
Graphics and Audio Notes

- There **will** be a sermon starter video.
- There **will** be notes and / or scripture to show on screen during the sermon.
- [Include other notes about graphics or media during the service here]



Text highlighted in this way have a slide prepared to be on screen.

Text highlighted in this way are a reminder for Andrew during delivery.

Text highlighted in this way are direction for Andrew during delivery.

Key Questions

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about...

Why is this sermon important?

It is important because...

What is the good news?

The good news is...

What are the next action steps?

You are invited to...

What is the context of this sermon?

[Place, congregation, series information, time, current events, etc.]

What are other key takeaways?

For social media

- [text here]

Metadata

Topics

- Change Lives
- Grow
- Make Disciples

Sermon Books of the Bible

- Zechariah

Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, Eldorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference

Sermon Audio

9 a.m. Worship

11 a.m. Worship

Sermon Video



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5th Sunday after Pentecost [Green]
Small Things, Big Difference - Small Things
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

July 9, 2017
Zechariah 4:6-10
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,973

Good News

Invitation

Closing Prayer

Introduction

Zechariah 4:6-10, CEB

⁶He answered me: "This is the LORD's word to Zerubbabel: Neither by power, nor by strength, but by my spirit, says the LORD of heavenly forces."

⁷Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain. He will present the capstone to shouts of great gratitude. ⁸The LORD's word came to me: ⁹The hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it so that you will know that the LORD of heavenly forces has sent me to you. ¹⁰Those who despise a time of little things will rejoice when they see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand.

These are the seven eyes of the LORD, surveying the entire earth.

Response to Scripture

One: The word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.



Fresh Start

Appointive Year

Annual Conference Report

Time to Make Change

There's always this sense, in the new year, that this is the year we could make some changes.

Types of Change

So I don't know about you, maybe some of you would like to get in better shape or lose some weight, eat better, maybe be more spiritually focused this year, perhaps spend more time with your kids. Maybe some of you want to get better with your money or quit some kind of annoying habit. I don't know what it would be, but there is something about a fresh start that just brings hope.

Looking at Others

So when I look at the lives of those who have it together in some area of their life more than I do, I don't know about you, but sometimes that kind of intimidates me. I'll look at their lives and say, "They are so much better than I am in this area. I don't even know what big things I need to do to get those results. I've got no idea all the big changes that I would need to make." I want to bring some good news to you today if you've ever felt that way. Because, I really believe that it's not often the big changes that we need to make, but if you're taking notes, here is the key thought for this week and next week:

Series Point

It's often the small things that no one sees that result in the big things that everyone wants.

Let me say that again because I really believe there's power in this thought, that it's not the big things, but it's often the small things that no one sees that result in the big things that everyone wants.

Small Things, Big Difference

Reading the Bible

Let me give you some examples. There was a guy, years ago, that I really admired the way he walked with God. I don't know if you've ever known anyone like this but he didn't just call himself a Christian, you could just tell that this guy was very prayerful. When he would respond, he would be searching for scriptures in his mind.

You could just really sense this guy was being led by the Spirit in everything that he did. And I asked him, "Man, what's your secret? Like, what are the big things you do to have these results?" He said, "Well, I honestly think things changed for me 17 years ago when I started reading through the bible every year. Just each year, I'd read from cover to cover through the bible, and that really helped me be grounded in the things of God."

I was like, "Oh, well, of course, 17 years of reading the bible, I could never do that. That's such a big thing." He said, "No, no, no, no. Really, it's not." He said, "Think about it. It takes me about 15 minutes a day."

And if I'm just faithful in that small thing, over the course of a year, I actually read through the bible." A 15-minute discipline changed his life. I thought, "You know what? I can do that. I can devote 15 minutes a day." And so for me, over the last 14 or so years, I've read through the bible, 15 minutes a day, and honestly, that small change has made a gigantic difference in my walk and relationship with God.

Exercise / Running

I'll give you another example. I've worked out in the gym for probably 20 years, and I'm one of those guys, I go there, I didn't see any changes. I'm like, "What's wrong with me?" And so there's this one guy, I'm looking at him going, "You're ripped. I'm not. What am I doing wrong?" I said, "Give me some advice. What are the big things you do?" He said, "Really, it's not big things. I just work out four days a week." I'm like, "Really? Four, not seven?" He said, "No, four's enough." I said, "How long are your workouts? Two hours long?" He said, "No, 20 minutes of weights and 20 minutes of cardio." I'm like, "You're kidding me. 40 minutes, four days?" "Yeah, that's about it." I said, "What about your diet?" He said, "Well, low carbs, high protein." "What else? What else?" "Nothing. That's it." "Oh, what? Low carbs, high protein, 40 minutes, four days a week?" He said, "Yeah, that's about it." And so I thought, "I think I can do that."

And so for the past year, I did about four workouts a week, low carbs, high protein, my waist is back down to where it was in college, my wife is kissing me more. I don't know what happened. But a small thing made a really big difference; it's crazy like that.

Marriage Counselor - Pray together every day

Another example is I was talking to a marriage counselor and I said, "You know, you've worked with marriage for years. What do you think it is for a Christian marriage, one of the most important things you could do?" He didn't hesitate. He said, "Beyond a shadow of a doubt, you want to have a great marriage, pray together everyday." "Okay. What does that look like? Like an hour-long prayer meeting?" He said, "No, no, no. Just everyday, maybe before you go to work, maybe at the end of the day, it might be a 30-second prayer. It might be 30 minutes. Whatever's comfortable to you, just pray together everyday."

I'm like, "What could that do?" And he said, "Well, think about it. If you're praying together, you're probably talking. If you're praying together, you have a spiritual connection and it's really hard to pray with someone you hate, and so you have to work

through things." I'm like, "You know what? I can do that. I can pray with Amy for just a little bit every single day." And this one small discipline has made a big difference in our marriage. And I came to tell somebody today that I believe, with all my heart, you can have a very different year. And chances are it's not the big things that you think, but it's often the small things that no one sees that result in the big things that everyone wants.

Scripture

And so what I want to do today is build a foundation. We're going to start in Zechariah, chapter 4. If you want to go there in your bibles -- which it's a really good reason to use the YouVersion bible app, because you don't have to find Zechariah flipping through the pages, you can just type it in. I don't know if you ever -- that's why I have tabs on my bible because some of the books are hard to find. So Zechariah, chapter 4, and then what I want to do is tell you where we're going to go in the message series. Then, I'm going to break it down and give you one very specific, one very direct, one very focused assignment to focus on one small thing that I believe can make a very big difference.

Context of Chapter 4

So let me give you the context of Zechariah, chapter 4. During the time when this was written, the temple was destroyed and God's people were in captivity so it was a low point in history. We don't have a house for God and we're not even in the place that we're supposed to be. And so people were very depressed. In the year 537 B.C., Zerubbabel led a remnant of people back to Israel, and so there was some hope. We're back in the land where we're supposed to live. And then 18 years later, God spoke to King Zerubbabel and said, "I'm going to give you the power to rebuild the temple."

So let's start in verse 6 of Zechariah 4 and we'll read it and let it speak to us. This is what the Lord said to Zerubbabel:

Key Scripture - Zechariah 4:6

"⁶He answered me: "This is the LORD's word to Zerubbabel: Neither by power, nor by strength, but by my spirit, says the LORD of heavenly forces."¹

"It's not by force nor by strength." In other words, the temple's not going to be built in a way that you get credit for it, but it's going to be by my what? Everybody let's say it aloud. "It's not by force, not by strength, but by My Spirit says the Lord of heaven's armies." Here's the thing. You can try to change and you can try in your own power. And you can make some incremental improvements by your power. But if you'll tap into a power greater than that which you possess, if you tap into the power of the Holy Spirit, His Spirit is made perfect in your weakness. And not by our effort, not by our might, not by our power, but by His Spirit, he can transform you.

¹ Zecharia 4:6, CEB.

Example of Hanging a Mirror

It's like when I was trying to hang up a really big mirror at my house. And I can't -- I don't fix anything. I can barely fix a sandwich. And I was fighting with this little screw driver, it was much too small, trying to get this thing screwed into a stud. When suddenly, Pastor Kevin Penry appeared at my front door. Why Pastor Kevin appeared at that time, I think I know. I think my wife, Amy, called him and said, "My husband might need help." She says she didn't, but I think she's lying, and confessing her sins so that she'll be forgiven. Pastor Kevin walks in and says, "Hey, need any help?" I'm like, "Well, sure, if you want to help." He walks out to his annoying car, brings in an annoying power drill, moves me out of the way, points it right there, and goes "Zip," then takes the other one and goes "zip!" Okay? For 30 minutes, I was fighting and not saying a cuss word because I'm a Godly man, and doing everything I could to -- he walks in there, "zip!" Then he takes out this little thing that's got a bubble in it. I never knew what it was for; it's a level. And so it's just right. Three minutes later, Amy walks in and she said, "Craig, did you?" I said, "No." She said, "Kevin, did you?" I said, "Yes." And she said, "I thought so."

Bottom line is, I can fight all day long in my own strength, but every now and then, you need a little Pastor Kevin power drill strength. Okay?

You can try your best all day long to make all your changes, but when you tap into the Spirit of God, there is a strength beyond what you can muster up on your own. Some of you, you've tried for years to change something, to improve something, and you cannot do it. This is the year that it will not be by your might nor by your power, but by His Spirit says the Lord. God says, "I'm going to give you my power to rebuild this temple."

Verse 9

⁹The hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it so that you will know that the LORD of heavenly forces has sent me to you.

Verse 9 says, "Then another message came to me from the Lord. Zerubbabel is the one who laid the foundation of this temple and he will complete it." If you'll pause there for a moment, I did a little research on kind of the background of this story, and what I found is that the initial phases of the construction was actually very awkward. It went rather slowly. And if you read in Ezra, there were times when people visited the early stage of construction, and they actually cried. They cried. It's debatable as to why they cried. Some people believe they cried because they were happy that the temple was being rebuilt. More people actually argue that they cried because they were embarrassed because it was so unimpressive. They're like, "This is so small and so pathetic. There's just a few rocks there. This isn't going to amount to anything." And the reality is that's the way we often feel.

You go to the gym, you're on the treadmill, and you're thinking, "I've got to lose all this weight and I've only lost 1 pound. There's no way I'm going to get anywhere."

"I've got make all these changes. I try so hard and I go three days and I fall back into it." And we get so embarrassed so often by the small beginnings.

Verse 9 and 10

¹⁰Those who despise a time of little things will rejoice when they see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand.

Verse 10 says this -- and I hope this will encourage some of you -- "Do not despise these small beginnings. For the Lord rejoices to see the work begin." You've got to put one stone before you put a second stone. You've got to start somewhere. And God rejoices to see you be faithful in the small things.

One of the challenges is so often, we look at people and we see their highlight reels and we know our behind the scenes. And we get so intimidated.

David

You look at people in the bible and you're like, "Look at David. He was a man after God's own heart. He took down Goliath. I want to take down my giant." But we forget that he was faithful for years in the fields, tending sheep. And whenever a wild animal would come up, he would run off the animal or he would kill the animal. What was happening? He was learning to be faithful with the small things so God could trust him with the big things.

Ruth and Boaz

People look at Ruth and Boaz. Girls, all the time, "I want a husband like Boaz. Boaz just sounds handsome."

Okay? You forget Ruth was faithful to Naomi when she didn't have to be, when it would have been easier not to be. She was faithful out in the fields for years and years, for time after time. And it was that faithfulness that opened the doors of God's blessing through Boaz. It was the things that no one saw that resulted in the marriage that everyone wanted.

Daniel

We look at Daniel in the bible like, "Oh, he's got such great faith. I mean, he's standing in a lion's den, and his faith is unwavering. I want fight like that." Well, we forget that three times a day, year after year, you know, what Daniel did? He stopped whatever he was doing, knelt down three times a day, and sought the Lord in prayer. What kind of faith do you think you would have if you devoted three specific times a day, everyday, to seeking after God? It's the things that no one sees that results in what everyone wants.

John Wooden

I read a book this year called "Wooden on Leadership." It was about John Wooden, one of the greatest basketball coaches of all time. He coached for U.C.L.A, ten NCAA titles, seven consecutive titles, unheard of between 1967 and '73. You know what the first practice consisted of for Coach Wooden? He brought the players in, didn't run drills, didn't run sprints, didn't practice free throws or passing. The very first practice consisted of sitting down, putting your socks on and putting your shoes on very very carefully. Because, he found that no one ever thinks about how you put your socks on, and therefore, you get blisters. And he made a very important point that we're a team that cares about the details, because the details matter.

In fact, John Wooden said this: It's the little things that are vital. Little things make the big things happen. I love that. It's so often the small things that no one sees that result in the big things that everyone wants.

Mary and Martha

Jesus visited the home of Mary and Martha, in Luke, chapter 10, and Mary was enjoying the presence of Jesus and Martha was wiggling out. "The tea's luke warm, the dishes don't match." Whatever. I don't know what she's doing but you can use your imagination. Jesus looked at her, he said, "Martha, you're upset about so many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary" -- who was sitting at the feet of Jesus -- "has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her." You missed the most important thing.

Rich Young Ruler

Jesus encountered a very wealthy, successful, young business person, and this guy wanted to follow Jesus. He's like, "Hey, I want to be on your team." And the problem was the material possessions were so important to him that he was missing the true blessings of becoming a follower of Christ.

And so Jesus said, "Hey, you only lack one thing, only one thing, just one thing. You get this one thing right and you can help change the world. You lack one thing. Go, sell your possessions, give all that stuff away. Don't let it weigh you down, then come follow me." But you know what happened? The guy went away sad because he was unwilling to do the one thing that would change his life. It's amazing what a life of focus can actually bring. It's often the small things that no one sees that result in the big things that everyone wants.

Conclusion

Call to Action

So here's your assignment, very simple, and very focused, very direct and very doable. What I'm going to challenge you to do is get as focused as you can. Don't give me a New Year's resolution. If you have three, you're going to do none. Don't even give me one New Year's resolution.

What I want to do is I want to ask you to seek God for one specific word that will define and direct your year to come.

One word. And then you can also put a verse to it, because this is not going to be by our might or by our power, but by God's Spirit that he will empower us to move forward. And you will not believe how different your year, and your life can be when you focus on one God-breathed word that can help direct your decisions and guide your life.

Example - My word - Necessary

Then you take your word -- I don't know what it is -- "faith, believe, focus, healing, discernment, generosity, serving," whatever. Then you type that in google and type in "serving on the bible." Just do that. "Serving in the bible." And then there will be verses that come up. And then you pick you a verse, and then you write it in lipstick on

your mirror. You get it framed and you put it somewhere that's important to you. And suddenly, when you wake up, there's a verse and there's a word that's focusing you throughout the year.

"Discipline," and suddenly you're disciplined, you're making wise choices. "Extra," you're making a little extra effort in all that you do. "Details," you're following details. "Relationships," you're sitting there serving people in relationships. And then at the end of the year, someone's going to come up to you and say, "Hey, what's up with you? I don't get it. I mean, I don't mean to be rude but you weren't in such good shape last year. Now you're in good shape." They're going to say, "I don't get it. You know, you weren't really involved in the church, and now you're like Mr. Church guy or Miss Church lady, you're there all the time, and you're full of joy because you're making a difference." Or, you know, "You didn't seem to even have a good marriage. Now you're like newly weds, like "hunika, hunika, lova dova, all the time. What happened to you?" "You weren't even that close to God and now, you know, all you talk about is how great it is to be used by God. What happened to you? What big things?" And you're going to say, "You know what? I've got to be honest with you. It wasn't anything really big, but it was God put something small in front of me and I just decided to be faithful in the small things over time."

Good News

Because you know what God loves? God loves when you're faithful in the small things. He says, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. You've been faithful in the small things so guess what? You are promotable. Now I can trust you with even bigger things." And when people look on and wonder how is your life so different? What? They can't even fathom. And you just say, "You know what? It's really not the big things but it's the small things that God put on my heart"

Invitation

Because, when you focus on one thing, it's amazing what God can accomplish through you. Don't let anybody fool you; it's not the big things. It's made up of faithfulness in the small things over time. It's often the small things that no one ever sees that result in the big things that everyone wants.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, I am sorry for all the times in my life when I mess up.

And if anything comes to mind, ask God's forgiveness.

Forgive me of my sin and all that I know is wrong.
Thank you that you died on the cross and rose for me.
I trust you with my life.
Help me receive your forgiveness.
Please fill me with your Spirit and help me to follow you.
In your holy name, Amen.

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