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"Zerubbabel at the Temple Site"

By
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What What if we're serving God in the way he called us to, but everywhere we turn, we face a new obstacle? Circumstances begin to lead us to question if this is what God really wants? We begin to question if we've either chosen the wrong path, or there is something lacking in us, or we wonder if perhaps God should choose someone more qualified. This piece is a reminder that God chooses us, not the other way around. He accomplishes his plans by the power of his Spirit. All we need to do is show up when He calls us, submit to Him fully, and trust Him for the timing.

Themes: God's Timing, Endurance, Hardship, Moving Beyond Grief, Obstacles in Ministry, Trusting God

Who Zerubbabel

When 520 BC

Costumes This piece could be adapted to a modern-day setting, but it's likely more effective if the actor is dressed in period-appropriate attire.

Props Old Plumb Line

Why Zechariah 4, Haggai 1:1-9, Ezra 1, Ezra 3, Ezra 4:24, Ezra 5.1, Ezra 6:15

How This piece is about Zerubbabel's honest, internal struggle, as well as his vulnerability in sharing the legitimate grief he and the Israelites endured, not only in their efforts to rebuild the temple, but stretching all the way back to their initial captivity by the Babylonians. If technical multi-media is available, the scrolling script 'credits' at the top of the piece serve as a nice intro, and a landscape photo projected onto an upstage scrim makes for an effective back-drop. If a scrolling script is not possible, a static slide that can be faded out once the piece begins will suffice.

Time Approximately 4 minutes

King Cyrus the Great finally gave permission for the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of the Lord, fifty years after its destruction. He allows 42,000 captive Jews to return to the Holy land, led by Zerubbabel, their appointed governor. Within two years, the Jews laid the foundation for the second Temple. But local Samaritans sent false reports to the Persian King. So the King ordered the Jews to halt all construction. Now, for seventeen years, nothing's moved on the temple project. Zerubbabel... 520 years before the birth of Christ

Zerubbabel enters. He looks a bit tired and uncertain, but curious, in the way he scans the scene.

Zerubbabel: *(looking up toward heaven, smiling sheepishly)* Good morning, Lord... I brought what you asked me to bring *(holds up plumb-line)*. I confess... it's been so long... I don't know where to start. I wasn't even sure if this was something you wanted anymore...

(looks around, shaking head) You know, I remember, as a child in Babylon, sitting in dark rooms at night, worshipping you in our secret Sabbaths, and hearing the whispers from my parents, and from their parents; hushed stories about your temple King Solomon built for you... how glorious it was... like a peek into your holiness, your greatness... a mirror of how we recognize your kingship in the world... a place we could come with our offerings to seek atonement, to worship you, to seek your face...

Those whispers carried me for years. They were so full of hope for me. I could hear you calling me in those whispers. They carried me here, to this place, and lit a fire in me to start! When we first got here, I felt like a dog that had just been let loose from its chain, hearing its master whisper 'go get 'em'. And the first two years... WOW! We laid a good foundation.

And then.... nothing... seventeen years of nothing. *(looking up)* Except this empty site, with grass and weeds growing through the seams of the foundation, and dust making tiny tornadoes in the wind. I think it's safe to say we're in a bit of a rut...

(introspective to himself, but asking God) What do you do when what lies in front of you doesn't measure up to the expectations of those you rely on for help?

What should you do when, everywhere you turn, you run up against another road-block? Double-talk and constant undermining from our neighbors... misinformed edicts from a foreign king... famine and poverty and pockets with holes in them that all your earnings fall right through. What do you do when the very captors that took away everything from you to begin with, give you false hope by letting you off your chain for just a moment, just long enough to build up a head of steam... and then clamp that chain back up to your neck and yank you back in your place to remind you you're still their dog to command? *(straight up to God)* How should your servant respond to those kinds of circumstances?

I keep thinking, if I were smarter, a better man, I would have figured out how to lead better. If I were wiser or more shrewd, I would have navigated the obstacles we've faced more effectively, and we'd be done by now. Or at least further along. Or doing... *something!* If I could, I would hoist each one of these stones and build your holy temple with my own two hands! But I am old and tired, and I sense my mind has atrophied just as much as my muscles and bones.

And, just when I'm ready to give up, just when I think that circumstances have spoken on your behalf... just as I am ready to let those whispers of hope die out, you send your prophets my way to remind me of who you are, and that you are still with us. To remind me that, sometimes, obstacles and roadblocks and hard times I'm facing mean I am *exactly* where you want me to be. That small beginnings should not be underestimated. That I am not a dog on a chain. I... belong... to... You. And you don't accomplish your plans based on *my* strength or smarts or skills as a leader. Your plans come to pass by the power of your Spirit. And nothing or no one will stop what you have ordained.

And so I am here, with plumb line in hand, just as you asked, hoping with a little less doubt that this time will be different. Thankful to be one of your olive branches and eagerly awaiting your anointing me with that new oil, just as prophet Zechariah declared.

(he smiles, as he raises his plumb line toward heaven gingerly) So, where would you like to start today?

Lights down.