

All right, if you guys want to get out your Bibles, we're going to be in Zechariah chapter 4 this morning. As you guys are turning, there, a couple service announcements. The first one is that after this service, we'll have a baptism out by the pond. So we're excited about that. That never gets old. And secondly, I had a little surgery this week. I got stitches here and here. So I got a little bit of a black eye going on. I had a couple pesky moles removed and apparently I did not listen to how extensive the recovery might be, or I would have spared you guys. You know, having to look at me like this, which really not that much of a downgrade from the normal deal. I never got a face made for TV anyway. But, you know, anyway, so you're not wondering, hey, what's going on? That's that's what's going on. So anyway, Zechariah chapter four. Now as we arrive here, then let me remind you that the setting is in 536 BC, little group of 42,000 Jews returned from Babylon after 70 years of captivity. It's a little group compared to the million or so people that were deported 70 years before, and they were led by the governor, a guy named Zerubbabel, and the high priest, a guy named Joshua. And they were to, when they arrived, rebuild the temple. And so the rebuilding of the temple started, as you guys probably know, in the same year that they arrived. And then as soon as the work started, it stopped due to opposition and it stalled for 16 years. Now, 16 years later, 520 BC, God said, hey, enough's enough. And he raised up Zechariah and Haggai to what we call minor prophets at the very same time to tell the people, hey, it's been 16 years, let's get back to work. So Haggai takes a more direct approach. He says, hey, you guys been building your paneled houses? Why don't you stop and actually build the house of the Lord? Zechariah is a little more tactful and much more mystical. And so he is going to encourage them to do this by God's Spirit. The task of rebuilding the temple was overwhelming for Zechariah and and for Joshua. And so God, through the book of Zechariah, is going to encourage Zerubbabel, as it were. And Joshua, through this particular book, Zechariah then opens with these eight, or, depending on who you read, ten visions. In fact, it could be one vision that has 8 or 10 components. I'll let you decide that. But what he's doing is he's trying to draw people in to this, you know, kind of behind the curtain spiritually to give them a bigger picture. And so often that's what God wants to do with us. We just see what we can feel and touch and taste and smell and hear. Well, these are all just part of a greater reality. And so he gives him a glimpse behind the curtain spiritually. In chapter 3, Joshua, who is the spiritual leader of the nation, the high priest, is addressed in this vision, and it's a heavenly courtroom scene. And we looked at this in two weeks, two parts. There's a prosecutor before the throne of God, and that Satan. And then there's the one who's being charged, and that's Joshua, and he's wearing these filthy clothes. This wouldn't be normal. A high priest would usually have on white linen clothes. And the filth is the charge that he's wearing his sins and the sins of the people. So they're not in a good spot.

If you're holiest guy who is mediating between you and God is filthy, you've got a problem. And so in steps, the defense attorney the defender, which Jesus is in our story, in Zechariah, the angel of the Lord, angel with the capital, A and he defends Joshua, and he cleanses him, and he gives him a new wardrobe. Now Jesus is last week we studied. Then the branch. That's the metaphor used. He's the son of David, or the branch of David, and he's also then another metaphor used the stone or the foundation stone. The foundation or the cornerstone for the building of Israel, but then also the foundation stone for the church. And he's the stone with seven eyes, which we'll unpack a little bit today. But all seeing, all knowing, so all powerful is the cornerstone. And then all seeing and all knowing and the idea being transmitted to Joshua, who's, you know, dog paddling on the deep end of the spiritual pool, even though he's the high priest, is that Jesus is going to accomplish the spiritual work necessary for both Joshua and the people of Israel to do what he's called them to do. So when we get to today, then he's going to deal with Zerubbabel, the governor, the civil leader. So chapter 4, verse 1 reads like this. Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me as a man who is awakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, what do you see? So I said, I'm looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with the bowl on top of it. And on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps, and two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left. And so I answered, and I spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, what are these, my lord? And then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, do you not know what these are? And I like this. He said, no, my Lord. So here's the vision.

Of the lampstand.

To begin, let me share with you that the lampstand, as I have here for you is a menorah. This particular one is seven branched. The seven branched menorah was originally found from Exodus 25. In the Tabernacle, and it was hammered of pure gold, which, as a side note, if you go to Israel with us next year in the Old City, the Temple Institute Society, who is preparing for the Third Temple they have all the implements recreated from Exodus, and they have recreated this golden menorah. It's there in this case, this bulletproof case. But what is interesting about it is that they cannot get it to stand up straight and stay up in pure gold, because gold is too soft and the branches keep breaking off. So what they've done is they've taken bronze and made a skeleton and then overlaid it with pure gold and ironically, bronze is the material of judgment in the Bible, overlaid with pure gold. So anyway, God's ways are fantastic. If that little garnish wasn't for you, you can check back in now. So seven branches. You know the menorah. It was the only light in the holy place. So the priest would tend it. And in the holy place, which is

the inside of the building of the tabernacle, this was the only light the priest must keep the oil field and the wicks trimmed, so that the light would burn perpetually. From Exodus chapter 27. And the reason is that it was symbolic of God, who is light. First John chapter one verse 5 says, Our God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. And Zechariah would have known all this very well, because, as we've mentioned, he was likely a priest as well as a prophet. Jesus says in Matthew 23 that Zechariah was murdered by the Jews between the altar and the temple, which is the inner courtyard of the temple structure or courtyard itself. The whole complex. And only the priests could go in there. So anyway, he knew all this. So he gets a vision of this thing that he's seen now before I move on another side note upon the lampstand is while the original lampstand and most menorahs you'll see are seven branched. When Solomon built his temple, Kings tells us that he made the menorah ten branched and that was what lit up the Holy place. If you follow the Jewish days of Hanukkah around our Christmas time, they use a nine branched menorah. But this is a seven branched one that he sees. But it's different than the one in Exodus. It's different. Most notably because it doesn't have to be filled and the wicks don't have to be trimmed. But it's perpetually fed by two olive trees. In this vision, and olive symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit. That's important for what we're going to study today. And when you read your Bible in general. Now, I like this a lot. When asked if he knows what these are, Zechariah just says, no, I don't know. And I like that because the more I study the Bible and the more I get the opportunity to field emails where people ask me stuff. Lots of times I just have to say in response to, you know, what's going on here? Like, no, I don't know. I used to think, I know now maybe I think something different or I don't know at all. Some things we.

Just don't know to heaven.

In this case. He's going to get shown though. So thank the Lord for that. So Zerubbabel then is shown he is. Zechariah is shown that it's about Zerubbabel. So verse 6, so he that is the angel answered me. That is Zechariah. 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, or the cornerstone, with shouts of grace, grace to it. So as this is explained to him, and you know, we think, well, Lord, I wish you'd explain all visions like this. He gets shown. Zechariah does that. It's Zerubbabel, the governor, who's being addressed here in this vision, and the temple rebuilding project. As I mentioned, would have been, as the metaphor is used here, a mountain, a great mountain. It would have been a mountainous undertaking for a guy like Zerubbabel. And so what God is showing in this vision

is that it's not Zerubbabel in his mighty power that will do this thing, but God, this great mountain in front of him is going to be flat, like a plane. And here's the key verse to the whole book. Chapter four, verse 6. God's going to do it not by might which that word in the Hebrew is like corporate might or an army. It might be translated nor by power, which would be individual strength, but by my spirit. And so God's going to do this whole thing that this, this mountainous thing is going to be accomplished, the mountain's going to be moved, made a plain by the spirit of the Lord. And when the temple is finished, because God's going to do it by his spirit, then people are going to shout when the capstone is set in place, instead of they're going to shout, Zerubbabel, you did it! They're going to shout grace! Grace to it! They're going to look at this thing and say only the grace of God got this thing done. And so that's how he encourages Zerubbabel here. Now, before we move on, I want to talk about the lampstand and the spirit here for a little bit, as I have here for you the lampstand in the holy place, not only represented the light of God, but it represented God's call on Israel to be his light to the world. And what God had done is he had chosen Israel. Out of all these we'll call them pagan or Gentile nations, and he'd give them a special covenant. And what their privilege then was to do was to share that with others, so that others would look at them and go, man, I, I love what they've got going on so much. I want their God. I'm willing to trade my gods in for their God, and they would be a light. Then to the Gentiles. And Isaiah 42 six and Isaiah 49 six, as well as other places, they were called to be a light to the Gentiles. Now the story of the Old Testament is that by the time we get here, they're about to forfeit, at least temporarily, that privilege, because they despise the Gentiles. Instead of wanting them to come to God, they actually called the Gentiles fuel for hell's fires. And then, because their heart was hard, they missed their Messiah, Jesus. They missed him completely. And so they have forfeited that privilege, at least for a time. We see when we read the Bible that that privilege or right will be reinstated in the Millennial Kingdom, because Romans chapter 9, ten and 11 talk about the Jews and their place, how they've been blinded, in part because they rejected the Messiah. And yet the gifts and the callings of the Lord. According to Romans 1129, are irrevocable. So someday they'll be all they were ever supposed to be. But until that day, the church is now the lamp of the world, or the lampstand. And we see this in revelation chapter one, where John gets a picture or a view, a glimpse into the heavenlies. And in verse 12 he sees this vision. And having turned, he said, I saw, I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the seven lampstands was one like the Son of Man. And he goes on to describe a glorified Jesus. And then in verse 20 of revelation one, he is told by Jesus the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches, the seven churches that he will write to in revelation seven, historical churches, places, but also emblematic of the church age of all churches. And so that being the case,

Jesus had already taken up this discourse with his followers in Matthew chapter five, when he wrote most famously, that you are the light of the world. In verse 14, and a city on a hill cannot be hidden. He said, they don't put their lamp under a basket, but they put it on a lampstand, where it gives light to all who are in the house. And then he encouraged his disciples, his listeners, let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven. That we as Christians are the light of the world. We reflect the light of the sun, the Essonne, and then we reflect said light to the world. So two this was the case with Zerubbabel in his day. But like Zerubbabel, God calls any of us who are gonna follow him for any length of time to, at some season of our life, what seems like often insurmountable tasks he puts in front of us things that we think, God, how are we ever going to get this thing done? It could be something in our lives, personally, or it could be something he's calling us to do for him. In servanthood. But my question is, as I think about these verses that I present to you, how do we let our light shine and work in such a way that God gets the glory? One of the things that's most mesmerizing about reading Jesus is how he did everything that he did. And when he did the things he did, then people glorified his Father who was in heaven. Well, the answer is that how we do it is how Jesus did it as well was not by might nor by power, but by His Spirit. So I want to talk just a little bit about the Holy Spirit this morning. The New Testament tells us there are three different relationships that someone can have with the Holy Spirit. The first one everyone has, whether they know it or not. Jesus told his disciples in John chapter 14. He said, I'm getting ready to go away, and if I go away, I'm going to prepare a place for you and I'm going to come back for you. But I have to go away so I can give you something better. And that is my helper, the Holy Spirit. And he said that the Holy Spirit right now is with you, and he will be in you. And so what's true for those disciples in that Jesus discourse is true for every person that lives, that the Holy Spirit is with us. He's the word is in the Greek. He's alongside us. He's drawing us whether we respond or not or whether we know it or not. The Holy Spirit is with us. And if the Holy Spirit is responded to at salvation, which the Bible calls being born again, to enter the kingdom, you must be born again. Then there's this spiritual transaction that takes place from dead. Spiritually. We are in the old King James. I like it in Corinthians. We are quickened or we're made alive as the Holy Spirit then enters us, he comes into us. And so from Jesus telling the disciples that the Holy Spirit was with them, and he would be in them, then he died. Shortly after that he rose again, and he came and saw ten of those 12 disciples out who were hiding, and two were not there. Judas had hung himself, and Thomas was not around. And Jesus showed up to those ten and he said to those ten in John chapter 20, verse 22, he breathed on them. And he said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. And so this first transaction, born again transaction takes

place in the New Testament, where ten of these believers have the Holy Spirit in them. Now, for the first time, they're born again, and yet there is this third relationship that we don't see really come into play until the book of acts where these ten believers that now are born again have the Holy Spirit in them, along with 120 other believers who have the Holy Spirit with them. They've not been converted yet, but they do believe they're all up in this upper room where Jesus said to wait until I send upon you the power of the Holy Spirit. He said, Wait in Jerusalem for that. And I love that, because as he tells them that in acts chapter 1, verse 8, the word power of the Holy Spirit, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, that word is in the Greek dunamis, which is where we get our word dynamite. And I've told you guys before when I was a kid, oddly enough, being raised in Iron and Reynolds County, I had a JJ Walker doll from Good Times. If you're old enough to remember JJ, and it had this little it had this little string on it, and you'd pull it and he would say, kid a dynamite. I always think about that when I think about the Holy Spirit coming upon us, because what happened for that group in the Upper room, here's ten, ten people who have the Holy Spirit in them. The others believe, but just have the Holy Spirit with them. And in waiting, the Holy Spirit at Pentecost comes upon them. And then the ones that had the Holy Spirit in them now are filled, or empowered to be witnesses. The others have simultaneously the Holy Spirit come in them and upon them, and they start accomplishing all these great works for God. The power. It all changed in one moment. Now when we think about that, then that's true for us too. The way I understand this biblically and the way I've seen it play out practically, is that for some people, they come to Christ and the Holy Spirit comes in them and upon them at the same time. I mean, they are lit on fire like a Roman candle. Immediately. And for some of us, others we have to ask for the coming upon the Holy Spirit comes in us at salvation starts to create the fruit of the spirit, love and joy and peace and patience, longsuffering and loving, kindness and gentleness and self control. But so often many Christians go their whole life with no power to really see God work in and through them. The power is to get things done for the Lord. And Jesus told his disciples for that. Luke chapter 11, verse 13, that filling of the Holy Spirit, he said, ask. He wasn't talking about salvation. He was talking about this third relationship where you have dynamite power. And that's what happened to those apostles and believers at Pentecost. Some people, depending on your theological transition, you know, your theological tendencies will be like, well, we'll thumb wrestle over the terminology, but you might call Pentecost the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the day the Holy Spirit was outpoured. But then throughout the book of acts, you see that these same people that were there are continually filled again, to have boldness, to do the things that God called them to do And you'll find Paul in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 18 saying to the Ephesians, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Don't be drunk with wine

unto dissipation, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. And that filled is be being filled is the tense, which means I need continually filled with the Holy Spirit. So what happens is lots of Christians are just walking around with no power because they have the Holy Spirit in them. You know, securing them for heaven and creating the fruit of the spirit. But they have no power. And then if they receive the power, they don't ask for refilling. And H.A. Ironside said, why do you need to ask for any more filling of the Holy Spirit if you've already had it? He said, because I leak, right? I need I need some spiritual fix-a-flat because the power to do the work of God is to be filled so that the Holy Spirit can splash out on others. You might say. So the Holy Spirit is going to do the work in order for me to shine brightly. The spirit must flow freely. So we must prepare ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit. Or maybe you'd say to to prepare our sails to catch the Holy Spirit, the filling that is Matthew chapter 5, verse 6. Jesus said that blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Righteousness is a key to being filled by the Holy Spirit. And then once filled, we must share what we have been given. Matthew chapter 10, verse 8 Jesus sent out these apostles, and he said, in regards to healing and all the miracles they were doing, what you have been given freely, you guys freely give that. And I love what Paul said in first Corinthians chapter 15 verse 3. He said, I'm just given to you that which I first received. So as Christians, we have to receive in order to give. But once having received, we need to give, because if we don't, an inlet with no outlet creates the Dead Sea. That's why the Dead Sea is dead. It has the Sea of Galilee flowing the Jordan River out of it into the Dead Sea. But it has no outlet. And yet on the other side of it, if I have an outlet with no inlet, then I'm a dry lake. I'll dry up. And so, in one sense, you might say, if my if my input exceeds my output, my upkeep will be my downfall and that I'll stagnate. I'll always be looking for something new. But on the other side that if my output exceeds my input, my upkeep will be my downfall, because I won't be able to. I won't be able to keep up. Which is why the priests were supposed to to serve in linen instead of wool. Because if you're always giving out more than you're taking in, you'll have sweaty pits and nobody wants to be around that deal, right? So this is what's being transmitted here, transmitted here. And so when I fulfill God's calling in the spirit, how it works is his. His grace takes center stage and he gets the glory. That's one of the ways you can tell if you're doing what God's called you to do in the spirit or not. I remember years ago I wasn't too many years into Parkland Chapel, and one of my mentors, Gary Lawton, he was on the board early and he sent me out along with pastor Ray from Maranatha. He called to check up on me and he said, well, how do you think it's going? Like, how's how's teaching through the Bible going in Farmington? I'm like, I don't, you know, I really don't have a clue. I'm like, people are showing up, but I don't get all that much feedback. I just every week do what I'm doing and nobody says much, good or bad. And he

said, well, I think that's probably the best thing that could be happening, because that means you're not drawing any attention to yourself. You're not doing it so poorly that people are wanting you to do better. You're not doing so good that they think it's all about you, that that way God will get the glory. And so that's kind of how I've kind of lived if if there's not much feedback, then hopefully we're doing something in a way, God gets the glory. Well, here the Spirit's going to do this work. But moreover, verse 8, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah and said, the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple, and his hands shall also finish it. And then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Israel. Zerubbabel. Excuse me, and they are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth. And so Zerubbabel had laid the foundation of the temple, as we mentioned 16 years earlier. And now God promises him, his hands are going to finish it. And if you read Ezra chapter 6, verse 15, this is exactly what happened. Ezra 6:15, four years after this writing, Zerubbabel actually finished the temple. And I like what he says here. He says, then verse 9, you will know that the that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you, and I think, well, how encouraging is that to me? Because I'm almost every season of my life, I get called to do something or I, I think I'm doing something for God. Or maybe I'm wondering, but almost every time, at some point I think, well, what? God, are you even here? What's going on? And then almost always, you know how it works. You can see afterwards like, oh, yeah, he was there. Why wasn't that so obvious? I was Captain Obvious. And here he tells Zerubbabel the same thing. After it's done, then you'll know. Then you'll know that I was a part of it. And that's just part of this life. By faith, you're going forward. And and afterwards you see very clearly. And then he challenges him by asking him who has despised the day of small things Most of us, most of us, if we really ask, we want big things and we're doing the small things, hopefully to get to the big things. But in this case, here's, here's, here's Zerubbabel. He's got old men that are crying, looking at this temple.

They're like, that thing's a nose picker compared to the last temple.

He's got a little bitty band of people to help. Solomon had crews of people. He had just little. And he's overwhelmed by the opposition at every turn. He's got people trying to stop him. And yeah, he despised the day of small things. But God says, look, the plumb line. I rejoice to see the plumb line represents the start of the work. Sometimes we can kind of be excited about the idea of the start of the work, but when you start a work, it's usually not that exciting. It's good in the stories that we have shown you to talk about the old days, but the old days wasn't that exciting. In

the middle of the old days, you know? And so here he's in the middle of the old days. And yet the Lord sees the end from the beginning so as to try to encourage him. You shouldn't despise the day of small things, because the Lord rejoices at the beginning of the work. Now who has despise the day of small things? Like I said, probably all of us. Did you hear about the guy who invented the microphone? By the way? He had a very difficult time at the beginning. He was always getting negative feedback. That's one of the better ones. You gotta admit it Reality is, this Jesus said in Luke chapter 16, verse 10 that if you're faithful in a few things, you'll be made ruler over many things. So if you can't be faithful in the small things, you'll never get to see the big things. And God loves the small stuff. He's excited about the small stuff. Well, the seven eyes here of the Lord see it? They see it for what it is. We don't see the small stuff for what it is. We don't see the big picture. There's so many things that are going to happen in this building project that Zerubbabel will never see. The result of. We'll never see it come to fruition. In fact, think about this. This temple, Haggai says chapter 2, verse 9 is actually going to be more glorious than the last one. Why? Because the Savior of the world is going to walk in. It was the rubble bill. Never see that. But if he's not faithful, that thing doesn't happen. And so often in our lives, the small things and we may think our whole life is a small thing or inconsequential thing, but what everything God has for us to do, if we're faithful in it, then we'll see that thing in heaven. We'll see afterwards that he was there in it, and we'll see as the Lord sees. And these eyes of the Lord are the the eyes that we were introduced to last week with the stone that had seven eyes, where they are the seven spirits of God, we're told from revelation chapter 5 verse 6, and revelation one four tells us these seven spirits of God are actually before the throne of the Lord, and the seven spirits of God. Actually, then, according to Isaiah chapter 11, which I, I told you guys we were going to Isaiah 11 last week, and I know you've been on pins and needles. When is he going to take us to Isaiah 11? He promised us, I know how you guys are. So now you get to go back to Isaiah 11 because that prophecy of the branch is also flowing into this prophecy about the seven spirits of God. And so chapter 3 of Zechariah in chapter 4, tied together in Isaiah chapter 11. There verse 1, there shall come from forth from a rod, a rod from the stem of Jesse. So it's a branch that will grow out of his shoots. So Jesse is David's dad, and that's the branch of David. That's the Messiah. Jesus and the spirit. Verse two of Isaiah 11, The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. And so these are seven facets or aspects of the Holy Spirit to accomplish everything that God has for us in our life, to complete his will. And these are what rested upon Jesus. Jesus did not come and cheat with his superhuman God powers. He set aside his powers and he came as the Son of God. But if you notice, he never did any ministry until his baptism. And

at his baptism he identified with man, and there all three of the Triune Godhead are present. As the father spoke. This is my son, in whom I am well pleased, and the son was dying, you might say, and rising again, to show he had no sin, but that he was dying for man's sin, and he could relieve man of sin and the spirit then descended upon him as a dove. And once he was filled with the Holy Spirit, just like you and I must be, he was empowered to start his ministry. That's exactly what happened. And he then had everything he needed. Everything that the spirit had for Jesus is available for us. To these seven spirits you say, well, I need the spirit of the Lord that's here. I need the spirit of wisdom that's there. I don't have any understanding. The spirit gives us that the spirit of counsel. Here it is might. He gives that the spirit of knowledge. Thank you, Lord, and the fear of the Lord. It's all there for those filled by the Holy Spirit. And so the eyes of the Lord. They see all, and the Spirit of God fills all who know Jesus and ask empowered to do what he calls them to do. And then verse 11, I'm out of time. So we'll head towards the end. Then I answered and said to him, what are these two olive trees at the right of the lampstand and at the left? Remember these two olive trees that were filling up the lampstand? In this vision? And I further answered, and I said to him, what are the two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of two gold pipes from the golden drains? And then he answered me and said, do you not know what these are? And Zechariah said again, no, I don't, Lord. So he said, these are the two anointed ones who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth. And so these two olive trees are branches that fuel the lampstand. In this vision, almost all commentators agree this is Joshua and Zerubbabel. And what God's doing is in this vision is he's encouraging them. There's not a greater compliment they could be given. Joshua you feel dirty and you don't feel like you're up to the spiritual task. Zerubbabel, you should have been a king, but you're your royalty got taken from you. You don't have a big enough workforce. You've got opposition. Your people don't like what you're doing. Hey, guess what? You guys are actually as faithful servants of mine. Conduits for me to pour the Holy Spirit into this nation and accomplish my purposes. And past that. Verse 14 is quoted in revelation chapter 11, verse 4, where these are the two anointed ones who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth, pertain to the two witnesses. During the Great Tribulation. Those guys are probably Moses and Elijah, or Elijah and Enoch, but they have the most powerful evangelistic ministry in all of the history of mankind. And these two guys. The Lord says that you think it's small, but I don't want you to despise it. You're actually pictures of two of the greatest servants of the Lord ever to walk the face of the earth. And so these two branches, you might say, they receive their oil or their power from the branch. Jesus. Now, the Bible's you might say to yourself when you read it like, why is it always mix and metaphors? Take that up with God when you get to heaven. I don't know, but God's not afraid to mix the metaphor. So

in the New Testament, the metaphor is vine and branch. If you'll go to John 15, I want to kind of start to conclude there. But what I want you to do before you go is look at that picture up there, and that was drawn by Lynne Reid from our church. And she sent this to me and then asked me what I thought about it. I'm like, this is awesome. She said, we'll make some modifications. We did. But how cool is that? So shout out to Lynne. Sometimes people are tracking along and they see this stuff and they send me this stuff. And I wanted to share that because that is really, really neat. Just kind of putting a visual to all. We've been looking at. She did a beautiful job with that thing. Well, here's John and the 15th chapter where Jesus says to his followers, I am the vine and you are the branches. And he that abides in me, and I in him, the same shall bear much fruit. But without me you can do nothing. And then in verse 8, by this my father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be my disciples. A few thoughts to take away here for you and I. The work God started in my life may seem small, and what we're what we are told here is don't despise it. I don't see the big picture, I don't see it the way it is. The work God started in my life may seem stalled, and the admonition here is keep going. Or maybe for some of us, it's start again. See, I don't got anything left. Get going. God steers moving ships. His Holy Spirit can give you the ability to take one step at a time. What? You'll find out if you get to do anything for God, for any length of time, is the only ability I bring to the table that matters at all is availability. Just show up. That's by his grace by the way too. But just show up. And so he who began a good work will be faithful to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. What? Philippians chapter 1 verse 6 says, that's for the work he started in me spiritually, and that's for the things he's called you and I to do for him to give this life purpose and to make it fulfilling. And then the work God started in my life may seem mountainous. The encouragement is pray and wait and Jesus in Matthew 17 told a group, because of your faithlessness, you need to know this. It's a little bitty mustard seed of faith that moves mountains. So often people preach on the mustard seed of faith. No, the point is, you don't have any. A mustard seed means you don't bring anything to the table except this little bitty piece that I gave you. But I can do a lot with that. I do the work. And he said, in fact, some things only come out by prayer and fasting, which is our key idea for the year. So pray and wait. If the thing seems mountainous in your life while you're showing up, and then remember finally, everything is a work of his grace by His Spirit. I know that God calls me to do stuff, and it's my responsibility to get involved. A lot of that's all past my pay grade. I don't understand how it works. I don't know if he calls me if I got 1% in the equation, or I have 50%, or I know I got to be all in, but I don't. I don't get how it works out. But I know this, that in the end, when I stand before the Lord and he says, well done, my good and faithful servant like you, nobody's ever going to say though.

Mike, you did it. You rock, know.

What are they going to say when this temple is completed and it will be completed? It won't always be patched up. Stitched up. Sucker's going to look like Brad Pitt someday. In that day, you know what? They'll cry out millions upon millions. Grace. Grace to. It was all by his grace. And the weaker we are and the more we don't have. And the less we bring to the table gives him all the more glory. That's That's what it's all about. Heavenly father, we thank you and we praise you and we worship you for who you are. And we we cry out when we look at our own lives. Grace, grace to it. Let us be able to see your grace in our life. If there's any here that don't know your grace. If they if they, they think they've done it. Lord, please strip the veil away from their eyes and be able to see the the Spirit of God at work and be made new. If there's some of you here that we've been walking with you, and we think we've overestimated our, you know, our contribution, Lord, please strip that away from us. We want to be available. We want to be used, Lord. But may we never take any of your glory. May we boast only in Christ. It's in his name we pray. Amen. Would you guys stand?