

**"God's Desire for His People"**

**Part 2**

**Zechariah 8**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of Zechariah we were looking at God's desire for the Jews and for us. God had brought them back into their land under the leadership of Cyrus and He had brought them back to rebuild the temple. But the opposition came, and they stopped. Fifteen years later they began again to build but they were living in fear of the opposition. Therefore God desired that they would:

1. **Believe His promises.**

**Notice Zechariah 8:13, 15**

In both of these 4 verses God exhorted the Jews to not fear. They were to walk by faith in the promises of God because where there is faith there is no fear. The fear in the lives of the Jews had paralyzed them and had kept them from finishing the temple.

**Application:**

Fear does the very same thing to us today. It will keep you from stepping out for the Lord. But when we walk by faith there is no room for fear in our lives.

**Mark 4:40**

<sup>40</sup> *And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?*

**2 Timothy 1:7**

<sup>7</sup> *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

2. **Be True to your Word.**

**Notice Zechariah 8:16a**

The Jews who went into captivity were not honest with one another in their affairs. They were deceptive and they especially took advantage of the poor and the vulnerable. God commands them here to be true to their word.

**Ecclesiastes 5:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> *When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.*

<sup>5</sup> *Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*

<sup>6</sup> *Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?*

**Application:**

We too are to be true to our word.

**Matthew 5:33-37**

<sup>33</sup> *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:*

<sup>34</sup> *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*

<sup>35</sup> *Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*

<sup>36</sup> *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

<sup>37</sup> *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

**James 5:12**

<sup>12</sup> *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.*

**Ephesians 4:25**

<sup>25</sup> *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

**3. Judge True Judgment and Seek Peace.**

**Notice Zechariah 8:16 again.**

The judgment referred to here was done in the gate of the city by the judges. Civil matters were decided by men who served in the gate of the city. The Jews who were sent

into captivity showed favoritism in the gate. Those who served in the gate would take bribes from the rich and therefore the poor were often mistreated.

**Amos 5:12**

*<sup>12</sup> For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.*

But there is more here.

**Notice Zechariah 8:16 again.**

The Jews were to execute the judgment of truth in the gate, and they were to seek peace between the parties. They were to do all they could to see that the matter was reconciled between those who came to the gate for judgment.

**Application:**

I want to make an application by looking at some verses in Proverbs.

**Proverbs 6:16-19**

*<sup>16</sup> These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:*

*<sup>17</sup> A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

*<sup>18</sup> An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,*

*<sup>19</sup> A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

God hates it when people sow discord among the brethren. We are to be people who seek peace. We are to be people who sow seeds of peace.

**Matthew 5:9**

*<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

James tells us that it is the wise person who seeks peace and avoids contention.

**James 4:13-18**

*<sup>13</sup> Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*

<sup>14</sup> *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.*

<sup>15</sup> *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*

<sup>16</sup> *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*

<sup>17</sup> *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

<sup>18</sup> *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

I have known people and I am sure you have as well, that love to see things stirred up among their peers. They will whisper to someone something that another has said just to get a matter stirred up. The sad thing is that this often happens in the church among believers. Let me just say that this is straight from the Devil because he loves to see divisions among God's people.

#### **Proverbs 26:20-21**

<sup>20</sup> *Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.*

<sup>21</sup> *As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.*

Those who stir up strife and contentions and those who do not seek peace are spiritually immature.

#### **1 Corinthians 3:1-3**

*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*

<sup>2</sup> *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

<sup>3</sup> *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

4. Do not devise evil against your neighbor.

Notice Zechariah 8:17

The Jews were to be very careful to not only practice righteousness, but they were also to keep a close watch on the mind. They were to not devise evil in their hearts against their neighbors.

**Application:**

Let us be reminded that God is fully aware of our thoughts. We are to keep a close watch on what enters into our minds.

**2 Corinthians 10:5**

<sup>5</sup> *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ:*

What many do not understand is that evil thoughts are also sin.

**Matthew 5:21-22**

<sup>21</sup> *Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:*

<sup>22</sup> *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

Anger in the heart is the same as murder committed.

**Matthew 5:27-28**

<sup>27</sup> *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

<sup>28</sup> *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Lust in the heart is the same as adultery committed.

Sin committed begins in the heart.

**James 1:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

<sup>15</sup> *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

Thoughts must be kept under control.

**5. Despise false oaths.**

**Notice Zechariah 8:17**

A false oath is a lie. It is promising something and then never following through with the promise. This too was something that was practiced among the Jews who went into captivity.

**Application:**

This can be applied with two verses.

**Matthew 12:36**

*<sup>36</sup> But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

*<sup>37</sup> For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

All of these things are hated by God. Now let us see how this was a path to blessings.

**Conclusion:**

**Notice Zechariah 8:18-23**

The fasts would be turned to feasts. The fasts marked times of sadness and brokenness. But this would all be turned to joy. These verses point to the Kingdom that is yet future. I want to draw your attention to the last verse because there is a wonderful message here for us.

***For we have heard that God is with you.***

Might this be said of you and me. You see if we practice truth, honesty, righteousness and peace people will see Jesus Christ in us. This is what we are left here on earth to do. We are to manifest Jesus Christ in our lives.

**2 Corinthians 4:6-11**

*<sup>6</sup> For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

*<sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

<sup>8</sup> *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;*

<sup>9</sup> *Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;*

<sup>10</sup> *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*

<sup>11</sup> *For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.*

**Philippians 1:21**

<sup>21</sup> *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*