

***Zechariah 4:1-7***

*Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. "Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'"*

**Insurmountable Obstacles**

Some time ago I read a story about the real spider man, a mountain climber who practised for his sport by scaling brick walls. To the average person, standing before a one hundred foot high brick building would seem an insurmountable obstacle, but to this athlete, even a one quarter inch ledge is sufficient to climb up by.

This reminds me of the apparent obstacle that lies before the committed Christian of today. In the midst of a "falling away from God" within the church (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3), Christ still calls His people to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19 NIV). The committed Christian is still called to be a part of bringing the gospel to a world and building-up those who believe. The weight of responsibility is being carried by fewer as Christians "fall away." The task, though hard, is not impossible!

Nehemiah's call to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, with few of Israel really interested, was a parallel task in God's work. The task was completed by applying three spiritual principles for serving God. First, the people *believed the impossible*. "I (Nehemiah) also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me... They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." (Nehemiah 2:18 NIV). God had led them to undertake the work, God would strengthen them for the work.

Secondly, they *saw the invisible*. When seeming insurmountable opposition arose, they rallied around their living God: "I (Nehemiah) stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." (Nehemiah 4:14 NIV). This was more than the power of positive thinking, this was faith in the Jehovah-God who always keeps His promises.

Thirdly, they corrected the ungodly practice of usury and foreclosure and began to *live the acceptable* in the sight of God. "We will give it back," they said. "And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say." Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. (Nehemiah 5:12 NIV)

Dear faithful believers, don't be discouraged by the turning aside of many from God's work. Remember the words of Zechariah: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6). Don't let that Sunday School class go, don't leave that visitation team or children's program. Despite the seeming insurmountable wall, take heart in the message of Nehemiah by taking hold of God. As the people determined, "Let us rise up and build" the church of God.

***What is my response:***

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