

# Not by Might, Nor by Power

By Tom Hill

**Bible Text:** Zechariah 4:6

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An evaluation of the Church today reveals a time when the Holy Spirit has a diminished role in our lives.

For example, when we face problems and difficulties, we seldom seek God's intervention by the His Spirit. In typical human fashion, we formulate plans to rescue us from our plight. We seek the best advice we can find. But in the process, He clearly takes a back seat as we make plans and put them into action to accomplish our goals and solve our problems.

We find recorded in Scripture times when Israel faced hardship. They encountered problems and difficulties that threatened to undo them. One of those occasions came after the exile to Babylon. Many of God's people returned to Jerusalem to rebuild it and the Temple.

During this era, Zerubbabel ruled as Governor. As they tried to reconstruct their fallen country, they faced numerous obstacles and enemies.

At that time, God spoke to them through the prophet Zechariah and revealed to them His design to overcome their obstacles. The prophet recorded it in Zechariah 4:6: "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."

In this simple statement, God declared His persistent purpose and plan for them: look to Me not your own capabilities or resources. In like fashion, the Church today needs to follow this same message.

From this passage, I want to examine with you this demand of the Lord God and how it relates to our lives today. I pray that the Holy Spirit will use these truths to bring a spiritual reformation and revival in your life today.

## **The Fallacy Of Might**

In the first place, God warned against reliance upon might. This word describes a force of many, whether of men, means, or other resources. In other words, God declared that victory does not rest in numbers.

It came to them as a reminder and as a relief. It reminded them of their dependence upon God, not man. Since the exodus from Egypt, God had taught them that He alone was their strength and shield.

Further, it reminded them of the faithfulness of God. He had on numerous occasions proved His power against the might of mankind. The memory of their exit from Egypt, their victory at Jericho, and the defeat of the Assyrians highlight only a few of those times.

God's expression also brought relief. In this situation, Zerubbabel and the Israelites certainly did not have many resources. They neither had financial strength nor military power.

In addition, their enemies substantially outnumbered them. That mattered not to God. The Almighty encouraged them with this word, "...not by might..."

The Bible confirms this truth in Isaiah 30:1-3: "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: {2} That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! {3} Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion."

Again the Lord God emphasizes this vital fundamental in Psalms 33:16: "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength."

This, then, shows us the truth regarding the fallacy of might. God's victories and ways do not depend upon might. Is that what you believe? Is that how you live? Does this truth mold and shape your life? Where in your own life have you yielded to this temptation? Where has the Holy Spirit identified occasions when you have trusted in might?

In our day, we need this reminder and relief, too. Human nature inclines toward the solutions and methods of the flesh and the world. Then, we fall prey to resting on might, the force of many.

To believe wrongly about this precept glorifies the flesh and dishonors God. I remind you of the word of the Lord from our text: "...not by might..." May the Holy Spirit correct and comfort you with this great truth.

### **The Fallacy Of Power**

In the second place, God encouraged zerubbabel that victory does not depend upon power. At first, it sounds like a duplication in thought. But it actually conveys the opposite of the strength of many.

This word points out the fallacy of the strength of one. The Lord God warns against reliance upon one person for deliverance.

This person may have power because of wealth, virtue, or vitality. The power of a polished personality can move people. Similarly, one with a prominent position has power with mankind. As a result, (s)he wields authority, and the masses follow.

Again, God remains and relieves Zerubbabel that His ways do not rely upon power. The history of Israel served as evidence to the Governor of the reality of God's word. A reading of Judges gives ample proof of God's deliverance by the nameless and the unknown. The world's concept of a powerful person means nothing to the Almighty. He can use anybody as He proved with Shamgar (Judges 3.31), Jael (Judges 3.31), Deborah (Judges 18.24), and Tola (Judges 18.1-2).

In this word to Zerubbabel, God declared the fallacy of the power of one. The prophet Zechariah delivered the word of the Lord: "...nor by power..." Does that describe what you believe? Does this truth govern your life? Or do you find your self swayed by the power of a polished personality or one in prominent position?

Error on this point robs God of the position and glory that only He deserves. I pray that the Holy Spirit will apply this truth in your life and bring you to trust the living God, not man.

### **The Fact Of God's Design**

The word of the Lord through Zechariah showed Zerubbabel God's design for victory. The Sovereign God said: "...but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." God called the Governor and his people to trust Him, and He would bring victory by the work of the Spirit of God.

Again, the fact of God's design brought reminder and relief to Zerubbabel. On many occasions in Israel's history, God proved His power through the Holy Spirit. For example, the Spirit of God moved upon creation (Genesis 1.2). Again, Pharaoh recognized the presence of God's Spirit in Joseph (Genesis 41.28). At the making of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, God's Spirit moved upon Bezaleel to fashion the instruments of the Tabernacle (Exodus 31.2-3). Before his great sin, King Saul knew the power of the Holy Spirit in his life (1 Samuel 10.10). Finally, Zerubbabel certainly must have known of the exploits of Samson by the Spirit of God (Judges 13.25-16.31). Yes, the word of the Lord reminded Israel's Governor of God's sovereign power.

It also brought relief to him. Victory would not depend upon his abilities, wisdom, strength, or vigor. No, it depended solely upon God. The Lord of Hosts would bring deliverance through the application of His omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. The sovereign, almighty God would work on behalf of His people.

This describes the way that God always works. Although God uses human instruments, He never uses their power. He works in that fashion so that mankind might praise God and not man.

Through example and exhortation, God's word confirms this truth. I will cite but 3 examples. Paul describes his preaching to the Corinthian Church in this fashion in 1 Corinthians 2:4-5: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: {5} That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Again, the Spirit through Paul reminds us of our human frailty in 2 Corinthians 4:7: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

A final example describes the manner of victory over our enemy in 2 Corinthians 10:4: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"

The Spirit of God works without regard to the feebleness of God's people. Nor does the power of any foe or enemy intimidate Him. In fact, God's power is made complete in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12.9).

From this passage, we learn God's works and His ways. He does it through His Holy Spirit. Then God gets all of the glory. Does that describe what you believe? Does that truth mold and shape your life?

Or do you copy the world's methods and only give lip service to reliance upon the Holy Spirit? To believe wrongly about the role of the Holy Spirit grieves Him and quenches His work and ministry in your life.

What does the Holy Spirit want these truths to accomplish in your life today? At the very least, He wants to clarify for you the truth. In simple terms, He contrasts His supernatural ability against human inability. It clearly states mankind's duty to God, for He never blesses the flesh.

In addition, the Spirit wants to use the truth to convict you of sin. Where has He shown you ways that you trust in might or power? Has He pointed out times that you rely upon human ability instead of the Spirit? Has He found you guilty or innocent? Does He approve or disapprove of your actions?

Finally, the Spirit wants to correct you from sin and conform you to the truth. He shows you your sin that you might confess and repent from it.

What changes do these truths require in your life? If you reject them and continue to rely upon human efforts, you will reap failure and frustration. If you repent and trust God, you will begin to experience a spiritual reformation and revival that will transform your life.

I pray that the Spirit will apply them to your life today.