

# The Unstoppable Work of God | Ezra 6

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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. Well, good morning, everyone. As we have just taken of communion, it's always a wonderful time to reflect and remember who Jesus Christ is. Remembering the sacrifice that he paid for on the cross. I'm reminded of that song, Jesus paid it all. How many of you know that song, right? Jesus paid it all, all to him, I owe.

It's just a wonderful, one of many wonderful songs that are out there, that just reminds us of the sacrifice that Christ has made. So today, we're going to continue our biblical exposition of the Book of Ezra.

We have been going through verse by verse, line by line, looking at so many of the spiritual truths, the things that we can observe, the lessons and the applications from this wonderful Book of Ezra.

[ 1 : 13 ] It is incredible to see how the Holy Spirit worked through kings and the people of God, starting a renewal and a revival among people.

It goes to show that the same God that stirred the heart of kings, that moved the people of God to go out of exile from Babylonia back to Jerusalem to return, is the same God that loves you.

I've titled this sermon, the unstoppable work of God and that's because you cannot stop what God has set in motion.

The will of God will be set in motion by him and it will come to completion. When we think of this Book of Ezra, we see how God again was working through the hearts of these people, the minds, the spirit of being stirred, but also the rebuilding of the temple.

We think of how there was Cyrus the king, who issued a decree that the Jewish people would return. You had the Jewish people coming back and they began rebuilding the temple.

[ 2 : 25 ] They laid the foundation and in each step of the way, they celebrated the progress that was happening. Much like how we as Christians, we are to celebrate progress that is made, such as making a decision for Christ, even partaking of communion, that is a time of reflection and remembrance.

Or when there is a couple that is getting married and they want to have God at the center of their life, how beautiful is it to see a couple coming together and making that dedication, that commitment to Christ.

That's something that we ought to learn and ought to remember and we've also learned in Ezra about how there were adversaries. There were people who were doing everything within their power to try to stop the progress that was made by the people of God.

And I'm sure for many of us we have had those moments where you're doing a good thing and people try to stop you. We also learned about the great pause that had happened with the people of God.

I'm sure for many of us we can identify moments in our lives where we've had a great pause and we had to wait upon the Lord for His divine timing. And before I left on vacation, we were finishing Ezra chapter 5 where there was again the pause that was happening, but there was the continuation of the rebuilding of the temple.

[ 3 : 53 ] And in that continuation you had prophets who were prophesizing. They were speaking that the temple needs to be completed. And you had the people of God continue once again on the progress continuing with that temple being rebuilt.

This temple is known as the second temple, Zerubbabel's temple. It was originally Solomon's temple that was destroyed because of disobedience to God. And in all of this, this leads us to where

we are today, where we are in chapter 6.

If you remember, Governor Tatani in chapter 5 wrote a letter to King Darius. He was seeing something that was going on. He was seeing the movement of the Holy Spirit.

He was describing these great stones and this progress that was happening among the people of God. And he was writing this letter saying, hey, King Darius, you've got to see what is going on here.

There's something that's remarkable that's happening here. And quite honestly, I want to be a good worker for the king. And I need to know that search the records. Make sure this is verified.

[ 5 : 02 ] But in all of that, there was this tone from Governor Tatani of saying, you've got to see this. You've got to check this out. And so that leads us to today. We are in chapter 6 of Ezra.

And this is where we begin with the first five verses. If you'd like to turn there in your Bibles, it's going to be page 462. And in here, the first five verses, this is what is known as when King Darius is, he verified the records.

So if you remember, Governor Tatani wrote the letter, you've got to check this out. So let's go to the scriptures here. Ezra chapter 6, if you're using your Pew Bible, page 462, King Darius made a decree.

The search was made in Babylonia, in the house of the archives where the documents were stored. It's going on. If you go to the end of verse 2, a scroll was found on which this was written, a record. So he found it. If you can think of that imagery for a second here. How many of you have filing cabinets? I know we're in a digital age. What is filing cabinet anymore? But you're searching through the records, or you're going through like a periodical.

[ 6 : 10 ] I can get this imagery of this guy who's searching the records, and he finds the record. In verse 3, the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king issued a decree concerning the house of God.

Let the house be rebuilt, the place where sacrifices were offered, and let its foundations be retained. So it's going on. Three layers of great stone. Verse 5, the gold and the silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple.

If you guys remember when we were going over Ezra chapter 1, the vessels, we have Cyrus who is a prefiguration, a representation of the coming of Christ.

The vessels going from the place where they did not belong to the place that they do belong, just like how when we are sinners in need of a savior, when we come to Christ, we go from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

That's kind of a wonderful little spiritual parallel that happens here. But it goes on. So he's saying, let the gold, you shall put them in the house of God.

[ 7 : 11 ] So we have here the first five verses, right? Darius verified the records. Then we go into verse 6 through 12, where it says here, verse 6, Tatani, governor of the province beyond the river, right?

It's going on. Keep away. Verse 7 is very important. It says here, church, let the work on this house of God alone.

Let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its site. And I want to take a moment here. What is being said here is, leave the people of God alone.

Let them finish what they're doing. They've been making this progress on this temple, the rebuilding of it. Leave them alone. Let them do what they need to do.

And that's a very powerful verse saying, listen up here. And so it goes on. I made a decree in verse 8, you shall do for the elders of the Jews for the rebuilding of this house.

[ 8 : 04 ] The cost is to be paid, right, in full. So it's to be funded. So it goes on. What about the royal revenue? Verse 9, whatever is needed, bowls, ram, sheep, or burnt offerings, the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, or oil, goes on in verse 10, that they may offer pleasing sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons.

Isn't it interesting? He's saying, give them what they need so that they can pray for us, those who are in positions of power, right, those who are the rulers who are the overseers of that area.

That's what's happening there. It goes on then in verse 11, if anyone alters this edict, a beam shall be pulled out of his house, and he shall be impaled in it.

And his house shall be made a dung hill. That's pretty harsh language right there. Verse 12, may the God who has caused his name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who shall put out a

hand to alter or destroy this house of God, I, Darius, make a decree, do it with all diligence. So the work is to continue. There's three things that you'll see in your notes here, right? Leave the people of God alone, right? Give the people of God what they need and require, and may God stop all opposition.

[ 9 : 20 ] And further, he's going to stop the person, the king, is going to stop oppositions here. This leads us to verse 13 through 18, right? We have the completion and the dedication of the temple, right?

According to the word sent by Darius, the king, Tatni the governor, right? It goes on with all diligence. Verse 14, the elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesizing of Haggai, the prophet in Zachariah, the son of Edo.

They finished their building by decree of God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the king of Persia. Do you realize that in Ezra, you have the conversion of three kings? It's remarkable, because if you remember when we were going back with Artaxerxes, he didn't seem very friendly to the Jewish people. We'll go further in that next week, but you should note the heart of King Cyrus, the stirring of the spirit of King Darius, right?

And even Artaxerxes, there was a change of mind, much like how we should pray for people to repent. The idea of repentance, the changing of the mind of who God is, the changing of what sin means, and knowing that we continue to have our minds changed, right?

[ 10 : 38 ] To be transformed, so to speak. And so that's just very interesting. That little note right there, the three kings that are being changed. And it's going on here in verse 16, the people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, the rest of the returned exiles, they celebrated the dedication of this house with joy.

How long? I mean, this entire book, we've been seeing the people of God being exiled into Babylonia. They return, they start, they build the altar, they build part of it, they build the foundation of the temple, but now they've completed it.

And what you'll notice is that in every step of the way, they are praising God, and they are celebrating the progress that has been made. That is so important. Verse 17, there's these dedications, 100 bowls, 100 rams, 400 lambs.

That's a nice little rhyme right there, right? And as a sin offering for all of Israel, 12 male goats, according to the numbers of the tribes of Israel, that's pretty cool, right?

And then verse 18, they sent the priests and their divisions, the Levites, service of God at Jerusalem. And so what you see here is the fulfillment of prophecy.

[ 11 : 46 ] Now, I had mentioned when we went over chapter 5 that there was, you had Zachariah and Haggai, and so many books, so many sections of the scriptures that is connected here, right?

I mean, that's not even factoring in the prophecies of Cyrus and Daniel and how they're all tied in here. But you'll see in your notes, Haggai chapter 2, verse 9, it says, the latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, right?

Talking, referencing the first and the second temple, that the second temple will be greater than the first. And then Zachariah 6:15, which is talking about the people who are going to come and help build the temple of the Lord.

So there's just a lot of that, where we see the connections with this. And when we're looking at the connections within scripture, I want this to be an encouragement for you in seeing when we think of the Bible, the collection of the inspired books of the word of God, this helps us with our understanding that our God is unstoppable.

That our God is powerful, that he is just, that he is a good God. And that we see through the prophets that these prophecies have been fulfilled.

[ 12 : 58 ] That's remarkable when we think about it. Verse 19 to 22 is the Passover celebration. And I think it was really cool. I didn't intentionally time this where there was this, the Passover celebration.

We had a time of celebrating communion. I mentioned in the communion devotional, where we were talking about how God has provided for his people, the Jewish people, and to us Christians today, just like the manna, the bread of life, the substance that comes from God.

God provides. And we also think of Passover, the sacrificial lamb that was slain. I mean, look, it says right in here. Let's see.

Yeah, they offered the dedicate, or excuse me, I'm on verse 19. If you look at verse 20 here, the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together. All of them were clean, so they slaughtered what?

The Passover lamb. It's a representation of what would happen in the future with the lamb that was slain, Jesus Christ.

[14:06] And if you need further evidence, 1 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 7, speaks to this. It says that Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

So isn't it cool when you see these connections here within the old and the New Testament? It just goes to show the power and the intricacies of our God having his way in the Word.

And so remember, Passover, the sacrificial lamb, it represents Christ being our atoning sacrifice.

You also have John chapter 1, verse 29, which says that, behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

So it's just a really wonderful connection there. So this is where the people were celebrating how God worked in their life, much like how when we celebrate communion, we are remembering and reflecting on Christ's sacrifice for us and how much he has done for us and continues to do for us. God keeps his promises and protects his own. Psalm 145, 13 says that the Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.

[15:21] And finally, at the end, if you want to turn to verse 22, they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy, and that's fine. The Lord had made them joyful.

It's that last section there where it says that the heart of the king of Assyria, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

And what we see here is that it's this working of the Holy Spirit of those who are in authority. For us, we have to think of how we as Christians today can pray for those who are in authority, those who serve in the community, those who are in political office.

We should pray for them, that the Holy Spirit would convict them and move them. I know that's a very harsh thing, a very difficult thing for us to think about, but the same God that had the Holy Spirit stir the heart of the king can stir our own hearts, the hearts of our friends and our families, but also those who are in the community, the leaders in the community, those who are in political office.

So what a wonderful encouragement for us to pray for those who are in such leadership capabilities. I know we can talk all day about bashing one person from the next who's in political office, but what we can do is pray for them.

[16:52] Pray that their hearts and their minds will be changed. What a wonderful story that we see here in Ezra of three kings. And here, the contextually King Darius turning to the Lord.

It's just a wonderful thing that we are to take to heart. And in all of this, we're supposed to think, OK, what can we learn from this?

What can we interpret from these verses? And there's three things here. The first thing is that Darius searched the records to verify the claim. You'll see why I'm saying that in just a moment in our application.

The second thing is that the Holy Spirit worked in the heart through the heart of the king. And the third one is that the people of God celebrated Passover, celebrating God's faithfulness.

That's a big reason why we come together as the body of Christ. And we sing praises. We partake in communion. We come together because we're saying thank you, God, for how awesome you are.

[17:52] And what a good God that you are. And we may not always understand everything about God, but we know enough that he sent his son for us, that he made a way for salvation for us.

And at this moment, I want to share a real quick story. So when I was on vacation, I got to go to a wedding. And it's a good friend of mine that I've known for about seven years, give or take.

And he finally got married to his bride. And something that was so beautiful to see was how when you're celebrating marriage, it's the two becoming one.

As a unit, as a marriage unit, a man and a wife together in marriage, they decided once they got married, they partook in communion together.

And that was something I had heard about. I have never actually seen that in a wedding. But that was something that was really, really different. But it was really beautiful to see. It's a time where they celebrated their wedding together and they celebrated communion together.

[ 19 : 05 ] It's just like how we're seeing in here, the completion of the temple, the dedication of the temple, and the time of celebrating the Passover. I'm like, man, things can be so connected in such a very remarkable way.

And so in all of this, we have to think for ourselves, what do we do with this? This Ezra chapter 6, there's things we've observed and there's things that we've learned. What can I do with this information?

Well, the first thing is to search the word, to find Christ. And how God is faithful to us today. I'm reminded of 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16. Many of you know that. All scripture is breathed out by God, the breath of life, so to speak, in His word.

Usually when we think of the breath of life, we think of us being born. We think of us having life, but yet He gives life to His word, His word being living and active.

[ 20 : 08 ] And so in the same way that Darius searched the records to verify the claim, I tend to think, look, you had Governor Tatini who was saying, hey, look, you've got to search these records. And he's probably searching.

And he finds the record, the scroll. And somewhere in that, there was the moving of the Holy Spirit for him to have his heart changed to the point where he's saying the Jewish people, the people of God are going to finish this temple.

Talk about conviction. Talk about how the word in this case can speak, spoke to him, and how the word of God can speak to us, that we are to search the word of God diligently, that we are to not be afraid of what the word of God has to say.

For many of us, we open the word of God, we read one verse, we don't understand it. And then later on, you read it again. Oh, I understand it. God is revealing truth and inspiration because God is going to work in and through our lives every single day.

And what better way to be molded by the Lord than to open His word and to study it. And think of this in your mind. The intentionality, the amount of effort that Darius had to do to search the records.

[ 21 : 23 ] Think of how we are to search with such intentionality in the word of God. So search the word to find Christ. If you're not a Christian, you'll learn about who Jesus Christ is.

Learn the gospel story, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And find how God is faithful to us even today because I am here to tell you the same God that is so good that fulfills all of His promises and His prophecies is faithful to us.

God continues to speak to us today. He continues to work through our lives. There's some remarkable things that the Lord has done in my life.

But in many of you, I'm sure for many of us, we can think of a time where God has worked in our life, where we have been transformed, where we're not the same person we were a year ago, five years ago, 10 years ago.

Do you remember your life before you were a Christian? Do you remember your life when you became a Christian? Think of how much of a journey you have been on in Christ.

[ 22 : 34 ] The second thing is to ask the Holy Spirit to begin a work in you and see it through to completion. I'm reminded of Philippians chapter 1 verse 6, which says, it says, He who began a good work in you, I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ, amen.

It's asking the Holy Spirit to work in and through you, transforming you, molding you. Think of the imagery of God being the great potter and we being the clay, the work of God's hands.

Right? When you make a decision for Christ, it is not the end of your life. It is the beginning of your new life in Christ. And what a wonderful journey you can be on by trusting in the Lord, but also obeying His word, right?

Listening to what the Word of God has to say, and listening to the call that God has for your life. Maybe you have been feeling a tug from the Holy Spirit to speak to a family member or a friend. Maybe it's a phone call or a text message. Have you ever felt that before? God just pulling at your shirt and you're like, I don't know about this, but you end up doing it? Or if you don't do it, how it bothers you when you don't do it?

[ 23 : 54 ] If you think about it? So asking the Holy Spirit to begin a work in you. I'm reminded of Zechariah chapter 4 verse 6, where contextually Zechariah is speaking to Zerubbabel, right?

Zerubbabel, he's not sure how the temple is going to be completed, right? This is all connected to Ezra. The prophet says to him that it is not by might nor by power, but by my spirit.

So think about that. The Holy Spirit working in the people of God to complete the temple, and in the same way, the Holy Spirit working in and through us to become the men or the women that God wants us to be.

Putting on the new self, being that new creation, exhibiting the love of Jesus Christ, showing kindness and compassion to other people, being an ambassador for Christ, speaking truth, but dealing in love.

There's so much that's from that. And we are all a work in progress. Don't let this overwhelm you. Just know you should have that intentionality.

[ 24 : 58 ] Look, I want to be changed by the Lord, and you should have that desire as well to be transformed, to be more like Jesus Christ. Because quite honestly, there is no name that is higher than the name of Jesus Christ.

And thirdly, celebrate milestones. This is a huge thing that I was mentioning at the beginning. The people of God, right? They returned from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem.

They celebrated that. They were so excited that they rebuilt the altar so that they could partake in their services, offering their birth sacrifices to the Lord, and celebrating in their feasts.

Think about that. They celebrated. They celebrated with the laying of the foundation of the temple, and they celebrated the completion of the temple. Much like how we as Christians today, we should celebrate when someone becomes a Christian.

We should celebrate that. That's why we should celebrate when someone decides to get baptized, the public proclamation of an internal decision. That's why we should celebrate when there is a Christian marriage or why we celebrate communion.

[ 26 : 06 ] Now we celebrate communion a little bit differently. It's more reverence, but it's still a celebration nonetheless. Rededication is a huge one.

Some of us, life happens. We go through trials and tribulations, and we feel distant from the Lord. When someone comes back into the presence of the Lord or comes back to God, that is a cause for celebration.

For many of us, we may know someone who walked away from the faith, someone who left the faith. Pray for them. Pray that God will intervene in their life, that they'll come back to have that relationship and to be fully restored.

And that's the other thing. Reconciliation, renewal, and this isn't all of the things that we should celebrate, but these are some of the things.

When a marriage is once broken, but is healed, or someone who was lost and now found, or when there has been healing, that's a praise.

[ 27 : 13 ] We praise God for miracles that happen, or when people are healed and there's restoration and transformation. It's not something that we should just hide and just be like, no, you made a decision for Christ's cool.

No, you celebrate that. That's something that's remarkable for us. Luke chapter 15, verse 10, and I love this verse so much, tells us, just so I tell you, it always gets me, even as a kid, I remember hearing this from my mother, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Think about that. If the angels are celebrating, so should we, someone who repents, someone who is coming to the Lord, and then of course, 2 Corinthians 5, 17, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away and the new has come. And in all of this, as we close here, the same God that worked in the heart of kings loves you.

The same God who moved the people of God out of exile, back to where they belong, desires a relationship with you. Jesus Christ loves you, and this is a call for you to come to Christ, to believe in the Lord and to be saved.

[ 28 : 35 ] I think of 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 4, which is the simple gospel, that Christ, he died for our sins, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.

That is the most simplistic way that we can explain the gospel message, especially if you know someone who's like, hey, can you explain what you believe in? Hey, well, there you go, 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 3 to 4.

This is what I believe in. Now, of course, there's other parts of the story, right? Jesus being born in a major, performing miracles, right? Turning water into wine, healing the sick, raising people from

the dead, the teachings that he told.

There's so much more to that. The fulfillment of prophecy, but if you were to explain it in a simplistic way, that's how you would do it. And so the same God that worked in the heart of kings and in the people of God and in everyday people calls for you to have a relationship with you.

And if you are distant, let this be a call for you to come back to the Lord. Or maybe the Lord is pulling your shirt to have a discussion with a friend or a family member.

[ 29 : 50 ] Know that Jesus Christ loves you. We are called to enter in that relationship, to believe in him and be saved, to grow in the faith, and to do good in the name of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray together. Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, the creator of the heavens and the earth, we thank you for giving us this time and this opportunity for us to go into the book of Ezra chapter 6, where we are seeing that there's this decree of Darius who is responding.

He verified the records. And he says to let the people of God do what they need to do. Father, we've learned about the completion and the dedication and the celebration that came with this temple.

May you stir our hearts. May you be with us. May we search the word to find Christ, to believe in you that our hearts will be changed, our minds will be transformed.

May your Holy Spirit work in and through us, making us more like your Son, Jesus. And along the way in this journey together, may we celebrate those milestones, the decisions for Christ, baptism, communion.

[ 31 : 13 ] May we not be afraid of who you are. Father, we love you. We thank you for giving us this chance to open your word, to read from it, to learn from it.

May we be moved to act upon what we have learned today. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray. And we all say together, amen.

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May God's blessings be with you.