

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 79 The Holy Spirit's Work Vital

Reading: Zechariah 4

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.

Address

On this occasion of our anniversary, we meet to return thanks for all the Lord's mercies during the past year and to pray for His blessing in our homes

and lives and families and circumstances, and above all here in the church of God, that the grace of God might reign amongst us. May there be that united spirit of prayer, and when one of the brethren is praying, may those of you in the pew pray along with them. Do not just listen; pray along with them, as we sing:

“While one is pleading with our God,
May each one wrestle too.”

Pray along with them.

The secret of it all is in this one verse: “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Apart from the Holy Spirit’s work, there can be no real blessing, no real profit. The preaching is dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit. Your hearing is dependent on the Holy Spirit. Our desire that sinners may be born again, called by grace – it is the Holy Spirit’s work. The sweet liberty of the gospel, the sweet assurance, finding the Saviour – it is the Holy Spirit’s work. The people of God being edified, their souls being fed – it is the Holy Spirit’s work. Now do we believe it? Do we believe that we can do nothing? Do we believe that the Holy Spirit can? Do we believe that He is almighty? Do we believe in prayer? Do we believe that He will answer our prayers this evening?

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Well, of course, in this chapter, the subject is the building of the temple at Jerusalem, the difficulties in the way, the problems, the opposition, but the work going on and the reason why. So that is really what we are praying for tonight. The foundation has been laid. It can never be laid again. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” The living stones being hewn out of nature’s quarry in the new birth – we are praying that that may take place. These living stones being shaped and formed and fashioned – we are praying for the Holy Spirit’s work at Bethel in that. And then the pulling, the drawing of these stones to where the foundation was, the sweet attraction, the drawing – that is the Holy Spirit’s work. We are praying for it. And then the building up on the rock foundation, that sweet assurance of gospel liberty – that is the Holy Spirit’s work.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” There were difficulties and problems in the way, and it seemed like a great and mighty mountain, all the opposition. Zerubbabel had so much to dismay him. “Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.”

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” There are all these mountains in the way, mountains in the way of God’s work, Satan trying to intervene, the hardness of our hearts by nature, our unbelief, our blindness, greater mountains than Zerubbabel ever had literally. “Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.”

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” And it seemed as if the work had come to a standstill, not much happening. And we have times like that – times of blessing and then times when there is not much seems to be happening. Perhaps we are a little discouraged. But, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it.” That beautiful word: “They shall ... see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.” The plummet was an instrument used in building the temple. What is the significance of it? God’s work is going on. “They shall ... see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel,” and tonight by living faith we look higher than Zerubbabel.

“The work is in His hand;
His gracious purpose He will do,
And all His word shall stand.”

But it is “not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.”

So may we be helped to pray for these things, not forgetting our sin, our unworthiness, our undeservedness, the ground of our prayer through the merits of Jesus, through Him alone, and our need to be forgiven, to be washed in the blood of Christ.

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, at the Anniversary Prayer Meeting, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 13th June, 2011

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Eternal Spirit, we confess
And sing the wonders of Thy grace;
Thy power conveys our blessings down
From God the Father and the Son.

Enlightened by Thy heavenly ray,
Our shades and darkness turn to day;

Thy inward teachings make us know
Our danger and our refuge too.

Thy power and glory work within,
And break the chains of reigning sin;
Do our imperious lusts subdue,
And guide our roving feet anew.

The troubled conscience knows Thy voice;
Thy cheering words awake our joys;
Thy words allay the stormy wind,
And calm the surges of the mind.

I. Watts