

# Appreciate the Day of Small Things

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**Bible Text:** Zechariah 4:10

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## **Berean Free Presbyterian Church**

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Let's think about two ten verses we might call them. We looked at one of these verses briefly in a prayer meeting recently and that is found in Zechariah. Anyone remember what Zechariah means? I gave you a clue? The clue is: does anyone remember what Zechariah means? "The Lord remembers."

Zechariah 4. This is a topical message as you see. We will just look at the portion of the verse that I'd like us to focus on today. Zechariah 4:10,

"For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice."

Then, Luke 12. You might want to put your finger in Zechariah 4. This might relate to it, I'm not going to particularly read any lengthy portion. Luke 12:32,

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

I want us just to think of those two verses today and that we need to remember that littleness in the Kingdom of God is not insignificance or insignificant to the Lord and ought not be to the people of God.

"Who hath despised the day of small things?" and "Fear not, little flock; for it is of the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Literally, in Luke, "Stop fearing." They were afraid of their smallness. They were not in the majority, were they? "Stop fearing, little flock, for it is of the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

This is going to be a briefer message than usual and I want us to take this to heart. Who would despise the day of small things? Who would fear that they are little? Well, the answer is: those who have seen larger things. The context is that the ancestors of those that lived in Zechariah's day had seen a larger temple, they had seen a larger ministry. Some of you have seen larger ministries and been in perhaps larger buildings and I can understand that a smaller ministry might be something that could be despised. The same word, the same ideas that he is despised and rejected of men.

Those who would want to see larger, would despise the day of small things and would fear a day of small things. I think we would not be considered perhaps normal if we did

not desire to see larger things because we want to see people saved, we want to see backsliders restored. We all enjoy new friends in the Lord and so this is a very understood question, isn't it? And an understood comment. I don't think the Lord is being stern or I don't think this is a serious rebuke in the sense that he understands their hearts, he understands their burdens and their motives. We can understand that those who have seen larger ministries and all of us who want to see greater things, would despise the day of small things and be afraid of the day of small things.

Why would we despise the day of small things and fear the day of small things? Well, there are several reasons that Zechariah, Haggai and Luke give, Christ gives as we read in the gospel of Luke. In Zechariah and in Luke 12, persecution is a reason why they are despising the day of small things and fearing that they are small. The small people are picked on. Small things are often in jeopardy. I remember, I had a friend in school named Joey P. and he was shorter than most people and he was always being picked on and always the brunt of people's sarcasm and jokes. He despised that; he despised being short; he despised being picked on. But Joey had a lot of spunk to him and he overcame his shortness, I think, in life.

You can understand why in Luke, the Lord is predicting this and in their hearts, they become afraid when he says for instance, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, those that kill the body." Being a disciple of the Lord and all of a sudden he says, "You're going to be killed. Some of you are going to be killed." The Lord hasn't said that to us but he said that to his disciples and most of them were killed for believing in the Lord Jesus. Most of them did not die natural deaths and even John, if you want to call his actual death, he was a martyr, at least a prisoner, on the island of Patmos.

Small things, though you may think that they aren't easily seen because of the smallness, are easily picked out. The Lord spoke of the persecution by way of the Pharisees, being killed, being cast into prison but yet he said, "None of you are forgotten. Even the hairs of your head are numbered." He goes on to say that "though there are those that will deny you and those that will speak a word against the Son of man that you will minister to. They will bring you into synagogues, into magistrates and powers and don't be afraid, don't take thought of what ye shall answer for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that same hour."

So, we find that persecution is a reason why we despise the day of small things and fear being small. The Lord tells that that is something that could easily cause us to despise this. Haggai tells us that, perhaps it was reputation that caused them to despise the day of small things. Haggai 2:3 says this,

"Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?"

So, reputation. They felt that they were insignificant in the eyes of men that what was now a temple was anything but in comparison to what was in the past and perhaps this

could be under the subject of pride that we have to be careful that we aren't seeking any reputation with men, that we are seeking the will of God.

Zechariah and Haggai also indicate that a day of small things is a day of hard work for those who are involved and that is certainly a reason why we can despise the day of small things. A day of small things means that people have to take on several jobs in order to see the work continue. For instance, Zerubbabel saw the work that was done by so few people as a great mountain, "Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel though shalt become a plain." And in Haggai's day, he said, "Go work." There was a lot of work. It was a lot of work to build their own houses but in Haggai's day, it was not different. Remember in the days of Zechariah and Haggai and the days of Nehemiah and the days of Ezra, it was a lot of work for them to build the temple, to build the altars, to build the walls, to assemble the people again for the public preaching of the word. We all have to acknowledge that with more people, jobs are less for each one and the Lord reminds us that it is hard work. The Lord Jesus worked hard, didn't he, in his ministry? We read over and over again of his tiredness of the long journeys that he made, the disciples and all the ministries that they took part in.

We can understand the reasons why one can despise the day of small things. If I could just encourage us to keep on working, to work until we can't work any longer, to work until the night falls. It's hard work to see a church built. It's hard work to evangelize souls. It's hard work to resist sin. It's hard work to resist temptation. It's hard work to have a job and then have a ministry of the Kingdom of God in mind as well. Let us remember that we're here to serve the Lord. We're here not to make a living but we're here to live for him.

Persecution, reputation, hard work are reasons why we despise the day of small things and are afraid of being small. Also, Luke tells us that the likelihood of deprivation is there for the day of small things. A whole section, again, in Luke verse 13-31 really deals with being deprived, being in want. The Lord Jesus first of all, corrects a man who sought to make him a judge or a divider of his inheritance and he said to be careful, to beware of covetousness. Then he spoke of the rich man that would tear down his barns and build bigger ones to house his things and he was not rich toward God. Then he went into the fact that it's easy to worry about your life, the things you eat and the body, the things that you put on, but he's saying to them, "Your life is more than meat and your body is more than raiment."

So, deprivation, poverty. People who have been on that end, it's easy to be tempted to be covetous, it is easy to be tempted to have the other end of the spectrum. And the day of small things is a time of great trials for many of God's people who sacrifice and it's easy to be anxious about things that we wear and things that we eat. We wonder how are we going to pay the next bill, how are we going to feed our mouths but the Lord provides for his people. He tells us to "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto us."

He says, "Don't worry." How often we spend so much time in our minds thinking about our everyday needs and he teaches us that his soldiers, like the soldiers in any army, are not to be worried about their temporal needs, that if you are in the army of Christ, that he's going to take care of the needs of his soldiers. Life is precious to God more than the things that he gives us. His soldiers are not to concern themselves about their wants and he says to consider the ravens, consider the lilies. What is he saying? Think through the gospel? Look, if God takes care of ravens and lilies and those are temporal things, how much more will he take care of his people who are made in his image.

Preoccupation with temporal matters is a reason why we can despise and fear. He says, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Be careful of the idea that this is all that you have. He's not giving a blanket statement for us to sell everything we own but he's telling us to be cautious. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Earlier he said, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." A preoccupation with temporal matters is going to cause one to be afraid and to despise the day of small things.

Then look at the verse itself in verse 32, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." I wonder if they thought, "Will the Lord despise us? Will he give us the Kingdom? Such a minority?" The temptation is always to think that God is always with the majority and yet, the Lord Jesus says, "It's the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom, to give you power, to give you authority, to give you a ministry." It's his good pleasure and that should comfort us. The Lord's good pleasure is to give his flock his presence and the promise of power in his Kingdom to reach souls.

So, there are reasons why we could despise the day of small things and be afraid of the day of small things. The Lord knows these reasons and he addresses them one by one. We're always tempted to despise the day of small things and there are reasons why we're tempted to do this and the Lord is addressing the need. The wisdom of Christ is that he anticipates the problems of his people and he addresses them one by one. He doesn't ignore them.

What's the answer? The answer to who despises the day of small things? Who fears? Why do we fear? Why do we despise? What is the answer? Despise not, I guess it's that simple. And fear not. Easier said than done but what does he say? "Who has despised the day of small things? Thou shall rejoice." There is the answer. What's the opposite of despise? Admire. Admire the day of small things; enjoy the day of small things. I guess I can't simplify it any more than that but I think that's the answer.

I've been studying in Ecclesiastes and I actually was very excited to teach on Wednesday night but for whatever reason, we weren't able to meet together and, I guess, the Lord just wanted me to be excited and I was able to share with Tanya and Jarod just a few of these thoughts but the one thing that just struck me in the passage is that the writer is saying, "Humanely speaking," which is what "under the sun means." "Humanely speaking," he's constantly bringing himself down to the level of the natural man, of the everyday man. The everyday man is always looking at comparisons. The wicked are

being treated like the righteous, the righteous are being treated like the wicked. It seems like time and chance happen to everybody irregardless and over and over in this book, there are reasons why the natural man, the everyday man, complains and says, "What's the use? It's not profitable to serve God." If you serve God, you get a worse lot than if you don't serve God and so he's always on the level of the everyday man but he is constantly seeking to bring that thought up by passages like "Fear God and keep his commandments." And, "I know it shall be well with the righteous."

But what does he say? Look, you cannot find out the reasons why the Lord allows righteous people to suffer and the reasons why at the end of the day, you cannot discover the secrets of God. Yes, we can come up with conclusions and he did, "It shall be well with the righteous. It shall not be well with the wicked." He says, "Let that suffice. If we try to delve into the secrecies of the Divine councils, we can't reach it. There is not way." That's his answer there. He says, I think at the end of chapter 8, "I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it." I think we know that with Job. As far as we know, Job never really knew why he suffered like he did but he was content in the end. The Lord said, "He's trying me and suffice it to say, he's going to make me as pure as gold. It shall be well with the righteous."

But what did the writer of Ecclesiastes say? I know I'm getting ahead of myself to Wednesday, but "despise not the day of small things, neither despise the day of great things if we were in a day of revival." In other words, enjoy the lot God has given you in the Kingdom of God and he says it this way in Ecclesiastes, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a merry heart for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white and thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity." He's not just saying, "Your life is vanity," he's saying, "Your life that is temporal but live joyfully." And he's saying, "for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

He's saying, "You're wasting your time to complain. You're wasting your time to despise the day. You're wasting your time to fear," and don't we spend a lot of time thinking about how we're going to pay for this and how we're going to pay for that? We think we've spent a lot of thought on temporal things when he's saying, "Your time is short. God is going to take care of you in his spiritual army."

I wonder: are the soldiers in Iraq wondering about what they're going to eat? I suppose some soldiers do but they know they're going to have their meal. They know they're going to have water. They know they're going to have clothing. It's all provided for them and if the world can do this, if man can provide, how much more shall the Lord? And he's saying, "I want you to enjoy the lot that God has given you. Don't despise it." If he's saying "don't despise it," he's saying "admire it." If it says, "Jesus is despised and rejected of men," then what's he saying we ought to do? We ought to admire and receive

Christ as men should and if he's saying, "Who hath despised the day of small things," he's saying, "You should enjoy, you should admire the day of small things for God's accepts your work." He's saying, "Rejoice in the Lord. It's his good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." And if he says, "Don't fear the day of small things," he's saying, "Be courageous in the day of small things. Prove the Lord in the thick and the thin." The Lord gives an answer to his people and I know he's not saying, "Just pick up yourself and do it," but he's saying, "By my grace, you can admire this day. You can admire how the Lord can bless you when it seems like nothing good can come. The Lord can provide for you when it doesn't seem that there is anything available. The Lord can give you opportunities where it seems like the opportunities wouldn't be there."

Brothers and sisters, I know the Lord can bring a day of larger things. I know that, as we read the Scriptures God has given us, scriptural history, he's given us the history of the church, that he can bring a day of great things. Israel was small. Israel is an example, they were the smallest nation. God chose them. They were despised. Look at Abraham. So few in number. God made them as the sand at the seashore. They were so insignificant among the nations and yet God gave them the whole land of Canaan. Look at the 12 apostles, there were so few. The work seemed so vast and yet the Lord broke through at Pentecost.

The Lord is able to break through but may I say that I hope I'm learning to stop worrying, to stop despising, to stop fearing and to start enjoying. I mean, it comes down to we've got to enjoy the Lord. We've got to enjoy his word. We've got to enjoy the work of reaching souls. Do you enjoy talking to people about Christ? Or is it, "I've got to do this to see the church grow." Or, "I want to do this because they are souls made in the image of God. Because I delight and declare the glory of the Lord." Are you working in this church with delight or just out of duty? Do I prepare messages out of delight or out of a duty? The Lord is checking our hearts at the outset of this year.

"Who hath despised the day of small things? Stop fearing, little; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The Lord desires for us to admire the day of small things for if the Lord would be pleased to give us a day of greater things, we will wonder how did this spring from a day of small things? We'll have to say, "It's the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes."

They despised the disciples. They despised Christ. To think via crucifixion, he could build a church, by a death on the cross that the Lord Jesus would produce a generation and generations of people who would go to heaven but it is so. God has used the foolishness of preaching, the preaching of the cross, to save them that believe. Let us admire, let us enjoy the day that God has given us. Let us be courageous and continue to take the gospel to people. Let us continue to come and worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness and rejoicing in the Lord always in the lot that he's given each one of us.

I hope at home, that we're enjoying the Lord. I urge you to enjoy the Lord in your Bible studies. Are you reading the Bible every day? Are you praying in your closets? Fathers, mothers, are you opening the Bible with your children? Are you reading to your children? Are you praying with your wife? Are you praying with your husband? Are you seeking

the Lord together? Are you enjoying it or are you doing it out of duty? The Lord checks our motives. Lord, deliver us from just dutifulness. I know we're to be dutiful but we're also to have delight. The Lord delights in his people. He rejoices over us with singing. Do you know, the Lord ministers to us with delight? It's never just a dutifulness, he delights in his people.

May God bless this word.