

## The Day of Small Things (Zechariah 4:6-10)

### Introduction

1. From the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Zechariah, I want to speak to you about a Christian's attitude and perspective and help us gain a little bit more of the heart of God. I'm excited to be speaking about "The Day of Small Things." The phrase comes out of our Scripture reading in Zech. 4:10, ESV.
2. We worship a big God with a big mission whose big kingdom is reaching a whole big world. Yet in all of God's bigness, He has His eye upon the small things as well. As Christians we are eager to embrace the bigness of God but for some of us – for one reason or another – we fail to share His love for the small.
3. We are people with big dreams, grand desires, or a big goal, but it seems like we are stuck in the small. I'm stuck with a small job or in a small town or a small life. And we can get discouraged or frustrated at this Day (even a season) of Small Things.
  - Maybe, spiritually, I have a great desire, a hunger for big knowledge of the Bible, or Big Faith to overcome temptation in the hour of trial, or Big Prayer where I see God moving. But my experience is Small Things.
  - Or maybe I just want to take a Big Step Forward as a Christian – a Big improvement on watching my language, or making it out to Worship or keeping a good discipleship habit going. But again, I'm stuck in the small. I'm stuck in small steps. I take one step forward I take two steps back. I do a really good for a couple of days or a couple of weeks and then evil old habits return. I don't want to quit but I get discouraged with myself and I feel like the devil's mocking me because it is the Day of Small Things.
4. But we learn from the prophet Zechariah: Do Not Despise The Day of Small Things. There will be the day of small things, but keep on, because you will rejoice in the Lord (Zech. 4:10).

### Discussion

#### I. Zerubbabel's Day of Small Things

- A. The Restoration era in Judah's history (ca. 540-518 BC). Persia is the ruling Empire. A remnant returns to Jerusalem from 70 years of Babylonian captivity with a charge: rebuild the Temple. Zerubb is the governor of the Jews and their High Priest is Joshua and so they are responsible to rebuild the Temple. The people are trying to rebuild everything, houses, farms, livelihoods. It's a Restoration time – spiritual and physical.
- B. The foundation was laid (Ezra 3:10-13). Disappointment and Discontent evident in some of the people right away. You don't start with a Temple, you start with a foundation.
  1. Many young people present & Some old people present. People who could recall the glory of the former Temple, Solomon's Temple.
  2. The sounds of joy and sorrow were intermingled at the sight of the foundation.
  3. Some were disappointed on the day of the beginning, the day of small things. The despised the day of small things.
- C. Obstacles arise preventing construction, keeping it small. Keeping it a foundation, a construction site. Discouragement sets in. Have you had road work done outside your neighborhood in the last couple of years? All of the orange cones, and traffic delays, and rock & asphalt gets on your car... will it ever end? Some of those projects go on for years. This Temple is worse than that – about 18 years it sits – a construction site, started & never finished. Maybe even Zerubbabel and

Joshua the High Priest get discouraged. So God sends 2 prophets to speak to the people and to the leaders with very similar messages (Ezra 5:1-2):

1. Haggai (Hag. 1:8; 2:3-5)
    - a. Hag. 1:8 – Amidst rebukes for building their own nice houses and leaving the Temple in ruins. They need to get to work. The people had gotten distracted by their own lives and busyness. They started small, never got back to it, now they despise it.
    - b. Hag. 2:3 – Current Temple foundation just ‘nothing’ in the eyes of the older folks. Sounds like they see this as small things, huh? They despise the day of small things.
    - c. Hag. 2:4 – Zerubbabel, Joshua, people all need to be strong and get to work.
    - d. Hag. 2:4-5 – God is with them, His Spirit is among them.
  2. Zechariah (Zech. 1:16; 4:6-10)
    - a. Zech. 1:16 – Jerusalem, God’s house, build it. It’s God’s surveyor line, this is God’s Work.
    - b. Zech. 4:6 – God’s Spirit is the power, go to work Zerubbabel
    - c. Zech. 4:9 – Zerubbabel who started it will finish it
    - d. Zech. 4:10 – Current Temple foundation is despised/ scorned, small things or small beginnings.
- D. Lesson: Don’t despise the day of small things.
1. The “day” is longer than one day (Zech. 4:10). This day of small things or meager beginnings actually stretches about 18 years. 18 years from the foundation being laid to the appearance of Zechariah.
    - a. It’s just an observation that “day” can mean different things in different contexts.
    - b. Illustration, words have meaning in context. “Back in my grandfather’s day, it took 12 days to drive across the country during the day.”
      - i. The first occurrence of *day* means time, in a general sense.
      - ii. The second *day*, where there is a number used, is an ordinary day – 24 hour rotation.
      - iii. The third *day*, speaks to the daylight portion of a 24 hour day.
      - iv. The same word can have multiple meanings, it just depends on the context.
    - c. So, “day of small things” is an 18-year period of time that Zerubbabel and the people were looking at rubble.
    - d. That expression is rendered different in other Translations – Zech 4:10 in NCV & NLT as “small beginnings.”
  2. Zerubbabel, Joshua High Priest and even the people needed to get God’s attitude and heart about the situation. Because...
    - a. Some people were disappointed and discontent at the situation. “This is not the way I thought it would be. This is small, humble, different than it was before.” They Despise.
    - b. Some people were discouraged, the situation wasn’t improving quickly in their minds. They Despise
    - c. Some people were distracted – because God’s things were underwhelming or encountering opposition they just forgot about it and went on with their own lives, building their own houses up. They got self-involved with their own things because their own things seemed bigger than God’s things.
    - d. That’s how they despised The Day of small things. But God wasn’t pleased and that’s not how God saw the Day of small things.
  3. The Lesson means “Don’t despise what God is pleased with.”
  4. The Lesson means “Don’t despise it because God uses meager beginnings.” He always has, that’s our God!

## II. God Honors The Day of Small Things

- A. God uses humble things, meager beginnings. It's about training our eyes and attitudes to appreciate things as God does. We confuse bigness for blessing and that's not always the case.
- B. God Values Small Things.
  - 1. God values children (Mk. 10:13-16; cf. Eccl. 3:1-2). When born, they are least. God bless families, mothers, for bringing their children to church! They listen, they learn. Smallest children answer the rhetorical questions, smallest children sing the loudest.
  - 2. God values the widow's mites (Mark 12:41-44).
  - 3. God values the small church, faithful church at Philadelphia (Rev. 3:8).
  - 4. God values one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7, 10; Mk. 8:36-37). The value of 1 soul is more than all of the world. Each and every one is worth more than all the treasure of the world.
- C. God Uses Small Things.
  - 1. Sampson used the jawbone of a donkey and killed 1,000 Philistines (Judges 15:14-17). Because the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, was with him.
  - 2. David killed Goliath with sling and stone (1 Sam. 17:40-51). He said, "I come in the name of the Lord of hosts. The Lord will deliver you into my hands" God's power!
  - 3. Jesus used a boy's lunch (5 small loaves & 2 fish) to feed 5,000 (John 6:8-14).
  - 4. The great power in the little things. How God's kingdom starts and grows.
    - a. Leaven, leavens the whole lump (Matt. 13:33).
    - b. Mustard seed becomes the kingdom (Matt. 13:31-32). Don't Despise the Day of Small Things.
  - 5. Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5-8; Lk. 2:4-16, 26-30).
    - a. Humbled Himself (Phil. 2:5-8).
    - b. Small things, despising about His birth. Manger, Shepherds (Lk. 2:4-16).
    - c. Simeon sees baby Jesus, not glorified Jesus (Lk. 2:26-30). Holy Spirit showed Simeon this. God's Spirit is the power.

## III. Is This Our Day of Small Things?

- A. Let's Learn the lesson! Don't be guilty of despising small things. What does that look like?
  - 1. Are we disappointed or discontent with ourselves or our situation? Preachers struggle with that.
    - a. Tempting to chase success or power or bigness or numbers instead of practicing faithfulness.
    - b. Such as Preachers who are more interested in building their Brand than preaching the gospel. They say, they need a huge platform to do big things for God. That becomes more important than obeying God or understanding what God loves and how God works – from small things.
    - c. It's nothing new. I'm teaching a Church History class right now with Bro. Payne, and I have a little book that tells some of the stories of Pioneer preachers in America (*Vignettes of Virtue* by Frank Richey). Preachers have struggled with Despising the day of small things for a long time. In the year 1826, a gospel preacher named B.F. Hall was preaching somewhere outside Florence, AL along Cypress Creek. When the days of preaching concluded, the meeting was seen as a bit of a failure – only 4 baptisms: 3 boys and one 16-year-old girl.
      - i. One of the boys was named Alan Kendrick who became a preacher and baptized thousands over his lifetime. One he converted was his own brother named Carrol Kendrick who also became a preacher and baptized between 20-30,000 souls in his lifetime.
      - ii. A second boy baptized was named Tolbert Fanning. Fanning became a preacher and an educator. He started churches all over N. AL and Mid. TN. He founded

- Franklin College in Nashville, TN which became Lipscomb college then Lipscomb University. He started a paper called the Gospel Advocate with his protégé David Lipscomb. He influenced thousands upon thousands of people.
- iii. The 16-year-old girl baptized that day was interviewed about it when she was 98 years old. Mrs. Merriman was her name. As she recounted the day of her baptism, she said, “Oh, I was just a girl. I couldn’t amount to anything like the others could. I raised fifteen children, though, and all of them members of the church.”
  - iv. What is a greater testament to God and how he uses small things than a dear sister who labored without glory or renown for 98 years and showed her family for generations honor Christ, what an amazing influence she had that only eternity will ever know.
  - v. I’m sure BF Hall preached his heart out but only saw 4 responses and he thought he failed that week. But it was the Day of Small Things – Don’t despise it!
2. Are we discouraged because things are tougher or take longer than we thought?
    - a. Remember that God is patient and patient with us. God is longsuffering and we need to be longsuffering.
    - b. I don’t know where you are today spiritually. Maybe you see getting into a prayer habit as a small thing but you’re still struggling to keep it. Don’t be discouraged. It’s the day of small things. Maybe it’s trying to stop cussing. When you’re around it all the time, it’s easy to pick it up and words come out of our mouths that displease God. It’s hard to control the tongue. But be patient. It’s the day of small things. You’ll get there.
    - c. Maybe for you, it’s a spiritual win to make it to services. But you’re here! You made it. Then we get down on ourselves because that seems like a Small Thing. A brother told me the other night, Wed. class can be a struggle. Work’s long, he gets tired and plenty of times he doesn’t want to go, but he goes. And he said, “but once I’m here, something happens and I feel stronger and I’m glad I came.”
  3. Are we distracted by worldly things and so the spiritual always seems small, quiet, scornful. Why can’t spiritual things be bigger? And we like big days. Nothing wrong with a big day. When several hundred people come out for a singing in January or April 9 we are going to do a Bring-a-Friend Day. Real soon we’re going to be talking that up and having details. But here’s the thing – we only have a Big Day when everyone does the small things – inviting 3 or 4 people. If we despise the small things, if we don’t invite 3 or 4 people because we ought to be doing BIG THINGS, like Rent a Billboard or make radio/ television commercials we are despising small things.
- B. Be grateful for the day of small things!
1. We have the Promise, like Zechariah told Zerubbabel. God will finish what He has started in us (Zech. 4:9; Phil. 1:6).
  2. We have the Power, like Zechariah told Zerubbabel. God’s Spirit is our power (Zech. 4:6; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 1:7). By God’s power, by God’s spirit, not by my might.
  3. Let’s have the Passion to go to work. Zerubbabel had a plumb line, construction tools to use (Zech. 4:10; 1 Cor. 15:58). Let’s go to work! How can I serve? What talents/ skills/ tools do I have? what work can I do today? It’s ok to start small.

## Conclusion

1. How did it end for Zerubbabel? After a construction halted for about 18 years, he started again with the good word from Zechariah and it was finished about four years following this Vision (Zechariah 1:7; Ezra 6:15-16). Zerubbabel, who laid the foundation, did place the capstone, and all the people rejoiced on that day.
2. God is Faithful! Our faith may be small but it’ll grow! If we work where we are, with what we have, trusting His Promises and relying on His power, it will cause our faith to grow. So Don’t Despise the Day of Small Things.