

Divine Power Zechariah 4:1-14

(Show slide 1 as soon as the sermon starts)

Most of us love stories where a **small** and **under-resourced person** wins against overwhelming odds.

A few years ago Vicky and I watched a wonderful feel good movie called **The Bank of Dave**.

Change to slide 2 Even though we love those kinds of stories, my hunch is that when it comes to our personal situations we'd all prefer to feel strong and have shedloads of resources at our disposal.

When we are faced by **mountainous difficulties**, what would you prefer to have at your disposal? Lots of money, excellent physical health and powerful people of influence on your side? Or dangerously low bank balance, mental health instability and no one around you who cares? **It's a no brainer!** For the films we watch and the articles we read, give me weak and powerless. However, when it's my own story, I'd much prefer a whole regiment of resources that I can see and touch.

Change to slide 3 Here's the reality about following the Lord Jesus Christ. His mission is glorious. We are to make disciples of Jesus from all nations. We are to seek their maturity until we see him face to face.

However, the people tasked to complete this grand mission are you and me. We are **weak, powerless** and **hugely under-resourced**.

This leads to inevitable feelings of inadequacy. We see the work of the kingdom is significant and we do want to do it.

However, it's so easy to be flooded with feelings of doubt and despondency. **How can we accomplish something so important?**

Listen to what we're told in **Zechariah 4:6**, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty."

In a moment we're going to explore the details of this chapter. However, before we do, let's grab hold of **the big headline**.

The mission of God will not be achieved by human power or human wisdom or human resources. No, it will be done as the people of God are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

This has so many positive implications. For example, it means...

- We can all be involved
- We can try new things
- We can try bold things

To help us understand this **chapter** we're going to divide it into three sections.

- The vision (Vs 1-5)
- The meaning (Vs 6-10)
- The trees (Vs 11-14)

Change to slide 4 **First, the vision (Vs 1-5)**

Look at verse 1. **Read verses 1 to 5.**

Zechariah can see what's in front of him but he doesn't see what it means.

It's not all completely strange to him.

For example, there was the **golden lampstand** in the Tabernacle and the Temple.

And yet the one in the vision isn't the same. It's similar but different. There is a bowl on top. This one has lots of pipes. And there are two olive trees on the right and left.

Zechariah knows what the individual objects are but he has no idea what the overall vision is supposed to mean.

At least he admits it

"I don't know" is a phrase that should be welcomed in any church.

What does it all mean?

Change to slide 5 Second, the meaning (Vs 6-10)

Look at verse 6. **Read verses 6 and 7.**

It's an inspiring and motivational message to a man called Zerubbabel.

He was the local governor of God's people at the time when they had returned from exile and were seeking to rebuild God's temple.

He was essentially their king but there was no way the Persian Empire would allow any individual to have that title.

Zerubbabel was key to the success of the building project.

As we've mentioned over the last few weeks, lots of the people were **fed up** and **demotivated**. The task seemed overwhelming and the opposition was fierce.

What would have made the situation even worse was if Zerubbabel himself was **downcast** and **depressed**.

In short, the people of God need motivational leadership. And for that to happen, the leader himself needs to be motivated.

That's what this vision is designed to give Zerubbabel.

Do you think it's all too big Zerubbabel? Are you worried that the opposition is too strong or that your resources are limited?

Hear the good news! The work will not be completed through human skill or intellect or wisdom.

Not by might, nor by power but by my Spirit says the LORD Almighty.

How does the vision communicate this message? The lampstand is both a reminder of who God is but also a reminder of who his people are. God is light. The God who is light is with his people. They in turn are to be a light to the world.

The addition of the bowl and the pipes and the oil is a deliberate change that is designed to help us realise that it is the Holy Spirit specifically who dwells with God's people to **equip us** and **empower us** in our task of building the kingdom of God. .

I love the phrase about the **mighty mountain**. Certainly there was lots of rubble. But it's not just bricks that the image conjures up. It's all about insurmountable difficulties that threaten to derail the project and ultimately bring a disappointing end.

Zerubbabel that mighty mountain will become level ground when Almighty God is at work.

In this case the end result for the people of God is certain.

Look at verse 8. **Read verses 8 and 9.**

Or in other words, the hands that have started the project will be the ones that will finish it.

As Zerubbabel receives the messages the whole scene looks **underwhelming, small** and **unlikely to end well**. However, what the people need to do is get on with the immediate small steps and trust the Lord for a glorious finale.

Isn't that hard? We want quick results and specular beginnings. However, life isn't like that.

Listen to the concert pianist on a grand stage and it's easy to forget it wasn't always like that! In the early days there is so much pressure to give up as it all seems so hard and pointless.

The same is true in the kingdom of God.

Look at verse 10. **Read verse 10.**

What's our small thing? Is it an invitation? Give it with faith. Is it a book? Give it with faith. Is it a testimony?

Is it moving chairs? Or designing publicity? Or balancing the music? Or serving the drinks? Or hosting a Life Group?

Let's not despise the day of small things.

The LORD hasn't promised that every local church will enjoy the day of big things.

However, there is a grand day in the future when everything will make sense!

The kingdom of Jesus will be gloriously triumphant!

In the meantime let us be assured that growth in either number or maturity is not dependent on might or power but on the presence of God's Holy Spirit.

If we feel **weak**, what do we need to know? Not my might or by power but by my Spirit says the LORD Almighty.

Try new things. Be bold. Be hopeful. Be expectant.

If we feel **strong**, what do we need to know? Not my might or by power but by my Spirit says the LORD Almighty. Let's make sure God gets the glory for what he is doing and what he has done.

Change to slide 6 **Third, the trees (Vs 11-14)**

As we finish I want to say something about the trees.

Look at verse 11. **Read verses 11 to 14.**

Zechariah keeps on asking about them..

They supply the oil for the lamps.

Eventually he gets an answer

These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth.

Who are the two? Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel the Governor.

God has arranged it that the presence of the Holy Spirit experienced by his people will be dependent on the high priest and the king.

Why? It's all preparing the way for Jesus.

In himself Jesus is the perfect prophet, priest and king. Jesus is the one who pours out the Holy Spirit on his people in a new and beautiful way.

John 16:7, "Very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you "

Acts 1:4-5, "On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit "

Ephesians 1:13-14, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a despite guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory."

Ephesians 5:19-20, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

How can we be filled with the Spirit? Or how does the Spirit take more control of us?

Through the word of God and prayer.

Ephesians 6:17-18, “Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”

Ephesians 3:20-21, “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Luke 11:11-13, “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

As we wait to see Jesus face to face and in the meantime play out part in building his glorious kingdom, let's seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit

Not by might or by power but by my Spirit says the LORD Almighty.

Let's pray.