

God's Unfailing Presence in Every Season | Ezra 5:3-17

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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. Well, good morning, everyone. Today, let's go ahead and open our Bibles. We're going to go with Ezra chapter 5.

So, we go ahead and close that door real quick. It's possible. So, it's great to be with you guys as we are continuing our sermon series through the book of Ezra.

This last week, we covered Ezra chapter 5 verses 1 through 2, and it was showing us how the Holy Spirit was working through the prophets.

There was the stirring of the Spirit, working through the prophets to speak to the leaders of the people of God, encouraging them to continue rebuilding the temple. Throughout this entire book of Ezra, the Holy Spirit worked in and through people, even through unbelievers, even through kings such as Cyrus, the King of Persia like we found in Ezra 1, and we'll find the Holy Spirit works through Governor Tatani and his associates here in Ezra chapter 5.

[1 : 22] What I want you to think about as we're turning here to Ezra chapter 5 is that just as there was spiritual awakening and the continuation of the rebuilding of the temple, there was questioning.

There was another letter that was written to the king, and the people of God in this situation are standing firm, accounting to God first.

And so, today's sermon title for today is God's Unfailing Presence in Every Season, because God is with us in every season, no matter what happens in our life.

God is with us. He protects those who love Him, and His eye is upon us even today. We'll be finishing chapter 5, so let's go ahead. Let's...

Are you all there at Ezra chapter 5? We're going to start from verse 3, and we're going to go to the end. At the same time, Tatani, the governor of the province beyond the river, and Shetar Banzai, and their associates came to them and spoke to them, thus, who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?

[2 : 35] They also asked them this, what are the names of the men who are building this building? But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop until the report should reach Darius, and then an answer be returned by letter concerning it.

This is a copy of the letter that Tatani, the governor of the province beyond the river, and Shetar Banzai and his associates, and the governors who were in the province beyond the river, sent to Darius the king.

They sent him a report, right? So they're writing a report here, right? They're writing a letter to the king. To Darius the king, all peace, be it known to the king that we went to the province of Judah, to the house of the great God, so they're going to the temple.

It is being built with huge stones and timbers, and it's being laid in the walls. The work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands. Then we asked those elders and spoke to them, thus, who gave you, so it's the same, it's a repetition here, right?

Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish the structure? We also asked them their names for your information that we might write down the names of their leaders. So, I mean, we're talking a thorough report.

[3 : 42] We want to know specifically who's working on here, right? Verse 11, and this was their reply to us. We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the house

that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished.

But because our fathers had angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, right, the temple, and carried away the people to Babylonia, right? They were exiled.

However, in the first year of Cyrus, right, we know this, Cyrus the king made a decree that this house should be rebuilt. And all the gold, right, this is like a kind of a summary of what's been going on since the beginning, right?

The gold and the silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, brought into the temple of Babylon. These Cyrus the king took out of the temple, and they were delivered to one whose name was Shespar, whom he had made governor.

And he said to them, take this Cyrus, right, take these vessels and put them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God rebuild on its site. Then this Shespar came and laid the foundation of the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

[4 : 51] And from that time until now, it has been building and it is not yet finished. What they're saying here, right, the decree was made. We are rebuilding. It's not yet finished. Therefore, if it seems good to the king, let search be made in the royal archives there in Babylon, to see whether a decree, so they're wanting verification, right, to see if a decree was issued by Cyrus the king for the rebuilding of this house of God in Jerusalem, and let the king send us his pleasure in this manner. Let's pray together.

Gracious Father, we thank you for this time and this opportunity to open your word and to finish this chapter 5 of Ezra. Father, we pray that this message is fruitful, that truth is spoken here, that it is insightful, and that your Holy Spirit will stir our hearts today here in this place.

We ask, Father, that you bless this time of all of us gathered today. No matter where we are in our spiritual walk. Father, may we realize and recognize the important spiritual truths here, and that your presence is with us in every season of life.

Father, be with us this morning. Send down your spirits. Let lives be transformed in your name. It is in the name of Jesus Christ, and we all say together, can I get an amen? All right, so we're going to go into the observation here. So this is what is happening in these verses. The first thing that we can find, and if you'll find here on your notes, you're going to see a lot of notes. We're going to just go over this real briefly here.

The questioning of God's people. So during the spiritual awakening, we had Zerubbabel and Jesuit. You had Tatnai and Shethar Banzai and the associates. They questioned the people of God.

[6 : 26] What specifically did they ask? Who gave you the authority to build the temple? Who are you? And what are your names? And finally, in verse 5 here, we're seeing that the eye of the Lord protected the elders, right? The people of God. The work was not stopped. So Governor Tatnai and the associates, they're coming onto the scene in the midst of a spiritual awakening that was happened.

The prophetic words were being spoken in, in the midst of this awakening that was happening. There's a lot that's happening here, and you can imagine the scene where the governor, his associates are coming. They're seeing the rebuilding, the huge stones that are happening, the progress that is being made. They're asking, who gave you the authority to do this? Who, whose authority was given to you to rebuild? So there's questioning, and it certainly can be seen as opposition. How many of us have done good things in the name of Christ, or we're making great progress in someone's questioning you, right? So they further go on, and they're asking, what are the names of the men who are building this building, right? So they're asking the specifics. They want the fine details. And so the governor and the associates, they're taking their notes, right? They're seeing what's going on. And in that Ezra chapter 5, verse 5 here, I want you to look at there real quick. It says, the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop until the report should reach Darius, right? This is very significant, because you have Governor Tatnai and the associates. It's different than the time where the adversaries were coming along and they were trying to infiltrate and try to stop the progress. Here, they are just taking a report. They want to observe what's going on and send the report off. So they're not saying, stop rebuilding. They're saying, look, we want to know what's going on, right? We want to, we're going to let you keep doing what you're doing, but we're going to send this letter off to the king here and figure out what in the world is going on, because we don't know. Can you imagine if you were in a situation like Governor

Tatni, right? You're going through, you're seeing this huge construction stones and timbers being built. Think of that perspective, right? That might be kind of a shocking thing. Well, they're doing their due diligence by reaching out to the king kind of thing. The second thing that we can find here is the confirmation with King Darius, right? So we find in those verses 6 through 10, the letter, the report that is written to the king, right? And in the report, it's talking about the temple is being rebuilt, right? And that it's saying here, we questioned the people of God. We asked them who gave you the authority and who are you specifically?

We want to know your name so we can write it down here. And so Ezra chapter 5 verse 8, it's saying, be it known that it, the temple is being built with huge stones, right? And I love the language here.

He's being very descriptive, like it's not being, it's talking about how much the progress is being made in this construction. So the work goes on diligently in prospers in their hands. And verse 9 is, right, that repetition with the questions that we found earlier in verses 3 through 5, right?

Who gave you the permission to do this? Who's authority? I need to write this down. I'm going to send this off to the king and he's going to verify this. And in this, the third thing that we can observe here is the confidence in serving God. And I want you to take this to know when we're looking at verses 11, right? If you still have your Bibles open, that's, that's all right.

[9 : 58] It's saying here, this was their reply to us, right? So what's happening? The governor, his associates, they're like, we asked them questions. And here it's saying they replied to us, right?

They are identifying who they serve. They serve, right? It says here in verse 11, this was their reply to us. We are servants of the God of heaven and earth. And we are rebuilding the house that was built many years ago, right? They're identifying who the Lord is that they serve the living God.

They're stating their purpose in the rebuilding of the temple. And they're explaining in verse 12 here the reason, right? The disobedience, right? Because our fathers had angered the God of heaven, right? What had happened? There was the disobedience. There was the punishment, as it were, that happened to the fathers for their disobedience from not turning from their sin. So they're explaining what had happened. And in verse 14, it's talking about the decree from Cyrus. You had the earthly authority. And what's significant about Cyrus, just like we will see here in Governor Tatani, is that God is speaking. So for Cyrus, the Holy Spirit stirred the heart of the king to make the decree that the people of God would return from Babylonia to Jerusalem. Here in Tatani, it's, wow, I need to look at what's going on because he's going to send a letter. And that letter is going to, in chapter six, we're not going there yet. But in chapter six, we'll see that the temple will be completed. And we'll see that Darius will search the records. So there's this movement that's happening with earthly authorities. And so verse 14, right? Talking about the earthly authority from Cyrus to rebuild the temple. The vessels being returned, right? The description of what's happening. The foundation being laid. And finally, in verse 17, it's talking about, therefore, if it seems good to the king, let a search be made. It's a call. It's a call to action to search the archives and to verify what was said. It's just like that famous saying, trust and verify. All right, I'm trusting you people of God, but I need to verify what's going on. And so the people of

God, right? They responded in confidence by standing firm. The amount of intricacies and details that the people of God are saying to the governor and his associates, right? They're standing firm. They're speaking to the work of the Holy Spirit, the promises of God, right? That there's this decree being made by Cyrus, but most importantly, that they serve the living God. So the people of God in a nutshell are just saying, look, Tatani, this is where we're at. There was a decree that was made by Cyrus. There's been this working of the Holy Spirit that has been going on. This is where we're at. The temple is not yet complete, but it will be finished. That is the wonderful thing that we can observe from here. And now let's go into interpretation, right? It's the lessons here that we can find from these verses. The number one thing that we can learn here is that when faith is questioned, respond, right? You have Governor Tatani with his associates. They're questioning the people of God. They're asking the two questions. Who gave you this authority and who are you, right? Just as the people of God were questioned, right? The people of God responded. Let us not forget this was happening during a revival, during the working of the Holy Spirit, right? The prophets, prophesizing the spiritual awakening. It's an exciting time that's happening. And in instances such as this for our own walk in the Lord, let us be reminded that there are times in Scripture where people questioned people within Scripture, much like there will be times where people will question who we are, what we believe in. Will you respond to such questions? That's something you have to think about. And I

encourage you that when your faith, when the work that's happening, that you're doing in the name of Christ is happening, that you will respond accordingly, that you will respond graciously. I'm sure for many of us we can think of a time when there was a neutral party or maybe there was an adversary who was questioning what you were doing. Has that happened to all of us? You don't have to raise your hand. I'm sure it has happened to us, right?

[14 : 20] And I want you to consider how you can respond when faced with a questioning, right? Whether that's someone who's in a position of earthly authority or even if it's just a normal everyday human being.

The people of God, they answered the question by saying who they are and whom they serve. They responded by saying why they are doing what they're doing. Right? Remember, if you remember Ezra chapter 4, the great pause that was happening in their lives, they're ready to continue the work that God had set in their lives. And so they're also saying in here what human authorities have supported them. You see that? You have this kind of this double layer. You have God who they're serving. They're saying, look, we actually have earthly authorities who have supported us by the inner working of the Holy Spirit. And that's incredible, right? There's that extra layer.

So the people of God saying, right, they're servants of the God in heaven. They are rebuilding the house. They are accountable to God first and foremost. They're showing what happened and they're speaking about what happened in their past. Can you think of how you can respond in your own walk with the Lord? Maybe there's been someone who recently or maybe in the past has asked you questions about your faith, who you are in the Lord, what you're doing or why you are doing it. Maybe it's as simple as explaining that you're a Christian who believes in Jesus Christ. Maybe it's as simple as that. Or maybe it's explaining how God has worked in your life, because God is the God of transformation, renewal and restoration. Maybe in situations like this, it's time for you to speak about the hope that you have in Jesus Christ, your testimony, or simply the gospel message. I think of 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 15, right? In your heart's honor, Christ the Lord, as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Do it with gentleness and respect. We now go on to the second one. Know that God's eye is protecting you. When we think of God's eye, unfortunately in our culture, we see a big eye, we think of symbolism. You guys know what I'm talking about, right? Symbolism and freemasonry and a lot of those things. I didn't want to put a big giant eye on here. I hope you guys can understand that. But just knowing that God's eye is protecting you, right? Because in Ezra chapter 5 verse 5, it's significant. We're saying the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, right? The eye of God, the eyes of the Lord. It's talking about the presence of God being with the leaders of the people of God, but also with the people of God, right? We're talking figurative spiritual language that God's eyes protects us. There are three things that we can know about the eye of God from Scripture. Number one is that the eye of God watches good and evil, right? It says in Proverbs 15, 3, the eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. If you want to think of Santa Claus, think of the Lord for a second, right? He sees all good and all evil. The second thing is that he supports believers. So these are the three things for us as believers, protection, guidance, and instruction, right? God's eyes protects us, right?

[17 : 54] His presence protects us. He, the Lord guides us and instructs us on where we need to go. Second Chronicles 16, 9, the eyes of the Lord run to and throw, throw throughout the whole earth to give support to those whose heart is blameless towards him, right? Another really good verse, Psalm 33:18, behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him and those whose hope is in his steadfast love. And then finally, Psalm 32, 8, I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you. So these are great reminders for us to be mindful of what we do, right? That God can see the good that we do and even the evil that happens at times. It's just like that famous saying many of you have heard before is character is doing the right thing even when people are not looking, right? So ask yourself, are you doing the right thing even when someone's not looking? Because you're going to give an account to God and God can see the good that you do, much like God will see the, well, the evil that we might do or the evil people do as well. It's something for us to be reminded of and it gives me a lot of comfort and reassurance.

I hope it does for you that knowing that God sees all, right? He sees the good that happens in the world. He sees the evil that happens in the world. So God will recognize the evil that we do even when people don't see it. And I know for some of us we like having reassurance or being

recognized, but what about the times where we're not being seen for what we do? Are you still doing good with a cheerful heart? And so the third thing that we can find here is that God's plan works even through human authority. In Ezra chapter four, or excuse me, in chapter five, in Ezra chapter five, we saw that Governor Tatnai is reaching out to King Darius, right? The letter, the report is being sent to the king. It is God using human systems and the human authorities to achieve his purpose.

We may not see it necessarily here, but the fact that the letter gets written, right? God is using this because look, the revival and the restoration, the rebuilding of the temple is happening. And then these people are coming on, the letters being sent. Darius is going to read the letter and you're going to have the green light, the temple being finished. So God is using human authority to reach his purpose. Let us remember in Ezra chapter four, there's a difference between Ezra chapter four and Ezra chapter five in the fact that Ezra four was talking about evil people, right? Adversaries with evil intent, using human systems, human systems to try to stop God and what God had planned, right? So you saw the human element, these people who were opposing God's people and they were doing what they could to stop God's plan. What we're seeing here in Ezra chapter five is God using human authorities to reach other human authorities. God is working through Tatnai, through the questions and the names being written down and he's sending it off to the king, which will be part of God's larger plan because remember the prophecy was that 70 years the people of God would be in exile and they would rebuild the temple and it will be so. We see the call for the king to search the records, right? We know that King Darius comes to support the rebuilding of the temple and again if you guys want to go ahead you can look at Ezra chapter six but we're not going over that part yet. Even though Tatnai and his associates they seem to challenge, question, or even oppose the people of God, the hand of God or the eye of God was protecting the people of God and working through Tatnai to reach Darius and in the same way we as Christians in your own walk with the Lord we should pray that divine intervention will happen to human authorities in our own lives, that God will work through those in positions of political power, those who are in the community, right? That God will lead and guide them, that there will be perhaps a stirring of the spirit or perhaps that God will use them for his greater plan and purpose. If anyone accuses you, if anyone opposes you or questions you, you can most definitely pray for them. Pray that God will intervene in their life and speak to them. The people of God are trusting in the Lord that he will deliver. Let us be called to pray for divine intervention for the movement of the Holy Spirit to guide people, right? Even if it's everyday people, your friends, your family, your co-workers, right? You're your boss even, right? Your former boss, all of these are your teachers, whatever, greater plan and greater purpose. God works in some incredible ways to fulfill his purpose and his plan. There's a lot of verses that support this Romans 8:28. We know that God, those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Even Daniel 2:21, right? He, God, changes the times and the seasons, right? He removes kings and sets up kings.

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. And so in all of this, we've gone over what we can observe in the Scriptures, what we can learn from the Scriptures, and then finally the third thing we ask ourselves is how can I apply the wisdom, the knowledge, these things from the Scriptures into my own life? Well, the first thing that we can find is to stand firm and respond when questioned. It is to remain rooted in your faith. Trust in God's word and respond in confidence when your faith is challenged, right? You've heard me say this before, to stand firm, to stay rooted in your faith like a great tree that has been planted, right? We think of, many of us can think of a great tree that provides a lot of shade and how difficult it can be to remove a tree. In the same way, that's a good representation of how our faith should be in Christ. Not something that's just knocked over like a, I don't know, a mushroom or something, but rather like a great, great oak tree or a great tree that produces fruit. There's a lot of times in Scripture where we find this kind of language. No matter what happens in any season, you remain rooted in Christ. Stand firm even when questioned, even when challenged, even when there's slanderous attacks or you're accused. You, as an individual, as a person, you will face moments in your life where you will be questioned. And this is especially true in your walk in the Lord, right? You're going to face opposition, whether you choose college A or college B. You're going to face people who are going to have their opinions, right? They might not like the career choice that you make, or a certain decision that you've made. Well, it's the same thing that we can find in our own walk with the Lord, that as we're growing in Christ and becoming more like Him, right? We're on this path of sanctification, right?

This path of becoming more holy. There will be people who will oppose us. It is important to remain rooted in our faith in the Lord, but also faithful to His Word and keep our ears open to the voice of God who leads and guides us. When the opportunity presents itself, when you are challenged, respond. Respond graciously. Respond with truth, right? That's why we talk so much about the balancing of grace and truth, right? Being able to deal with others in love, going to the Word. We must stand firm and trust and know the Word of God, trust in the living, living God and know that He is with us. No matter what happens, God is with us in every season of our lives. And sometimes as we found in Ezra chapter four, there are seasons of waiting.

[26 : 11] Sometimes there's seasons where we have to act and we have to act immediately. It really depends on the circumstance. And as the community, as the church, as the body of Christ, this is a call for us collectively to be prepared. Stand firm and responding applies to you personally on your walk with the Lord, but also as the church body. Because sometimes oppositions will happen to churches, much like there will be opposition to individuals. And so James chapter one, verse 12, blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial. When he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, right? It's just like when we're talking about treasures in heaven. Obviously we believe in Jesus Christ by faith. I'm not talking about a workspace salvation. I am talking about you believe you're saved and upon that salvation, you build treasures in heaven. And so in this verse, just like many other verses, that in all the good that we do in standing firm in the Lord, we receive a reward from that. That's something that's just wonderful. It's just like how

Ephesians chapter six reminds us of putting on the armor of God. The second thing that we have here is trusting in God's protection and presence, right? It says trust that God is with you in every season, guiding and protecting you even when the path is unclear. It's so easy for us when the path is clear. It's so easy for us when there are the sunny days, right? It's easy when we're on top of a mountain to see everything that's going on. But how difficult can it be for us when we're in a valley or storm in our life or we just don't know what's going on. God is still there even in the greatest of trials, even when there's opposition, even when there's people questioning you just like we're finding in here. Trust in God's protection in God's present in every season here.

Just as I mentioned in Ezra 5,5, the eye of God, the eye of their God was on the elders and that's a truth that we find in Scripture, but also that God is with us, that his eye is on us. So again, I didn't want to put an eyeball on there, but it's just spiritual language, figurative language that we can think about in our own lives. It's a call for you to trust in that. Know that God is with you, even when you don't see it, even when you don't know that he's there, he is still there.

Just be, it's kind of like when you tell your children, how many of you have experienced this? When they close your eyes, they think everything's off, right? When they close their eyes, they think you can't see them, right? It's just like how in times of darkness, just because we can't see things doesn't mean it's not there. So just because we may not feel the presence of God or just because we're going through a trial in our life doesn't mean God is not there. This should give us comfort, especially in those trials and the testing of our faith when we're being challenged or questioned.

The people of God, they faced that questioning, but they knew that God was with them, especially after a season of delay. In our own personal life, we can find peace and comfort, knowing that God's presence is with us, that his eye or his eyes, guides, protects and watches over us in every season of life. Let us, as the body of Christ, be assured that God's protection is on us. We must seek him first, just like the verse says, seek first the kingdom of God, right? We must believe in Jesus Christ and be saved by grace through faith. Now, many of us, we may ask the question, why is someone questioning me? Why am I going through a trial? Why am I going? Why are these people doing these horrible things? And the thing is, we may not always have the answers.

Sometimes we don't even know why we do what we do. Much less do we always understand why people do what they do. But we must know that no matter what happens, God's going to be there with us in every season, the dry seasons, the seasons of delays in every season of our life. Isaiah chapter 40 verse 31 is a great verse, those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. Psalm 46-1, that God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble, right? And there's other verses on there.

[31 : 00] And finally, the third thing here is never, never stop growing and doing good in Christ or doing good in the name of Christ. We are to continue doing what we're doing in the Lord, continue growing and continue doing good in the name of Christ, despite when opposition happens, despite

when trials or questions or tribulations or challenges happen in your life, never give up. Keep growing in Christ even if you have to wait, even if there is a season of delay, or even if God is calling you, you keep going regardless of accusations, regardless of questioning. In this chapter, the people of God, they kept working on the temple and they were trusting in God, knowing that God would deliver, even though they had to wait for verification, I'm sure in the back of their mind, they're like, well, what happened before is going to happen again, right? They still kept doing what they had to do.

They didn't stop, they didn't give up, they remained faithful to God and in the same way, we are called to continue in faith, trusting that God works in and through people, even unbelievers, even through the, the scope of how God works in and through people is remarkable, right? And I want you to think of how God works behind the scenes, right? Just as I think of how being a parent, when I think of my own children, I think of how they don't understand money. And I know for some of us, we may not understand money, right? But sometimes my kids, they want to go have McDonald's, right? And they think they can always ask for McDonald's or always ask for lemonade or Gatorade or whatever it is, not having the full scope that there's things that happen behind the scenes in order for them to be fed, to be clothed, to have shelter for them. It's much like how our God provides for us. We may not always see what's happening behind the scenes, but let me tell you, God works in some incredible ways. I'm reminded of Habakkuk, where it's saying that where God says to Habakkuk, if you knew the things that were happening behind, I'm paraphrasing this, if you knew what was happening behind the scenes, you wouldn't even believe it, even if I told you to, and then God proceeds to explain what is happening in that situation. And the idea here is, look, God works behind the scenes. We continue faithfully in Christ.

God works behind the scenes to bring about His perfect will. And maybe for you, this is a call for you to no longer to be stagnant, but to begin again, rebuilding in Christ. Maybe this is a call for you to stand and patiently wait. In either case, you never give up. You continue growing in the Lord and doing good in the name of Christ. And if you're not a Christian, let this be a call for you to believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that we are sinners in need of a Savior. Let us be reminded of that as well.

Galatians 6, 6, 9, let us not grow weary of doing good for in due season we will reap, right? We're talking about the treasures in heaven, building upon the foundation in Christ. Hebrews 12, 1 through 2, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and protector of our faith. And so I want to encourage you, be reminded and be encouraged that God is with you in every season of your life. I want you to know that. And just as we've read here in Ezra, chapter 5, then finish this off, God protects His own, right?

When we talked about the eye of God. Being a believer, being part of the family God is knowing that God will protect you and that God will guide you and that God is constant in this world, especially when there's so many cultural changes, there's so much division that's happening in the world, right? Even in times where we face oppositions or we have doubt in our own lives, the eye of God is a representation of God's presence in our very lives. God's plans will be fulfilled no matter what humans try to do. And as believers, as Christians were called to stand firm in faith and to trust in His protection, we continue doing this work that He's called set before us. And if you want this protection, if you want this guidance and to experience peace that is beyond understanding and the joy that is inexpressible and inexhaustible that comes from the Lord, you need to believe in Jesus Christ. Having that relationship with Him is the greatest decision that you can make here in this life and in the next one. 1 Corinthians 15 verses 1 through 4 is believing the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures, that Jesus Christ is the savior of the world and He is all that we need. And that salvation is a free gift that is given to us not by what we can do, but rather what has been done for us. Believe in the Lord and be saved. This might be a call for you to come and believe in Jesus Christ.

[36 : 18] This might be a call for you to have faith in Christ and to know that His peace and His protection and His presence are with you in every season of life. I'd rather believe in God and know that He is there with me than to not believe in God. No one wants to face a trial or a challenge alone, but knowing that God's presence is with me is the reason why I believe in the Lord and I continue to trust in Him no matter what is happening.

Maybe you're being called to stand firm in your faith, maybe you're dealing with questions, maybe you're dealing with oppositions or an adversary. God is with you. Is that mine? God will guide you

and protect you.

This may also be a call for you to serve the local church or to be an ambassador for Christ in your community. Know that His presence is with you wherever you go. Maybe this is a time for you to return to the Lord or to begin rebuilding or build upon that foundation. In any case, whether you're a new Christian or you've been away for a while, you can always be encouraged to have that foundation laid, believe in Jesus Christ and build upon that foundation.

Think of how Christ talked about having a foundation in sand or on the solid rock. How are you going to build your house? God continues to speak to us every day and God calls every day people for extraordinary purpose.

God's presence is with us in every season. Let us remember that because God works in amazing and incredible ways and God will work in you. He will renew you and restore you. He will protect you wherever you go.

[38 : 08] His presence is with us every single day and every season of life. Let's pray together. Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time and this opportunity for us to come together.

Open your word and finish this Ezra chapter 5. Father, we recognize that there are times where there will be people who will question us. There will be times where people will oppose us and there will be times when people may even try to undermine or they might try to slander us or whatever it is.

We pray that we can stand firm in truth. We can stand firm in your promises and who you are. May we never waver but may we remain in you. Father, I pray that everyone here today will begin, if they haven't already, that they'll begin to have that relationship with you.

That they may come to know you. That they'll grow in you. That they'll know what it means to be a Christian and to open the word of God. May God be moved to study your word but also to live out the faith. We pray that we will be moved to be a beacon of hope for the community, serving the community, building up your church together.

Father, you call each and every one of us into that relationship. We know, may we recognize that we are a work in progress and we're on this.

[39 : 34] May we all be on the spiritual journey together in you. We pray that our lives will be transformed in this place and from this place. Most especially, may we recognize that transformation comes from you, that salvation comes from your Son Jesus Christ.

And as we close in this final song, we ask that you are with us and may we recognize and realize that you are with us in every season of life.

It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray and we all say together, can I get an amen? 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.