

FROM RUBBLE TO RADIANCE PRT 1 - INTRO

Ezra 1:1 And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, so that the Word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also in writing, saying, 2 So says Cyrus king of Persia, Jehovah, the God of Heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

I am sure you have heard the saying "from zero to hero" or "from hero to zero." The first statement typically refers to someone who was beaten down but somehow managed to recover. Whilst the other refers to someone who had everything going for them, and somehow things started going awry.

I don't know which of those two statements accurately describes your current situation. If your life has been one of going from hero to zero, I want you to know that there is a God of comebacks, a God of the resurrection, who will turn your situation around. Let me read you a song list I came across, which typifies a life that is not doing well. If your life has been a zero-to-hero story, I want you to know that there is a God who sustains what He starts, and you need to know how to sustain your victory.

For the coming weeks, I will be teaching you a series titled **FROM RUBBLE TO RADIANCE PRT 1**, and today I will do an introduction on which we will build upon in the coming weeks.

- There are times when the devil comes and burns our lives down, and we are left with rubble around. This happens to varying degrees, but the reality is that most of us have rubble around.
- Sometimes this happens because God is calling For our attention, or sometimes it is just the enemy having a go at us.
- This year, we are running with the theme **KINGDOM BUILDERS**, and it is important for you to know that God wants to build you; God wants to restore your broken walls.
- In other words, God will rebuild your life regardless of the level of devastation you have gone through.
- When we talk about rubble to radiance, we are referring to the process of going through a journey from pain to healing, from loss to renewal, and from weakness to strength.
- Where there is rubble in your life, God will radiate His glory, and He will bring forth His joy and peace.

- We read from the Book of Ezra, a book written by Ezra himself, and he wrote it for the Jewish community that had just returned from captivity and to those who were still in Babylon.

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- His aim was to encourage the returning Jews to rebuild the temple, restore worship, and obey the Law of Moses.
- Where we read, we come across Cyrus, the king of Persia at that time, who had a visit from the Lord.
- God came to him and placed it upon his heart to facilitate the rebuilding of the temple of God in Jerusalem.

Ezra 1:2...Jehovah, the God of Heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

- At that time, the temple was non-existent, and no worship had been taking place.
- The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple triggered a profound religious, political, and cultural crisis.
- There is something significant about the temple of God and His word to His people, which warranted God touching a pagan king to ensure that the temple and temple worship were restored.
- In our contemporary environment, it is like having the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khaled bin Mohammed saying God has placed upon his heart to go and build the temple in Jerusalem.
- The significance of the temple
- In the Jewish culture, the temple was central to their life of worship:
 - The Temple symbolized God's presence among His people.
 - It enabled the existence and continuation of the covenant relationship with God.
 - It was the focal point for both national and individual prayer.
 - It represented holiness and unity between God and His people
- Today, we no longer talk about a physical temple, but we are talking about our body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body

- Your body belongs to God, and it is in your body that worship ought to take place. Your body has become a sacred place for worship. In your body, the Holy Spirit dwells and is worshipped.
- Through the death and the resurrection of Jesus, a shift happened which resulted in your body becoming the temple of God.

Mark 15:37 But Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed His last. 38And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39When the centurion standing there in front of Jesus saw how He had breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

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- Just as worship had stopped with the destruction of the first temple, worship will stop in our bodies and in our churches when our bodies are in a state of rubble. No proper worship can take place when the temple is in ruins (rubble). In other words, the state of your heart and body determines the quality of worship that can take place.
- The temple played a major role in God connecting with His people.
- The temple has always been the point of contact between divinity and humanity.
- Let's take it from the beginning. Since God created Adam and Eve, He always wanted to dwell among man, and by so doing, He instructed man to create a point of contact called the temple, a place where God would come and fellowship with man.
- At creation, the temple was the garden of Eden – God created the earth as His temple, and in it, He placed His image and likeness. That is why God would come into the garden and fellowship with man.
- Adam and Eve looked after the Garden of Eden, just like the priests do in God's temple.
- Fast forward into the wilderness, Israel stayed in the desert longer than anticipated because God prolonged their stay due to their unbelief.

- Just like in the Garden of Eden, God wanted to be among His people, and He initiated the building of the tabernacle in the desert.
- God wants to dwell with his people, so he instructs Moses to build a tabernacle that mimics his dwelling place, the heavenly temple (Exodus 25 to 27).
- God wants to experience uninterrupted fellowship with you even during your difficult seasons.
- Worship must continue in all seasons of your life – keep your body in a state that allows worship to be continuous.

- After 40 years of wandering in the desert, God's people entered the promised land, a land that flowed with milk and honey.
- Finally, the promise had arrived, and life was good, and one would think there was no need for a temple, since what was promised had been fulfilled.
- Again, we see God coming and promising them a temple where they could worship Him.
- David was a man after God's own heart, and his heart knew that there was a need to build a temple for his great God.
- God comes and promises David that his son will build that temple.

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2 Samuel 7: 12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body,³ and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

- God is interested in our worship. Even in the good days of Israel, worship remained a priority.
- King Solomon built a magnificent temple for God. He spared no expense in building the temple (1 Kings 5 – 8).

2 Chronicles 7:11 When Solomon had finished the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the Lord and in his own palace, 12 the Lord appeared to him at night and said: “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices. 13“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, 14if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 15Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. 16 I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

- God promised His presence and His hand to be upon the temple, and this began what is called the golden years of Solomon's reign.
- He became the wisest and greatest king. Israel was prosperous, God was as common as silver, and each man had his own piece of land.
- When true worship is observed, the blessing of God is present and felt by all.
- Never remove worship in your life when all seems to go well.
- In our current dispensation, the believer's body is the temple where true worship must happen.
- That is why Paul commands us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.
- We carry the Holy Spirit, and we are called the priests of our God.
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