, 23-24 (ESV)**

[1] Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. . . [23] It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures forever; [24] and rescued us from our foes, for his steadfast love endures forever

**Ezra context:** They are aware of the risk and danger around them, but are getting their priorities straight . . .

### **Ezra 3:3, 6 (ESV)**

They set the altar in its place, for fear was on them because of the peoples of the lands, and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, burnt offerings morning and evening. . . But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.

**Note:** They rebuilt the altar and worshipped, then they got to work on His house, worshipping along the way!

- You want true joy? It comes from the presence of the Lord. Expressing gratitude in proper worship
- **True Worship** (prioritizing, valuing, and relying on God): Realigns us to our **True North**

### **3) Former Glory**

#### **Ezra 3:12-13 (ESV)**

[12] But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, [13] so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away.

**Note:** From the time of the laying of the new foundation, to well over a decade later, there was sadness . . .

#### **Haggai 2:3 (ESV)**

Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?

**Note:** There was a lingering sadness that this new Temple paled in comparison to what had been.

There is much sadness in the church today . . .

**Our Leaders** are using and wounding people, compromising themselves, as we watch them fall one after another, and using pulpits to build brands and influence instead of building up the body.

**Our People** are uncertain, unfaithful, unavailable, mostly just consumers and attenders at best. Not a body.

**Our Country** is broken and fractured, its people and the prevailing culture have never been less biblically aligned.

And in response . . .

The American Church has exchanged the **Power of the Holy Spirit** for the **Spirit of Power**

(Pastor Randy Tomko, repeated by our own Gary Peacock)

And what we are calling Faith and Taking a Stand, is really Fear masquerading as Faith . . .

We know the priorities of the culture around us have shifted, but in fear we are trying to maintain and regain influence to stem the tide. Not considering the damage done when we attach the name of Jesus to a political figure or party who is willing to leverage and co-opt our faith for their own devices and aims.

And we are participating in it because we are trying to have control over the culture through laws and leaders. Instead of understanding that the lives people live are a reflection not of the laws of the land, but flow from the heart - a reflection of their core values and worldview.

But as always revival starts not in the State House but in the house of God. Let's stop trying to Make the Church great again, and instead seek the Lord and get back to work, rebuilt upon a proper foundation. Let's be a Remnant People, set apart and faithful to Him. Committed to the Work, instead of longing for days gone by.

**Haggai 2:4-9 (ESV)**

[4] Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts, [5] according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not. [6] For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. [7] And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. [8] The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. [9] The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.”

**Note:** How could it's latter glory be greater than the former? Jesus came to this Temple, not Solomon's

**Listen Church:** Jesus will return one day, not to what we may consider the former glory days of the church, but to a church no less glorious, a faithful remnant of His people.

Is the church making herself ready? Are we opting out due to sadness, opposition, or just the flat out distraction of “building” our own kingdoms?

We may need to grieve, but then we need to participate in what the Lord is building in his people now.

**Isaiah 43:18-19 (ESV)**

[18] “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. [19] Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

**Conclusion:** If you have been distracted, or feel sad, out of place, and uncertain about the condition of the church and the world around us; remember what the Lord is building . . .

**Ephesians 2:19-22 (ESV)**

[19] So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21] in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22] In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.