

Day of Small Things

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[0 : 00] Alright, well let's pray and ask God to help us understand His word well and to encourage us this morning! Our Father in heaven, thank you that you've given us your life-giving word.

! Thank you that your word speaks living and actively, dividing heart and soul. Pray, Father, you'd help us as we hear your word this morning, not to be just hearers of it, but to be doers of it and be encouraged by it.

We pray, Father, for the kids and the Kids Church teachers now. We pray that you'd help them to have a good time thinking about your word going out to the world. Thank you for those who care for them.

And we do pray for the UniChurch crew. Please help them to be nourished and fed and equipped and growing in the knowledge of you. And they come back well and truly encouraged, keep serving you the rest of their lives.

Pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Zechariah chapter 4, there is an outline and a sermon transcript for those who would like it available. Well, you know that looks can be deceiving, don't you?

[1 : 05] Things that look impressive can actually be of very little use. Things that look unimpressive can actually be priceless. And so it takes the eyes of faith to be able to tell the difference.

Which is more impressive, do you reckon? The flocks and the crowds and the hundreds of thousands of people who will go to the Taj Mahal today. Or what goes on here on a Sunday morning at Ironside State School.

It takes faith to hold on to God's word, to believe it and so trust it and know that it's true. Which is what we're looking at here in the book of Zechariah, particularly in chapter 4 here this morning.

So we're in the first section of Zechariah, just a bit of a recap of where things are at. We're in the first section of Zechariah. You see that we're in part 1 and we're in this section here, chapters 1 to 6.

And we're in that section of 8 visions plus 1. And we're on the 24th day of the 7th, of the 11th month, which is the month of Shabbat. We know the exact day that is, right?

[2 : 20] That is the evening of the 15th of February, 520 BC. That's where we're at in the world history. We're in the middle part of book 1.

It's the fifth vision of Zechariah. And the situation for the Jews at this stage in history is as far as they could see the day of small things.

It's a pathetic time for them in their history. Given their heritage and their situation in Zechariah's day, it would be reasonable to think that life is hopeless.

It's almost like the Liberal Party would be feeling right now in recent election. Not much hope of ever coming back to power ever again. So they're in a region of the vast Persian Empire.

That's where they are, right? And they're in a place called, they've been called Yehud. It's a little place. It's about 65 kilometres by 55 kilometres.

[3 : 19] That's the size of their world, right? Judah, with Jerusalem as the capital city, wasn't a patch on what it had been in the past.

They are that tiny little red dot in the place called the province of Yehud in the vast Persian Empire. They're a nothing.

But around 500 years earlier, right? About 500 years earlier, they had been, under King Solomon, Jerusalem was kind of the centre of the known world.

With a glorious kingdom and peoples from all the nations coming to them. Remember the Queen of Sheba, she came and she saw Solomon, his grandeur and his wisdom and thought, wow, this is not even half as good as what I've heard about it.

It's far, far greater. But now, but now, God's people are just a small, tiny remnant of what they might have been.

[4 : 20] Estimation is something like 50,000 people left that had come back from exile. So first the Assyrians and then the Babylonians had conquered them and taken all their wealth from the nation, destroyed the temple and carried them off to Babylon.

Judah's just some now small, troublesome backwater in a vast empire. Could they ever be great again? Where is their hope?

Now the Persians, under Darius, had given them permission to return. And the exiled Jews had come back and they'd been given permission to rebuild their temple.

But the work had begun and been stalled. And the temple foundation indicated that it would be pretty small, really. Nothing much. Nothing like the one that Solomon had built, really. And the nations are far cry from what it had been.

Not much hope, anything again. And into the picture comes Zechariah, the prophet, with this word of encouragement to get on with doing the things of God.

[5 : 33] It might look like a day of small things, but these small things are actually the beginnings, the stirrings, the things are far greater than they could ever, ever possibly imagine coming to reality again.

Sometimes we may think similarly. We're meeting in a school hall. It's the first day of winter. We're 150 or so people of a Sunday morning.

We're about 60 people gathering a Sunday night. Doesn't look that impressive, really. But looks can be deceiving.

For those with eyes to see, God is at work. So let's be encouraged as we dive into Zechariah chapter 4. We've got a vision, verses 1 to 5.

It's the fifth vision of 8. Along with vision 4 last week, it's a central pair of visions in the middle of part 1, the book of Zechariah.

[6 : 41] Last week, Nathan took us through chapter 4 with vision 3 of Joshua, the high priest, being cleansed, which we will see is significant.

Then we have two words from the Lord that he gives. One to Zerubbabel, one to Zechariah, followed by an explanation of what he's seen in this vision.

That's the big picture of where we're heading into chapter 4 this morning. So the vision first, right? Zechariah chapter 4, verse 1. And the angel who talked to me came again and woke me like a man who was awakened out of his sleep.

You know what that's like, don't you? What's happened here? And he said to me, what do you see? And I said, I see and behold a lampstand, all of gold, with a bowl on top of it and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on top of it.

And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left. And I said to the angel, who talked with me? What are these, my Lord? The angel talked with me and answered and said to me, don't you know what these are?

[7 : 46] I said, no, my Lord, I've got no idea. It's like the angel expects Zechariah to know what they are. It might look something like this. Here's a bit of a picture. He sees a lampstand made of gold, right?

And on it, seven lampstands on it with seven lips on it. And as well as that, there's two olive trees, one on the left, one on the right. That is the vision. Now, it can't be exactly drawn, but that's the kind of thing that we're seeing here.

And that vision forms a backdrop to all that's going to happen here in Zechariah chapter 4. And what he sees is going to be foundational to how God works. That's the vision.

The word of the Lord then to Zerubbabel. Then the Lord said to me, this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

Who are you, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel? You shall become a plain and he shall bring forward the top stone and mid shouts of grace, grace to it. So this is the first time we've heard of this man, Zerubbabel.

[8 : 50] Here he is. He is the governor of Judah. That's who he is. Zechariah chapter 4 is the only place in the book of Zechariah where we come across this figure. He's not the king, right?

He's the puppet king. He's the governor appointed by the Persians. There's no king in Judah. It really is a day of small things.

But look what's going to happen. Something is going to happen. It's going to be God by his spirit who will do it. It won't come about by the wisdom of man. It won't come about by the power of Zerubbabel.

It won't come about by the deal-making of men, the finances of men. It won't come about by politics. It's not going to come about that way, right? It won't come about by any other way. It's going to happen.

Well, a great mountain is going to be moved, you see. Not a small mountain is going to be leveled before Zerubbabel, but a great mountain is going to be removed. Now, that great mountain could be a couple of things.

[9 : 49] It could be the pile of rubble that was the temple left behind that they'd done it before. Some people think that, but probably not because that's been cleared away and this new foundation has been laid.

So, it's unlikely to be the pile of rubble and that wouldn't be a great mountain. When we look at great mountains in the prophets, we see great opposition to God, particularly in reference to what's been going on in the history of Israel.

It's those who oppose God's people. Isaiah and Jeremiah spell it out for us. That's how you read the Bible. Where does great mountain turn up in the Bible?

And you go searching for it and you come across Isaiah chapter 41, as you would have, I'm sure. Isaiah 41 verses 11 to 15. Here we go. I'll read it.

You can follow it or jot it down. Isaiah 41 verses 11 to 15. Behold, all you who are in sense against you shall be put to shame and confounded.

[10 : 53] Do you get the picture? Those who are against Israel are going to be put to shame and confounded. Right? Those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them.

Those who war against you shall be as nothing at all. For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand. It is I who say to you, fear not. I am the one who helps you. Fear not, you worm of Jacob, you men of Israel.

I am the one who helps you, declares the Lord. Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I am making you a threshing sledge, new, sharp and having teeth. You shall thresh the mountains and crush them.

And you shall make the hills like chaff. Who are the mountains? Who are the hills? It's those who fight against Israel.

And Jeremiah 51 speaks specifically of Babylon, right? Jeremiah 51 verse 25. Behold, I'm against you, O destroying mountain, declares the Lord, which destroys the whole earth.

[12 : 03] I'll stretch out my hand against you and roll you down from the crags and make you a burnt mountain. No stone shall be taken from you for a corner or no stone for a foundation, but you shall be a perpetual waste, declares the Lord.

God's victory over his enemies is not by man's might or by man's power, but by the very Spirit of God.

The very breath of God that carries the very Word of God. God breathes and it happens.

Nothing can stand before the Spirit of God. Israel doesn't need a standing army to defeat the world that stands against her.

Because the leader of Judah is God. All opposition to God will be flattened.

[13 : 09] And it's God who will do it. God will bring forward the top stone, the topmost stone, the stone that holds the whole building together. God will bring into place the topmost stone of the temple.

The temple will be built, right? It's going to happen. And then we have this word to Zechariah about this day of small things.

And the word of the Lord comes to Zechariah, firstly restating the fact that under Zerubbabel the temple will, the house will be completed under Zerubbabel.

And this will be evident to Zechariah, right? That he is a true prophet and has indeed spoken true words, the words God has given him to the nation.

Now, Israel chapter 6 verse 15 tells us that the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. It was completed.

[14:08] It was finished. And those who despise the day of small things will change their tone. They will rejoice when they see the plumb line, or probably better, capstone, I think, just quietly, in the hand as rubble.

They will rejoice when they see the temple complete, even if it doesn't seem much. For size isn't what's important.

Significance doesn't come from size. Significance comes from substance. And the temple is significant for lots and lots of reasons, but here's just three reasons why the temple is significant. The temple is the place where God dwells, right? God's present with his people in the temple. If you've got the God of the universe present in his temple, it doesn't matter how big the temple is. It matters who's in there. It might seem a small thing now to have just a temple built in Jerusalem, but don't despise that. This is the most significant thing to have in the centre of the nation.

[15:23] God there with you. One day, God's temple will fill the whole universe, just so you know.

And then we too will rejoice with countless millions when we see that reality. God's temple is where we also find God's mercy, isn't it?

Atonement for sin. Sacrifice for sin is made by the priests of God. And so forgiveness for sin is made and received at the temple.

And that is something that no man can earn, no man can deserve, which no person can bring about by their own might. It doesn't come about by the power of man.

It's no small thing to be one of God's people, to have received his mercy. To be living with God as our Lord and Saviour for all eternity.

[16:28] And this mercy comes and we will not be living under his wrath and anger. We will be living under his mercy, which is made available to all mankind. That's what comes about at the temple.

Mercy. And the temple is also where we see the rule of God, isn't it? It's where the priests taught the word of God. That's what they were supposed to do at the temple.

Sure, sacrifices are made, yes. But teaching God's word was at the centre of the temple. That's what Jesus did when he got to the temple.

Sometimes we fail to see that. Something that orders life the way that God would have us live is far more precious than gold.

And sweeter than honey, as the psalmist would say. Knowing the mind of God, the will of God, the plan of God, the wisdom of God is something that is wonderful.

[17:33] Having a rock, solid foundation for life when the rest of the world is in chaos and crumbling around the place is something to really rejoice in.

The temple is central to God's plans and purposes. 520 BC might feel like a day of small things for the Israelites then.

But the promise is that Zerubbabel will see the temple built. And one day people will rejoice when God's plans are fulfilled. And God will establish the temple by his power.

And the people will see Zerubbabel finish the work with the capstone put in place. Now at one level, those who saw it may see it as a day of small things.

The temple was not as good as Solomon's. It wasn't. And know that it would be built with splendour and all that kind of stuff as it was promised. But it points to a temple, the temple far greater than the one made of bricks and stones in Jerusalem on Mount Zion.

[18:43] While Judah and the people of God might feel like it's a nothing, they are not to despise themselves.

They are to find themselves and see themselves pointing to a nation far greater than they could ever be. Those who might otherwise despise the day of small things will one day have incredible joy.

God actually sees what's going on. That's the idea of the seven eyes, I think. He sees it completely. There's no doubt that he sees things accurately. While these people might see them as small, God sees them for what they are.

Because they are actually bringing about his sovereign plans and purposes. And he's in charge of all that will be.

What's this vision all about in verses 11 to 14? The angel explains the vision of the lampstand for us in verses 11 to 14. Then I said to him, what are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?

[19 : 50] And the second time I answered and said to him, what are these two branches and olive trees which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out? He said to me, don't you know what these are? I said, no, I've got no idea.

Then he said, these are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth. Well, we've got the inside knowledge, haven't we? God's revealed it to us. God revealed it to Zechariah. It might look something like this, but again, pictures can't grab the reality of it all because it's things and it's people and it's plants and it's not.

Zechariah recognised that the two olive trees are actually two people. So the lampstand is a key piece of the temple. It is central, right, into the temple.

And the Lord says that Zechariah should know who they are, but Zechariah says he doesn't. And then God says that they are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

Literally, anointed ones, they are sons of oil.

Sons of is a way of saying they have the character of, right? So, you know, sons of fire is a way of saying you're hot-headed. Sons of darkness is a way of saying people are evil.

[20 : 59] Sons of God is people who've got the character of God transformed a bit like God. Sons of oil, sons of those transformed by something, full of the Holy Spirit. And pipes are bringing this never-ending supply of oil into the bowl which lights the cantors, which are going to burn and bring light for eternity.

The Spirit of God is a never-ending, empowering, fueling, energising and equipping these two servants for the task.

More than likely, given the context, it's Joshua the high priest for his task in chapter 3, the high priest and what he's going to do, vision 4.

And Zerubbabel, the governor for his task in chapter 4 of rebuilding the temple, vision 5. One, the divinely anointed temple builder.

One, the divinely ordered, recognised, appointed priest for the temple. That's who they are. God's chosen, spirit-filled leaders who build the temple and enable the temple to function as it's supposed to.

[22 : 19] So chapters 4 and 5 fit into the part 1 of Zechariah like this. We saw it last week. Again, the slide comes from Josh and Nathan put it up on the screen last week.

God returns to his people as they return to him. And it might look like the day of small things, but it's from little things that big things are going to grow.

Judgment comes on the nations, that's announced, we heard about that, the mountains being laid low. And a house is built in Jerusalem. And when God returns, sin is going to be departing and going off into exile in Babylon as the exiles return from Babylon.

And the nations will be judged. And we see the reversal of fortunes for God's people. And this day of small things is actually the guarantee of massively important things.

Now, where and when will we see all this happen? When will it all come together? When will it all come to pass?

[23 : 32] Well, when priest and ruler, when priest and king come together. Ultimately, we'll see it in Jesus.

He was filled with the Spirit of God to accomplish great things in the strangest of ways. On another day, a seemingly small day.

A day unlike any other. At the cross, under the power of the Romans. And despised and rejected by his own people.

Jesus is crucified. But by the power of God, he is raised from the dead. And he is the one who now rules forever.

And is preached among the nations. And those who crucified him, the priests and the rulers, many of them were converted and changed their tune.

[24 : 53] And rejoiced that they saw that day. Now, the Roman Empire has come and gone. And many other nations have risen and fallen.

By the might and power of man. But God's kingdom has continued to grow and to go to the ends of the earth. Radiating out from Jerusalem.

Out of Zion. From the person of Jesus himself. For by the Spirit of God. God has conquered the hearts of people from all nations.

And drawn them to himself. And filled them with his Holy Spirit. God has made Jesus the temple.

In fulfilling all of the Old Testament. Proving his word is true. We can trust it is true. Jesus is the place where God dwells.

[26 : 01] He is the sacrifice. By which we find mercy. And are forgiven by God. He is the one who is filling the whole world.

As his kingdom grows. To the ends of the earth. With his people. Who are. We are. Being built in like living stones.

To build this temple of God. God. And by his breath. Bearing his word. Preached. God is building his temple.

Brick by brick. Stone by stone. Person by person. Today. It's you and me. Who are filled with the eternal spirit of God.

Who are the temple of God. Shining as light to the world. That's who we are. Burning brightly. As we're empowered by the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[26 : 59] Who's been poured into the hearts of all believers. You and I. Brothers and sisters. Let's not despise. What might be seen as a day of small things.

God has done extraordinary things. Powerful things. Starting in an obscure backwater in the world. In Jerusalem. And poured out his spirit. And is so saving people from all nations.

We are evidence of that. And his kingdom continues to grow. Going out to the ends of the earth. And it's sort of like that mustard seed being planted.

Which becomes the biggest of trees in the garden. From small things. Big things grow. God is doing extraordinary things. Through ordinary people.

Like you and me. And we can only see it with the eyes of faith. God by his spirit is at work.

[27 : 59] In us. Might look small. Might look powerless. Might seem insignificant. Might seem a small minority. But one day. We will see God return.

In a blaze of glory. And on that day. Those who may have once been discouraged. Will see things. For what they really are. And we will really rejoice.

Now let me just paint a picture for you. About you. You might think it's a day of small things. For the gospel in your life. But let me try and just paint a few big things. For you to see.

Alright. Mums and dads. When you read the Bible with your kids. Alright. It might seem a small, small thing.

When you pray with them. It might seem a small, small thing. But. That is how the spirit of God is at work. In the lives of our kids.

[29 : 03] It's actually the most important thing we can do with them. In our day. So that they can come and know and grow. And to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

And take their place. In joining us. In being part of the temple of God. And share the extraordinary blessings of being his family.

Shining brightly. The more we can have shining brightly. The bigger the shining is in our suburb.

Husbands and wives. When we remind each other of the plans and purposes of God.

And encourage each other to keep turning towards God. Turning towards each other. It might not seem much. But that is the power of God.

Not aspiring to the things the world loves. And the riches. And the honour and the power. But willingly putting the kingdom of God first in our lives.

[30 : 14] Shining brightly for Jesus in the world. As we. As our families. Demonstrate. How good it is to be God's people. To our neighbours and our friends.

And when any of us. Say no to sin. And yes to righteousness.

Wow. That might look a small. And weak. And powerless. And trivial thing. But that is only done.

By the power of God's spirit. And his word. At work in us. Transforming us. To be more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's a powerful. Big thing. Evident. That God's spirit. Is at work. And he's building his temple.

[31 : 21] When we speak a word. For Jesus. To our. Friends. Our neighbours. Our family. The under. We don't know what's going to happen with that word.

But. It might seem like a small. Small thing. But. Who knows what God's. Spirit. Will do.

In the lives of those that we speak to. How about that? And. When we hear. One person. One child. Becoming a follower. The Lord Jesus Christ. Wow. That's spectacular. Now. God's bringing people from death.

To life. That's a powerful thing. That he does. God's. So remember. It's not by might.

[32 : 25] Or by worldly power. That truly significant things happen. It comes about. By the spirit of the Lord.

Working in the world. Through God's. Prophetic. Word. God. Let's pray. Our father in heaven. Thank you. For the Lord Jesus. Who has come. And lived. And died. And risen again. Brought us into your family.

And we pray. That. The things begun in us. Might continue. To radiate out. Into our world. God. And that we would see things.

Truly as they are. As your spirit. Is at work in us. And your spirit. And your words. At work in our world. We look forward.

[33 : 29] To the great day. When the Jesus. Is seen. Those who may have despised. Will. Greatly rejoice. And we thank you.

That many who have despised. Have come to greatly rejoice. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And we pray that many. Many more would. We pray it in his name.

And for your glory. Amen. Amen.