
Rebuilding The Altar (Overcoming Our Fears)

Rebuilding The Work

Pastor Wil Nichols

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Victorious Praise Fellowship Church of God in Christ

2116 Page Rd. Durham NC 27703

WEBSITE: www.VictoriousPraise.org

EMAIL: PastorWil@VictoriousPraise.org, Info@VictoriousPraise.org

PHONE: (919) 957-7500

Sermon: Rebuilding The Work: Rebuilding The Altar (Overcoming Our Fears)

Lesson Text

Ezra 3:1–3 (KJV)¹ And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. ² Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as *it is* written in the law of Moses the man of God. ³ And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear *was* upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* burnt offerings morning and evening.

Psalms 27:1–6 (KJV)¹ The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? ² When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. ³ Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will I be* confident. ⁴ One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. ⁵ For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. ⁶ And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

Introduction

So far in the series, “Rebuilding The Work,” we’ve been looking at the things that happen before we begin the work.

Last week, we looked at how God gives us the power of Authority, Anointing, and Supernatural Force to get wealth to finance the work.

Let's now look at one of the first things we must build as we actually begin rebuilding.

Ezra 3: ² Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, **and builded the altar of the God** of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as *it is* written in the law of Moses the man of God.

If they were called, stirred, and anointed to rebuild the house of God, why would they start with the altar, and not with the house itself?

The altar of God is a sacred place where sacrifices and gifts are offered up to God. Altar comes from the Hebrew word *mizbēah*, which means ‘place of sacrifice.’ It represents the presence of God where we offer sacrifices to Him.

But the significance of why it is built first is in the next verse: Ezra 3: ³ And they set the altar upon his bases; **for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries:**

Whenever God begins a work in us, there are three things we will have to overcome: our fears, our flesh, and our circumstances. And it is at the altar of God that we get the power to overcome them.

Series and Sermon: Rebuilding The Work: Rebuilding The Altar (Overcoming Our Fears)
“Rebuilding The Altar of Courage, Sacrifice, and Praise”

I. Rebuilding The Altar of Courage (Overcoming Our Fears)

Ezra 3: ³ And they set the altar upon his bases; **for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries**; and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* burnt offerings morning and evening.

The first reason we build the altar before we do anything else is to overcome our fears. The altar represents the presence of God which gives us Courage.

2 Timothy 1: ⁷ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

I find it amazing that anything God gives us as an assignment, it is always in the midst of enemies.

Is it just me, or has anyone else ever wondered why God doesn't just make our assignment easy? Shouldn't our spiritual callings be “Enemy-Free” and “Drama Free?”

1 Peter 4: ¹² Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

We need to stop being discombobulated, confused, and befuddled when we see enemies coming against the work that God has called us to do.

As a matter of fact, you need to think it strange if you're not running into enemies. Anything that's worth doing is worth fighting for. And if you don't have any enemies, then what you're doing isn't worth anything to them.

Psalms 23: ⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Ezra 3: ³ ... **for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries**:

And when that fear and anxiety shows us, we build the Altar of Courage.

Courage is not the absence of fear, it is fear that has said its prayers.

Philippians 4:6–7 (KJV)⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

God commands us to be of good courage when we come up against our fears.

Joshua 1: ⁹ Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Psalms 27: ¹ The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? ² When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. ³ Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will I be* confident.

II. Rebuilding The Altar of Sacrifice (Overcoming Our Flesh)

Ezra 3: ³ And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: **and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, even burnt offerings morning and evening.**

The second reason we build the altar is to overcome our flesh. The altar also represents the place of sacrifice, where we offer ourselves.

Romans 12: ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The Altar of Sacrifice is about giving God an offering that costs you yourself. If what you give to God costs you nothing, then it's not an offering of sacrifice.

1 Chronicles 21: ¹⁸ Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

1 Chronicles 21: ²³ And Ornan said unto David, Take *it* to thee, and let my lord the king do *that which is* good in his eyes: lo, I give *thee* the oxen *also* for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all. ²⁴ And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take *that which is* thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost.

2 Samuel 24: ²⁴ ... **neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing.** So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

To do the work of the Lord, it's going to cost you!

“When God Calls You, It Will Cost You!” A lot of people see your glory, but they don't know your story!

Romans 8: ¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

“There's a Story behind the Glory!”

Matthew 19:²⁹ **And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.**

III. Rebuilding The Altar of Praise (Overcoming Our Circumstances)

Psalms 27: ⁶ And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

- Because we are surrounded by our enemies, we build The Altar of Courage
- Because we won't offer God that which cost us nothing, we build the Altar of Sacrifice
- Because we know that in the end we win, we build the Altar of Praise.

Psalms 22: ³ But thou *art* holy, *O thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

To change the circumstances of our lives, we must offer God the sacrifice of praise.

A lot of people just want to be happy, but happiness costs you nothing. Anybody can be happy when life happens to work out. But your praise is going to cost you!

Psalms 27: ⁵ For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. ⁶ And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

We don't wait until the battle is over, we shout now.

Hebrews 13: ¹⁵ By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.

This praise right here cost me some tears, this praise cost me heartbreak, this praise cost me lost pain and suffering, this praise cost me weeping all night long.

Psalms 30: ⁵ For his anger *endureth but* a moment; in his favour *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

Psalms 34: ¹ I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth. ² My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad. ³ O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

Psalms 150: ¹ Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. ² Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. ³ Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. ⁴ Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. ⁵ Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. ⁶ Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

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Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Rebuilding The Altar (Overcoming Our Fears))

Lesson Text

- Ezra 3:1-3, Psalm 27:1-6

Sermon Outline (Notes)

- I. *Rebuilding The Altar of Courage (Overcoming Our Fears)***
- II. *Rebuilding The Altar of Sacrifice (Overcoming Our Flesh)***
- III. *Rebuilding The Altar of Praise (Overcoming Our Circumstances)***

Questions (What was your takeaway from Sunday's Sermon?)

I. Getting to Know "Me"

1. Are you a better listener or talker?
2. If you had a warning label, what would it say?

II. Into the Bible

1. According to 1 Peter 1:6-9, what is the significance of trials in the believer's life?
2. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego faced the fiery furnace without fear in Daniel 3. What can we learn from their example in overcoming fear? Reference your answer with scripture.

III. Life Application

1. Romans 8:5-8 speaks of the flesh and the carnal mind. One verse says to be carnally minded is death and to be spiritually minded is life and peace. What can we do to be more spiritually minded to overcome our flesh?
2. Overcoming fear is sometimes easier said than done, so sometimes we have to just "do the thing" that God has asked us to do. Share your strategies of how you've been able to move past your fear and toward your assignment.