

THE DANGERS OF NEGLECT PRT 1

Ezra 4:24 Then the work of the house of God at Jerusalem ceased. So it ceased to the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Today, we are continuing on our series titled **FROM RUBBLE TO RADIANCE PRT 19**. The last time I taught you under this series, we spoke on how to respond to the enemy. We learned that one of the ways that the enemy attacks us is by stopping us from doing things that matter to us. He stops us by making us sick in our bodies; he stops us by stealing from us, and so forth.

- Where we read, we see that the enemies of God managed to stop the construction project.
- We must never underestimate the length to which the devil is prepared to go to disrupt your life.
- Though the work was stopped, at some point God's people were able to restart the project again.

Ezra 5:1 Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. 2 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God at Jerusalem. And with them were the prophets of God helping them.

- Inasmuch as the devil is determined to disrupt your life, we have Jehovah who is sovereign and His plans will always come to pass.
- In other words, the attacks of the enemy are not forever; a child of God will bounce back at some point.
- The construction project came back online, and eventually the project was completed.
- What is not apparent by casual reading is that between the work stoppage in chapter 4 and the resumption of the work in chapter 5, there was a long period where nothing happened.
- For 16 years, the construction work was halted – The devil was responsible for the work stoppage, but who was responsible for the delay in the resumption of the construction?
- The big question is, what was responsible for the delay, and that is the subject matter of my message this morning.
- I want to talk to you on the subject matter **THE DANGERS OF NEGLECT**.
- The enemy was responsible for the work stoppage, but a phenomenon called neglect was responsible for why the work stayed stopped.
- The devil was responsible for you not coming to church once, but neglect was responsible for why you did not come for the following Sundays.
- Neglect is the failure to give something the attention, care, maintenance, or action that it requires.
- It does not necessarily mean deliberately destroying or rejecting something. Often, neglect simply means failing to attend to it.

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- The children of God were stopped by the enemy, but neglect sustained the stoppage. In other words, neglect will make temporary setbacks become permanent features.
- The book of Haggai closes the gap between Ezra chapters 4 and 5.

Haggai 1: 2 This is what the Lord Almighty says: "These people say, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord's house.'" 3 Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: 4 "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"

- When the work was stopped, the builders shifted their attention to building their own houses. There is resistance in building something with eternal value – the enemy was not worried about them building their own houses. Sometimes a lack of resistance in what you are doing is not an indication of God's blessing but rather a sign that what you are doing does not threaten the kingdom of darkness.
- Neglect is subtle but has far-reaching implications.
- The statements we need to carefully consider are verses 2 and 4 (emphasize them).
- It was never a case of not having energy, time, and resources; it was a case of where they chose to spend the resources – they neglected the temple.
- Neglect happens when something valuable is left unattended – for 16 years, they failed to care for the temple.
 - Neglect will cause you not to pay attention to your children. You slowly get used to not checking on their homework, checking their gadgets; you used to have supper together, but now everyone is eating in their bedrooms.
 - Every parent wants their children to get married properly but when they were growing up, you did not address the flirtatious behaviour, we allowed ours kids to have boyfriends and girlfriends when they were too young. In other we trained them to easily go in and out of relationships.
 - A marriage does not die abruptly; rather, it is the continuous lack of real conversations and intentionality that eventually kills the marriage.
- Neglect happens when you know something needs to be done, but keep postponing it - they failed to act when action was required.
 - You missed a deadline because you kept on postponing sending the email.
 - A key relationship eventually dies because you postponed having an important conversation.
- Neglect happens when you give priority to other things — not necessarily because the neglected thing is unimportant, but because something else keeps taking its place.
 - It's not that you don't know that prayer is important; it's just that you are prioritizing time with friends over time with God.

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- People know the importance of church, but it's just that going to visit family takes priority on a Sunday.
- Neglect results in deterioration through inattention — the damage happens gradually rather than abruptly.
- Neglect is not necessarily evil, but it is an indication of one's priority. For them, the temple was no longer a priority, and this had nothing to do with their enemies; it was on them this time around.
- You see, neglect can easily result in negligence, when you fail to exercise the standard of care that a reasonable prudent person would use in a situation, resulting in unintended harm or damage.
- The reason we are talking about neglect is that you are overlooking something of great significance. How important was the temple?
- The temple was a significant part of their spirituality. At the temple, they connected with God. They sought the face of God for breakthroughs. There are certain things that can only be achieved within the context of God's house.
- When the temple of Solomon was dedicated, certain declarations were made – look at this with me – 2 Chronicles 6.
- The temple was going to ensure justice when disputes arose — vv. 22–23
- Solomon asks God to hear when people bring disputes before Him and to judge between the righteous and the wicked.

2 Chronicles 6: 22 “When anyone wrongs their neighbor and is required to take an oath and they come and swear the oath before your altar in this temple, 23 then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the guilty and bringing down on their heads what they have done, and vindicating the innocent by treating them in accordance with their innocence

- The temple was going to facilitate restoration after defeat — vv. 24–25
- If Israel is defeated because of sin but then turns back, confesses God's name and prays, Solomon asks God to forgive them and restore them.

2 Chronicles 6: 24 “When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you and when they turn back and give praise to your name, praying and making supplication before you in this temple, 25 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to them and their ancestors.

- The temple was going to restore rain after repentance — vv. 26–27
- If drought comes because of sin, Solomon asks God to hear when the people repent, forgive them, teach them the right way to live, and send rain again.

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2 Chronicles 6: 26 “When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, 27 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.

- The temple was going to ensure help during disaster and crisis — vv. 28–31
- Solomon mentions famine, plague, crop failure, locusts, enemies, and other disasters. His prayer is that when people recognize their affliction and stretch out their hands toward God, God would hear, forgive and respond.
- By neglecting the temple, the people neglected the source of their well-being – by implication, they ignored Jehovah.
- The result was that the Lord lifted His hand from among them.
- There are consequences in neglecting what matters in your life. Every decision has a consequence.

Haggai 1: 6 You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”

- Because no effort was placed on the temple, all their other effort elsewhere was unproductive – they planted much, but harvested little.
- People are hustling, energy is being expended, but they have nothing to show for it – could it be because you have neglected your walk with God, you have neglected the house of God.
- You have all the basics needed for this life, but you still feel unsatisfied – you keep on feeling like something is missing, and the result is that you keep on looking and searching.
- You don't necessarily earn little, but you cannot account for what you do with the cash – you don't know where your money goes. It's like there is a monthly crisis that requires your money – what is going on here?
- You have been expecting a project to bring a big return, but something happened that resulted in no return. There has been an expectation of a bonus, but there has been a sudden change at the company, and no bonuses will be paid out.
- I am sure you have been praying for answers regarding your lack of progress, and you have been casting devils out, you have been rebuking family curses, and the devil has had nothing to do with it.
- What has been the reason for all this?

Haggai 1: 9 “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the Lord Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house.

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- The house of God matters to God, and it determines your well-being. In other words, the way you treat the bride of Christ will determine how Christ will treat you.
- God wanted to draw their attention, and as a result He allowed things to become a little bit tight around them.
- What areas of your life are suffering from neglect.
- How do we deal with neglect to avoid the dangers associated with it? That will be our conversation next week.
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