

God Still Speaks: Will We Respond in Faith? | Ezra 5:1-2

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Date: 08 September 2024

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daly preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. All right, everyone, we're ready to start. Well, good morning, everyone. It's great to be with you here as we are continuing our sermon series in the book of Ezra, you know, just as a side note.

One thing I love about this church and this congregation is that we are a church that is focused on families, young families.

Whether you're young or old, you are welcomed here and I just thought it was so crazy. I mean, I'm seeing my own children, but the idea of having children up and praising and worshiping.

They may not fully understand it at this time, but it's showing that example and showing that there is beauty and praise of worshiping our God. It's just something that's wonderful and I hope that for all of us here, we keep that image in our mind of how the church is to be a place for all families of all sizes.

[1 : 21] Even if it's just a family of one or a family of 10, you are welcomed here in this place and it can get messy at times. Sometimes children knock things over and sometimes they smell funny and sometimes we do too if we're being honest here.

But the reality is, is we take our relationship with the living God seriously. In that though, we exhibit the love of Christ with others.

I think of how Jesus Christ says, let the children come to me and how in scripture we find this importance of having the mind of a child and literally having children come to the Lord because they're so young.

And they're in those formative years where they need to see that what beauty it is to have a relationship with Jesus Christ, but also the beauty of coming together as a family unit.

And so with all that being said, let's go ahead and we're going to get started with our sermon today. The past few Sundays, we have been going over Ezra chapter 4.

[2 : 33] It's a time when the adversaries, they were opposing the people of God. They were doing everything they could to stop the momentum that was happening with the rebuilding of the temple.

We finished chapter 4 and it seemed like the adversaries won. The progress, the work that was happening had just stopped.

You had the decree of Artaxerxes and all of that progress just seemed to be, as I mentioned last week, a great pause button had been pushed.

And I can understand that for many of us, we might have gone through a time, or maybe we as a church have gone through a time where a great pause button has been pushed. It's very real that we can see not only in our own lives, but how it has happened in Scripture.

And it's something that we are to be reminded of that what God has set in motion will not be stopped by the will of man.

[3 : 34] Man, people, adversaries, opposition may try to stop you in what you are doing, the work that you're doing in the Lord. We see this in Scripture and many of us have experienced it in our own lives.

We have to think that is why we trust in the living God. We trust in Him knowing that with God as the center of our life, as the firm foundation, there is nothing to fear.

In chapter 4, set the scene where we are today. In chapter 5, we're going to be going over the first two verses. If you want to go ahead and turn there and you want to be ahead, that's fine.

It's page 461. The adversaries, remember, they attempted to infiltrate God's people to discourage and to frustrate them, even to the point where they wrote this accusation to higher authorities, putting the people of God in a season of delay.

That doesn't mean when opposition happens to the people of God or happens to us, that doesn't mean that God abandons us. In fact, it's a time for us to realize that God is with us, even in those valleys or in those storms in life.

[4 : 52] People may try to hinder our work, but again, they cannot stop what God has set in motion. In chapter 5, like I'm saying, if you've already turned there, we're going to focus on these first two verses.

They're going to reveal something very significant. You know what? Let's go ahead and read that together. I realize we may not have all of our slides at our disposal, but we thank God for the ability to print things out.

We have our Bible and we have our notes, and that's what we need. Let's read this together and then we'll pray together. Are we all there on Ezra chapter 5 verses 1 through 2?

Let's do it. Now the prophets, Haggai and Zachariah, the son of Edo, prophesied the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel who was over them.

Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtel, and Jeshua, the son of Jehoshedek, arose and began to rebuild the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

[5 : 57] And the prophets of God were with them, supporting them. Let's pray together. Father God, we are grateful that we are here today, gathered, united as the body of Christ.

May our ears be open to hearing your word. May our eyes be open to seeing. In other words, Father, we ask that we can understand the message today.

You God are the God of transformation. You are the firm foundation for our very lives. You are strong and mighty and just as the prophets spoke through God's people in your word, we know and we should be well aware that you continue to speak to us even today.

May you provide us clarity. May you send down your Holy Spirit to be with us today as we observe the context and the connections within Scripture. Give us that clarity, Father.

May our hearts be ready for you. And we understand sometimes that Scripture can be difficult, but it is truth nonetheless. So be with us this morning as we go through this Ezra chapter 5 and the connections here.

[7 : 06] It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we all pray together and can I get an amen? Amen. So in these verses, you'll see in your notes here, you can follow along, you can have it alongside your Bible or whatever you choose, your mobile device.

We see that there are two prophets that are being mentioned here, right? Now the prophets, Haggai and Zachariah, they prophesize to God's people in the Lord's name and God was over his people.

Right? Because of this prophesying, the leaders of God's people is a rubble and Yeshua arose. Now, does this mean that the leaders were just taking a nice lovely Sunday nap?

Does it mean that? Or does it mean there was a spiritual awakening that was happening? They arose and normally when we see this in Scripture, it is speaking of a spiritual awakening, the stirring of the Holy Spirit.

The inner workings of the Holy Spirit, it caused their eyes to be open. Again, a spiritual awakening that happened for what purpose?

[8 : 15] To rebuild the temple. Right? Because again, the great pause was happening. Many of us can identify with times where great pauses have happened.

But there comes a time when the pause button is, it's done. The pause is over here. And so the final verse, right? It's mentioning that, I love when it says this.

It's right at the end of that verse too, the prophets of God were with them, supporting them. Now, in order for us to understand this, you might ask the question, okay, well, why are we doing only these two verses?

This seems very cut and dry. It seems very simplistic. Okay, we see that the prophets, they prophesied. Right? And then the leaders, they had the spiritual awakening and they were on their way.

Well, what we can see in here in your notes is that there is significance here. Not only do you have the prophets who are prophesizing, we see in God's word, what exactly is happening from the prophet's point of view, from Haggai and from Zachariah.

[9 : 20] And so what I would like for us to do, I want us to turn to Haggai. Can we do that together? Can we turn to Haggai chapter one verses one through 11?

And the easy way to know this, you all know where the gospel of Matthew is, right? Turn back a little bit. Right? You have Matthew.

And you'll probably find Zachariah. Right, before Zachariah, if you go to Zephaniah, you've gone too far.

You have the little tiny book of Haggai. And this is going to be pretty much the entire book of Haggai is actually speaking to these two verses.

Pretty much the bulk of it here. And then that's something that's incredible. So are we there Haggai chapter one verses one through 11? I'll go ahead and read it.

[10 : 21] You can read it out loud or however you feel led to. So it says, in the second year of Darius the king in the sixth month on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai.

Right, so we know that there was the Holy Spirit that was moving. Right, the prophet to who? To Zerubbabel, right? Hmm, doesn't that person sound familiar, right?

The person who's rebuilding the temple, the son of Shatil, governor of Judah and to Joshua, or some translations will say Jesuits, the same person here. The son of Jehoshedek, the high priest. So here's what it says. Thus says the Lord of hosts, these people. These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord. Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai, the prophet.

Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses? Well, this house lies in ruin. Well, whose house is lying in ruins? It's the temple because the people of God are reconstructing the temple together, right?

[11 : 26] And so what the prophet is saying here is that, well, these people are saying that it's not time to rebuild the house, right? Because they were in that season of waiting. But now we're seeing here that the time has come to continue, right?

Dwell in your paneled houses? Well, that's kind of harsh language when I read that, right? Why are you dwelling in your own houses when there's work that has to be done here?

Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. You have sown so much and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough. You drink, but you never have your fill.

You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does not so to put them in a bag with holes. Very powerful imagery, right?

It goes on then in verse seven. Thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Go up to the hills. So this is God speaking to Haggai, right? Consider your ways.

[12 : 23] Go up to the hills and bring wood and what? Build the house. That I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord.

Is God going to just go into a spa and just have a nice time hanging out? Or is this where God wants to be present with his people in the temple?

It should be a pretty cut and dry answer, okay? But that's something we have to think that God is wanting this temple to be rebuilt so that he can be with the people of God, right?

That I may be glorified, says the Lord. You look for much and behold, came too little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? Declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house.

So look, a lot of time has passed by. Right? That's the thing we have to kind of observe that's happening, right? Look, when the great pause button is being pushed, there's this time of waiting.

[13 : 19] But there also can come a time when you're waiting where it's time to resume, time to continue. And that's what we're seeing in here. So it's saying, therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew and the earth has withheld its produce.

And I've called for a drought on the land, on the grain and the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth on man and beast and on all of their labors. So through Haggai, all of that.

God is basically rebuking the people here, right? He is rebuking the people and the leaders for neglecting the temple's building because eventually there's a time you gotta continue with the work

of God.

And I think of not that long ago when there was a great pause that happened in the church world. For some people, they might have just continued and remained.

Others gathered together right away. Perhaps in your own personal life there might have been a time where you had to wait for something but maybe you got comfortable in waiting.

[14:27] Or maybe you waited too long. That's what's happening here. There's a time for waiting and there's a time, okay, the pause is over. It's much like for those of us who play video games, I'm not one of them.

When you are playing a video game, you push pause and then you just go off and you have your dinner and you come back. You're like, are you gonna finish the game or not, right? I'm not saying the building of a temple or building of the temple is a game, but it still comes back to the idea.

We have to resume the work that we start. That's what God's saying. Finish what has been started here. And I love Haggai chapter one verse eight, go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified says the Lord.

And so the prophet here Haggai is going to help with the restarting of the work of rebuilding of the temple. The time to act is now. And remember just because man tries to stop God's people or to stop you in what you are doing doesn't mean they may succeed temporarily.

But what God has set into motion will become well be completed. It will be brought forth into fruition. Man will not prevail against God. And when we have God on our side, when we're following the will and the way of God, our Father, we will succeed.

[15:48] That is a big reason why we believe in the Lord because God will put you on a wonderful path. God will take you places that you never knew you'd go or have you interact with people that you may have never met before.

It's always incredible the people that you meet when you're on your spiritual walk in the Lord. We must factor all of this in. And so with that, I want you to turn a couple pages if you still have your Bible.

Let's turn to Zachariah. It's the next book. Okay, Zachariah chapter one versus one through six. It is a call. It says it'll say in your ESV Bibles, a call to return to the Lord.

Zachariah chapter one versus one through six in the eighth month in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet, right, and you see a pattern here. The word of the Lord came to Haggai, came to Zachariah, right?

It's going on saying, the Lord was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, thus declares the Lord of hosts, return to me.

[16:52] Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. Do not be like your fathers to whom the former prophets cried out. Thus says the Lord of hosts, return from your evil ways, because if you remember before the scene was even set up in Ezra, there was the destruction of the temple because of disobedience.

And so what we're seeing here is the Lord is saying, look, you got to return to me. Come back here. So return from your evil ways, right? But they, the fathers, right, the past generation did not hear or pay attention to me declares the Lord.

Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? Beautiful words here. The prophets, they don't live forever, right? We don't live forever, but it says, my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants, the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers?

So they repented. So the implication here is the word will last, right? And so will the statutes. And so they, so they repented.

And what we're seeing in here is a connection with the people of God in Ezra. Zachariah is calling God's people and the leaders of God's people to turn to repent, to change their minds.

[18:10] When we think of repentance, think of the word metanoia or metaneo, which is to change your mind, right? We think of repentance of sin. It is changing your mind about how you view sin, changing your mind about Jesus Christ from being a great teacher or a great guru or a guy with a beard and long hair to the Savior of the world.

Repentance has such great meaning even when we're looking at the Old Testament here. The people repenting and saying here, the Lord of hosts has purpose to deal with us and for our ways indeed, so he has dealt with us.

It's a beautiful call for God's people to renew their relationship with him. How many of us have felt distant from God before because of someone or something that has happened in our own lives? I can tell you very recently, I was a part of a Bible study and I met a lot of really good Christians. I was invited and in there, I found out that those Christians were part of a cult.

Why was I invited to the Bible study? To join their cult. At first, I didn't realize it, but eventually through spiritual discernment, I realized, oh, your intentions were not pure.

[19 : 28] Just like how we've been reading the idea of infiltration with the people of God. Think about that. Sometimes we get hurt by man.

Sometimes we get hurt by a situation that happens. It's a call for us to return to the Lord. Like to repent of our evil ways, repent of our sin, return to the Lord.

And I'm sure that for some of us, we've been through a season before where we felt separated from the Lord. The Old Testament is full of times where they talk about being separated from the presence of the Lord.

That's not what I want to be. I want to be in God's presence and I hope that for you, you want to be in the presence of the Lord. Can I get an amen? And if you're on, if you're in that season, let this be a call for you to return to the Lord because there's nothing worse than going through a time of trial or tribulation without having God with you.

Knowing that you have God with you at the center of your life at the core and that we trust in the living God and the living word that is living and active. That is what we need.

[20 : 39] And so with these connections in God's word, this helps us to understand Ezra chapter 5 verses 1 through 2. Two prophets are coming onto the scene. They provide prophetic voices to let God's people and leaders know that God's plans are still in motion.

It is still going to happen. The temple will be rebuilt. And let this be an encouragement for you right away from what we can observe from the word of God. There will be times where people will come in and they'll try to stop you or they'll try to infiltrate you.

They'll try to deviate you or deceive you. They'll try to distort the word of God. But we remain, we place our trust in the word of God and we place trust in Jesus Christ. Don't you see the parallel in Ezra 4?

Don't you see that after the storm, there's a time for repentance and turning back to the Lord and being renewed? That may be a call for you.

It's because man said stop temporarily doesn't mean that it won't come to fruition because I know that the God that I believe in, the God that we worship and love, he is constant.

[21 : 47] He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And so these verses, again, they give us more understanding. Let's go back to Haggai real quick.

There's one more verse I want to show you here. Well, there's a couple more verses here. The people obeyed the Lord. It's a rubble, the son of Shiltele and Joshua, the son of Jehoshedek, the high priest with all the remnant of the people.

They obeyed the voice of the Lord, their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet as the Lord, their God had sent them because sometimes, listen here, sometimes God sends people into your life to rebuke you, right, or to speak the truth.

And I know, look, look, the truth hurts sometimes. Okay, I'd be lying to you if I said that the truth never hurts, right?

And sometimes we need to hear the truth. Sometimes we need to be rebuked. Sometimes we need to have that conversation with people, right?

[22 : 52] And so it's saying here, Haggai, the messenger of the Lord spoke, actually before that, the voice of the Lord, their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet as the Lord, their God had sent them and the people feared the Lord, right?

The awe and the wonder and the healthy fear of the Lord, knowing that he is powerful and mighty and strong, I mean, that's pretty powerful. I can't make a planet.

I can't. None of us can. But our God can. And so the Lord spoke to the people with the Lord's message, I am with you, declares the Lord and the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shiltele, the governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehoshedek, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people.

There was a revival. There was a renewal that was happening with the spirit was stirring and working in the people of God at that time. They came and they worked on the house of the Lord of

hosts, their God.

And it keeps going on talking about on the 24th day of the month and the sixth month and the second year of Darius the king is not incredible. This gives us way more depth in our understanding of this Ezra chapter five versus one through two.

[24 : 07] One more verse, you guys, Zachariah four, right? Zachariah four.

So it says here, we won't cover that whole chapter. So start at verse five real quick. The angel who talked with me answered and said to me, the whole premise of chapter four is the angel going to Zachariah and showing him all these things.

And then he's saying, do you understand these things? And he's saying, no, I don't understand these things. It's actually hilarious. I think that sometimes the word of God has a sense of humor, right? Well, I mean, read it on here.

We'll start from verse four. The angel talked to me, came to me, he woke me up like a man who was awakened out of his sleep. So literally shaken up, right? He said, what do you see? And I said, I see a lamp stand of gold with a bowl on top of it, seven lamps on it with seven lips, right?

So it's going on. And he's talking about the two olive trees. Then in verse four, I said to the angel, what are these? I don't understand this. And so the angel who talked, do you not know what these are?

[25 : 09] And the prophet said, no, I don't understand this vision, this dream that's happening, right? We're going on to the verse six. Then he said to me, this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel.

Beautiful words here. Can we read this together? Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit says the Lord of hosts. Who are you?

Oh, great mountain before Zerubbabel, you shall become a plane and you shall bring forward these the topstone amid the shouts of grace, grace to it. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying the hands of Zerubbabel have laid.

Let's read this together. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall what? Complete it, right? Then you shall know that the, you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.

For who shall ever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. This is fascinating to see. Now in that verse where you're seeing the one that I had you read from verse six, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, right?

[26 : 16] So the spirit is the Holy spirit is working with the people of God. There's a lot of spiritual work that is happening in this scene here. Right?

The spirit of God is working through these two prophets. The prophets not only gave their message and prophesied, but they stayed to support the people of God.

Sometimes we have people who might speak truth to us or give us a prophetic word. And how wonderful is it when we have support from people as well?

Right? They didn't start the fire. I know you guys probably think of that song. We didn't start the fire. It was always burning. Right? There's some biblical truth to that, right? The fire of the Holy spirit, the inner workings of the Lord.

They kept it going, the fire of the spirit was burning within them. Haggai and Zachariah, they remained with the people throughout this rebuilding process and talk about a revival that was happening in their land.

[27 : 17] What a prayer would it be for us? What would it look like for us to pray that there would be revival in this land? That the Holy spirit would work with pastors and it would radiate through the people of God, through the churches, through church.

Think about that. Like what a wonderful prayer we can have. And with all of this in mind, I want us to think, well, what can we learn? What can we interpret from this? And the first thing is the power of prophetic encouragement.

Haggai and Zachariah by the Holy spirit, they prophesied. They encouraged and supported God's people in times of delay or opposition. They were still there. And look, what you'll find later in chapter five is there's still opposition that's happening.

But the Lord is saying it's time to continue the process. We saw the adversaries doing everything possible to stop God's people. And even though there was that season of delay, God brought forth the prophets, the prophetic word to bring that spiritual awakening within the leaders and within the

people of God.

And through the Holy spirit, through the prophets, we have to think of how the word of God speaks to us even today. And sometimes there will be people who will speak to you a prophetic word.

[28 : 41] How many of you have ever interacted with someone and somehow they're speaking to you, even though they're not really speaking to you and they're saying something that you've been wrestling with in your mind.

Right. I remember one time I have a very personal story that happened. One time I was really, really down and I was thinking about how I was wishing for the past.

I was wishing for a time when it seemed so simple in the past. Many of us can identify with something like that. I went into a coffee shop and I was sitting down.

This is when I was a single man and I sat down and there was this man who was sitting about a table or two away from me.

He was speaking and I don't think he was fully there. But what he was saying, he said, you can't live your life looking at the rear view mirror.

[29 : 43] And he was going on about that. You have to focus on what's ahead of you and in front of you. And he kept talking about taking this trip to San Francisco.

And he kept saying, you can't live life looking at the rear view mirror. And even though I have no idea who this man was, no idea, I'll probably never see him again.

That spoke to me in such a way that I thought, wow, this is incredible. Here I am longing for the past a simpler time and yet there I'm hearing from this guy saying, you can't live your life looking at the rear view mirror.

You have to focus on the here and the now and what's up ahead. How incredible. I believe I'm fully convinced that was the spirit speaking through this man at that moment.

Was he speaking to other people? Maybe, maybe not. But I remember that. And that's been what, 10, 15 years ago. It's incredible when the Lord speaks through someone.

[30 : 51] I want you to consider Isaiah 55 verse 11 that the word goes out of the mouth of God, right? It shall not return to him empty.

It shall accomplish what he purposes and it shall succeed in the things in which he sends. It reminds me a great deal of 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16 saying that all scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and training in righteousness.

When we experience seasons of delays, when we are patiently waiting, we must keep our eyes open and our ears ready to listen to God's voice and to read the word of God because let me tell you something.

God still speaks to us even today and I want us to take that to heart. It could come through scripture. It could come from a man who's in the, who's saying, talking about trips and not looking at the rear view mirror when you're driving.

It can be through a word of encouragement. There are many ways that the Lord speaks to us today. It's a reminder for us that as the local body, as the church, we worship a God who is living and active, much like the word is living and active.

[32 : 16] God is so powerful that he can speak to you through his word, through people, through experiences and interactions. Even if it is a rebuke, even if it is the harsh truth, would you rather deal with the harsh truth or be told a lie and then find out later and all the pain that comes from afterwards?

God is the God of truth. God has a plan for each and every one of us. He is present with us and he continues to speak to us today. Let's move on. The immediate obedience to God's call and what we find in the two verses here is that is a rubble in Jesuit responded immediately to God's call in obedience.

The prophets prophesied. There was the awakening that was happening and there was a response to God's call. There was obedience without hesitation.

They arose immediately and they began to rebuild God's house. I'm reminded of James 1.22, be doers of the word, not hearers, right?

It's a call for us to think of how is God speaking to you, to do something or to not do something? I told you guys today about the Bible study that I was invited to.

[33 : 35] I said, no, thank you. And I said that immediately and I'm moving on and I'm going to pray for those people in that Bible study that they know the truth, that they don't need to rely on anything

else but the word of God and have that faith in Jesus Christ.

That was a moment for me to act immediately. And for you, God may be calling you to act in obedience immediately.

It's something that you have to think about in your own life. I think of also Luke chapter 11 verse 28. Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and they keep it.

Let's think about that. We're called to action not to delay or to remain stagnant. Now look, there's a difference between that pause button, the delays in our lives and when we have to act sometimes like we've talked about, there's times where we have to patiently wait upon the Lord.

And there's other times where God says you got to go and you got to go now. You need to start talking to your brother. You need to start forgiving people or whatever it is.

[34 : 49] What is God calling for you to do? Trust and obey in him. When God calls us, will we respond accordingly, will we say yes to God's call for our lives or will we miss an opportunity to see great things done in the name of the Lord?

That's something we also have to think about. Let us be encouraged by Zerubbabel and Jeshua who arose and had that spiritual awakening and began rebuilding.

There's also the next point is encouragement through presence and consistency. The prophets delivered a message and they continue to encourage and support the people of God.

When you're helping someone out, be present with them. You've heard me talk about the ministry of presence. When someone is going through a trial or tribulation, you sit with them, listen to them, hear them out, follow up with them too.

It's not just a one time thing, right? God continues to exhibit his love to us every single day. And in the same way, when we care and encourage one another, we support one another, we have to be consistent in that.

[36 : 06] The prophets remained during the rebuilding process. They provided that ministry of presence, that support to the people of God. And they ensured that the rebuilding continued despite opposition.

The prophets were consistent through encouragement and support. And this is a lesson that we can apply today. When we are called by God to go into action, we need to be encouraging and supportive of one another as the body of Christ.

First Thessalonians 5:11, encourage one another and build one another up. Hebrews 10:24, let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.

These are things that we have to take to heart. And so with all of this in mind, I want us to think, how can we apply these verses today?

How can we live this out? And the first thing, number one, listen to the prophetic voice of God. Be open to hearing God's voice through the Scriptures, through the Holy Spirit and even through other people.

[37 : 15] May I remind you though, make sure that it is consistent with God's Word. Make sure that what is spoken to you, that it is consistent and not contrary to the Word of God.

Because that does happen at times. Sometimes there are people they may have good intentions or maybe they don't have good intentions and they might give you a word from the Lord.

That's something for us to keep to mind and to heart. But in all of that, we can still be encouraged in knowing that God continues to speak to us today.

Because we believe in the living God, the personal God and how blessed are we that God has provided us His Word to us.

Let us keep our ears open but also our eyes open to Scripture. That's another big thing. So think of 1 Thessalonians 5, chapter 5 verse 20.

[38 : 19] Do not despise prophecies but test everything. So be open to a prophetic word but just make sure it's consistent with God's Word.

Hebrews 3 verse 13, exhort one another every day as long as it's called today that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. So keep your ears open and keep your eyes open to God's Word and the things of God.

Consider how God has worked in your life. Consider the moments and the times where God has done some tremendous things in your life. Because our God is remarkable.

The same God that made the heavens and the earth made each and every one of us and calls for each and every one of us to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. God still speaks to us every

single day.

The next thing is the immediate obedience to God's call. When God calls you, respond through listening and acting accordingly.

[39 : 30] Ask yourself the question, is God calling you to enter into a relationship with Him? Is God calling you to return to Him just as we've read through the prophets?

We see that God calls for His people to return to Him. For some of us we may not have even had a relationship with the Lord. May you come to the Lord. And for some of us we may be in that season where we may feel separated or maybe life has just happened.

Have you heard the call to return to the Lord? Maybe you've experienced a spiritual awakening or maybe you're not responding to God's call for your life.

We must respond to God's call to receive salvation right by believing in Him, believing the death, burial and resurrection, but we also need to listen to God's specific calling for our life.

We need the light, love and truth, the grace and truth that come from Christ and His Word. We must trust that God will provide for us, lead us and guide us as He always has.

[40 : 41] The next thing is to persevere through opposition. This is a reoccurring theme that we found in Ezra. Continue doing God's work even when facing external opposition or any sort of setback that happens.

There was a season of delay for God's people. They were discouraged and afraid of what the king or the adversaries might do. Let us think of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the prophetic word from the prophets, the spiritual awakening and the continuing of the rebuilding of the temple.

Doing this, we are to either begin in having that relationship with the Lord or return to Him in either case.

May you know the Lord, may you grow in Him and may you be moved to do good in the name of Jesus Christ.

When God calls us to go, let us go. I want you to consider your own personal walk with the Lord.

[41 : 50] Not only are you to grow as an individual, we as the church are to grow together. For one person, God might be calling you to have a discussion with a friend or a family member.

For another, it might be for forgiveness. For others, it might be to begin serving in the church or serving your community. There might be teaching or preaching.

What God has called for you specifically is unique to you. But in any case, let us know. Let us listen to God's call for our life.

The next one is to encourage one another. This is also a repeated theme that we find throughout Scripture. Support and encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ, praying for one another, being present with one another, and a sense of Christian community.

We are not meant to do life alone. Surround yourself with your brothers and sisters in Christ and be encouraging to one another. And sometimes in that, there will be times of harsh truth.

[42 : 58] But in all of this, it's for us to journey together. Just as the people of God, they journeyed from Babylon to Jerusalem. They journeyed together towards where they were meant to go.

And in the same way we are to journey together towards Christ. I think of that song when we all get to heaven. That's the goal here.

To make sure we are all saved by grace through faith, not by our works. We're all to journey and grow together. We're not to be like the world that discourages and tears people down.

We are to encourage one another and to grow in Jesus Christ and in the things of Scripture. Let us ask God for a spiritual awakening in our lives.

Let us step up and courageously live and love like Jesus Christ. We are called to go out into the world and do good in the name of Christ.

[43 : 59] And how important is it for us to take to heart these verses? That the prophets Haggai and Zachariah, they prophesized, they basically rebuked.

But they also encouraged and they were consistent in their support. And how important is it for us to have encouraging words and sometimes the hard truth?

I think of the famous saying, to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God. Sometimes you say that because sometimes the truth will be hard to tell.

How important is it? The prophets rebuked, but they also encouraged. They spoke the words from the Lord and in turn there was the spiritual awakening.

There was the working of the Holy Spirit. And so in all of this, I want us to focus on the mission. We are to encourage people by letting them know they are made in the image of God and they are sinners in need of a savior.

[45 : 00] And that salvation is freely available in Jesus Christ to believe in him, his death, his burial and his resurrection. Let us keep in mind the main thing. Let us pray that we have a spiritual awakening in Christ and that we follow, that we trust and obey him accordingly.

Because let me tell you, God has some amazing plans for each and every one of us. Let us respond to God's call for our life. Perhaps you have been away from the Lord or perhaps you've never made a decision for Christ.

I encourage you to begin that step by believing in the death, burial and the resurrection according to the scriptures. If you have been away from the Lord, may you be encouraged to return to the Lord. There is renewal. There is strength. There is healing that comes from our God. And finally, let us remember that we as the church, as the local body, are to build up one another, to sustain one another and to encourage each other in times of crisis when life has the good, the bad and the ugly. Let us support one another in the work that God has called for us individually but also as a community as the church. May we be open to listening to God speak to us today.

[46 : 21] Can we hear an answer from the Lord? May we respond accordingly. And may we trust in the Lord in every season of our life. May we support one another and may we just continue on building but also rebuilding.

Let us pray together. Gracious Father, we thank you for this time and this opportunity for us to come together and for us to open your word and to read from it.

Let us be reminded that your word is living and active and that you brought forth these two prophets to speak to the leaders of the people of God, to have that spiritual awakening, to now act, to act now and to no longer be waiting.

In the same way, Father, I pray for those who need encouragement. I pray for those who, maybe there has been a pause in their life.

May you speak to them that when the appropriate time is right, may they be ready to act accordingly. We are so blessed to have your word with us that we can read and study and that this word here can be taught but also preached that people can come to believe in you and believe in your son, Jesus Christ.

[47 : 42] We're so grateful for who you are. May there be reconciliation and forgiveness from each other and any past progressions. We know, Father, that you forgive us.

May we respond. May we go boldly. May we be courageous in this life trusting in you fully and responding to your call for our lives. May we be empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the work that you have called us to do.

And may we be encouraged by these words that we've read from Ezra chapter 5 this morning. May we understand that just as the prophets have spoken to the people of God, you continue to speak to us today.

It is in the name of Jesus Christ, the Alpha and the Omega that we pray and we all say together, amen. Thank you for tuning in to the Ontario Community Church sermon podcast.

For more about our church and how you can get involved or support our mission, please visit ontariocommunitychurch.org. May God's blessings be with you.