

How Revival Transforms God's People Series

Sermon Notes

The Potential of God's People through United Prayer

Zechariah 8:20-23

Background of the text:

This prophecy occurs at the close of Israel's Babylonian Captivity, The Jews had been conquered by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar and many of the best and the brightest had been taken into captivity. Later Babylon was conquered by the Medes and the Persians.

Most likely Zechariah was born in Babylon and had returned with Zerubbabel to Israel when Cyrus the King of the Persians issued the decree to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1-6) The name Zechariah by the way means Yah (God) Remembers.

The Jews had begun to return from their long captivity. During that captivity they had established several additional fasts to mourn their losses they have suffered but losing Jerusalem. This prophecy is an answer to Zechariah's question about fasting in Zechariah chapter 7:3. At that point God asks the prophet and the people with the question, "In your fasting did you fast for Me?" Or for yourselves?

The only annual fast that God required of the people was the Day of Atonement. But the people had added fasts to commiserate their loss of the blessing they had enjoyed in Jerusalem.

God looks for the intent of the heart. Not just outward obedience. He is seeking a people who will seek Him with their whole heart not just to seek His blessings.

Here in chapter 8 God finally answers Zechariah's question about these four fasts.

- The fast of the Fourth Month commemorated when the wall of Jerusalem was breached in Nebuchadnezzar's army. (2 Kings 25:3)
- The fast of the Fifth Month recognized the fall of the Temple. (2 Kings 25:8)
- The fast of the Seventh month remembered the death of Gedaliah the governor who was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings 25:22-26)
- The Fast of Tenth Month remembered the beginning of the final siege of Jerusalem in 588 BC (2 Kings 25:1, Jer. 39:1)

God is now telling Zechariah that the fasts you and the people have held will become times of feasting and joy.

The Potential of God's People

For a congregation to reach its full potential, God calls them to...

I. The PRIORITIES of United Prayer.

- A. United Prayer seeks **GOD FIRST**, not just His blessing. v21
- B. United Prayer Seeks God's **KINGDOM** before our **COMFORT**. *Matthew 6:9-15*
- C. United Prayer must be **URGENT**. v21

II. The PROMISE of United Prayer.

- A. United Prayer is **CONTAGIOUS**. v21
- B. United Prayer **UNIFIES** the Church. v22

III. The PURPOSE of United Prayer.

- A. United Prayer brings **REVIVAL**. v22
- B. United Prayer will bring about the **FULFILLMENT** of the Great Commission. v23
- C. United Prayer is the **CATALYST** for ushering in Christ's Kingdom.

To reach our full potential as a congregation, God wants to enlist each one of us to express His love and truth to our NEIGHBORS and the NATIONS.

IV. The POWER of United Prayer. *Revelation 8:1-6*

V. A PLEDGE of United Prayer.

I would ask us to pledge the following...

- A. Let us *Pledge* in our hearts to seek the Lord personally and continually.
- B. Let us *Pledge* to Pray diligently for one another.
- C. Let us *Pledge* to unite in praying Mission Focused Prayers.
- D. Let us *Pledge* to the Lord to be a church He can use to be a catalyst to bring Revival.
- E. Let us *Pledge* to Lord to GO to other cities and other people groups to urge them to pray.
- F. Let each one of us *Pledge* to enlist in expressing God's love and truth to our Neighbors and to the Nations. – "I myself am going."

Psalm 67 – A United Congregational Prayer

1 May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah 2 that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah. 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! 6 The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!