

Consider Your Ways

Let us begin with a word of prayer this morning.

Lord, what love! Lord, it is true that we cannot fathom with our human understanding Your love. You have chosen to demonstrate it to us in Your Son, Jesus Christ, who loved us so much He gave His own life for us. We do thank You this morning that Your word says to rest in Your love. We thank You, Lord, that by Your grace we can do that. And as we come in the glory of Your love this morning, Lord, we are also grateful that You are not silent towards Your people. But Lord, it is Your heart to commune with us. It is Your heart to share with us, to give a word to us, to build us up, to encourage us, and even, Lord, to train us and discipline us. Your word is a mighty thing, Lord Jesus, more powerful than any energy upon this earth. Lord, we look to You in Your word this morning that, Lord, You would anoint. I stand in the anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ this morning. And Lord, may the anointing be upon our ears, our hearts, and our spirits as we come before You this morning. Lord, meet each one of us where we are. You are so good at that. We thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction

Well, it is a wonderful morning. The Lord loves us, and we can come and share together in the context of His great love for each one of us. The message that is on my heart this morning is “Consider Your Ways.” I would actually entitle it “God’s Cry: Consider Your Ways.” As we come together this morning, I would ask people if they could read the book of Haggai. I hope you were able to do that. This morning, I have two verses from Ezra, which give us a little history, and then the verses from the prophet Haggai, which provide His prophecy to the remnant that had returned to build the house of God.

Ezra 1:1-3 says, “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.”

Ezra 1:5 says, “Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.”

Haggai 1:1-8 says, “In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the

prophet, saying, is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your paneled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house.”

Haggai 1:12-13 says, “Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord. Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.”

Haggai 2:1-4 says, “In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Haggai 2:9 says, “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Haggai 2:18-19 says, “Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.”

God's Cry to the Remnant: Consider Your Ways

God spoke to this remnant, the ones who had chosen to return to build a house for God. And praise the Lord, this remnant had returned with good hearts to build this house. I have said this before, but it appears it was about 4% of the people—around 50,000—who actually returned to build the house of God. But He is crying out; He says, “Consider your ways.” He prophesied three times over a four-month period, very briefly. In this short prophecy of only two chapters, He exhorts the people five times to consider—to consider their ways, to consider their lives.

As I read this, I said, Lord, this is not just a word from You; this is a cry from Your heart to Your people, to those who have responded to Your call. It is a cry to them. It is not a gentle word. It is a very strong word, a word that would awaken this remnant. Praise the Lord, but it was His cry to His people. Consider your ways. What is your purpose? What are your priorities? What is the number one thing in your life? How are you using your time?

They were working hard, but they were not gaining much. They sowed seeds, but the harvest was small. They earned wages, but it was as if the bag they put them in had holes in it. Why? Why was it this way? They were under the Lord's discipline to awaken them. And He says, you need to consider your ways. All of this has been going on almost unnoticed, but you should have awakened and you have not. You have become unaware of your condition and your purpose for returning to Jerusalem. Where is your concern for building My house? Where is the passion? Where is the spark? Where is the fire? Has it gone out? Is it dim? You need to awaken from your slumber. Awake and consider your ways.

The Relevance for Us Today

I think in a sense this is very appropriate, as the Lord calls His people to consider their ways. He is calling us—calling me—to consider our ways. This is especially relevant since tonight we are actually going to be registering for the CFC conference. The conference is all about God's eternal purpose, about building His house, about being matured into the bride. Consider your ways.

Brothers and sisters, there are times in our lives when we just need to be awakened. Thank the Lord, He is gracious. And He does this not just one time, but many times in your life as He has in mine. He has those special times when He has to awaken us once again to our spiritual condition. And He wants us to seriously consider our ways.

Are we serving His purpose today? Are we serving our own purposes? Are we just going through the motions of life? I call it just surviving, a passive state that we can get into concerning God's calling on our lives and what He has called us to. It is a great calling, a holy calling, a calling made before the world was even formed. Brothers and sisters, we cannot be passive. When I say “consider your ways” this morning, and when God said it to His people, He was not asking them to get introspective. He was asking them to consider their lives, to consider their ways in His light—the light that He would give to them. That is how we consider our ways.

Historical Background

That is the way we examine things, brothers and sisters. Let me give a little background here. The nation of Israel had become a very rebellious people. They had turned away from God, and God brought discipline upon them. He brought the Babylonian nation in to conquer them.

They even destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple itself, and the people were in captivity for 70 years, according to the word of Jeremiah. The Lord raised up a Gentile king, Cyrus of Persia, to issue the edict: You need to go back and build God's house. Praise the Lord.

Daniel had probably gotten to Cyrus and shown him the prophecy. And Cyrus believed. In cooperation with God, he asked God's people to go back and build the house. What a sovereign, wonderful Lord we have. The call went out to the entire nation, but only a few responded. A remnant came out and responded to the call.

We find this is still true today, brothers and sisters. The Lord loves all. The Lord loves all of His own. The Lord does not give up on any of His own. But, brothers and sisters, there has to be a response. There has to be a going on, giving your heart totally to the Lord to follow your calling, to follow His calling on your life, to follow His purpose, brothers, and sisters, to build a house of God.

The Remnant's Initial Zeal

The calls had gone out to all, but only a few responded. And now He is speaking to this remnant. The remnant had loved God. When they came out, they had a heart for God. They had a heart for His purpose. And they returned with a sole purpose. Think of this: to build the house of God. That was their charge, their sole purpose. It was to be God's dwelling place once again, where He could be in the midst of His people. There was no other place that could serve His purpose.

Brothers and sisters, in those days of captivity, they came up with a system of synagogues. Actually, they still have them today. But the Lord was not satisfied with the synagogues. Why? Because God had already commanded His people that only in the temple in Jerusalem could the blood sacrifices be offered to make it an acceptable place for God to dwell in the midst of His people. Without the blood sacrifice, there could be no forgiveness, no redemption, no hope, no place for the Lord, and no testimony.

The blood sacrifice was so needed. The remnant had returned out of a heart of love, and they had a fervent desire—a passion to please the Lord. They wanted to build His house to serve His purpose, not their own. And they began laying the foundation.

The Remnant's Subsequent Decline

But the people around them, the neighboring people, the tribes, rose up against them in opposition. If you read the book, you will see it. The opposition was intense and unrelenting. There was a lot of warfare going on. It greatly weakened their hands, their resolve, and their spirit. They became discouraged, and they stopped working on building the house.

Well, they stopped for three months, but they did not return to building the house. It went on for a whole year, and they had not returned to building the house. Another year passed, and they still had not returned to building the house. Brothers and sisters, this went on for 15 years. Fifteen years!

They still remembered that they had come back to build the house of God. And they probably hoped that it would still get built. But they began to reason, "Now is not the time. Now is not the time." This seemed to appease their conscience, and that is why it could go on for so long.

Focus On Personal Comfort and Daily Life

It is not that they did not want to build a house. It was still there, but it just was not the time. They began to focus on themselves instead of the house of God. They began to

focus on their own desires. They began to build bigger houses, decorate the ones they had, make them bigger, and add additions. They began to tend their crops and take care of their farms and animals. They became mostly concerned with the cares of life.

The cares of life, we have been warned, have we not, by the Lord Himself to beware that the cares of life can eat your life up. Well, now their time was being consumed with these things, and this became their interest in life as they came and went. As time went on, the vision and purpose they had in the beginning began to fade.

It got dimmer and dimmer. Yes, it was still there, but its dimness now made it not seem as pressing as it used to. They had come to a point, brothers, and sisters, where, frankly, they had become indifferent toward this matter of building God's house. And they could go by the building site, look at it, and pass on without noticing it. It had been like that for so long, a little bit of the foundation, but that is all there was. It is like you get used to things around you and stop noticing them. We all do this.

They had just become indifferent. Maybe a few times their consciences might have been pricked, but they thought, no, that is for another day. Now is just not the time. The remnant had entered into a spirit or a state of spiritual lethargy, passivity like the Laodicean Church. They were neither hot nor cold. It was a slow, almost unnoticeable process of decline. Fifteen years!

The spirit of first love, that first love they had in their hearts—where was it? That first love that puts God's interests and desires first and in first place. Brothers and sisters, it was almost gone. The remnant's desire to build the House of God, to be a testimony on this earth, was at a point of no return. Think of that. God's heart in His people to enter into and serve His purpose was almost gone.

Warning To Us: Spiritual Lethargy and Indifference

Now, this is the heart of the burden that I have today. Brothers and sisters, it is a warning of danger that is always lurking, almost unnoticed, ready to take any of us into captivity, to keep us from our full calling in God's purpose and in His purpose to build His house. It keeps us from a real desire to serve Him.

He is looking for that place to dwell. But, brothers and sisters, we can become captive to passivity, a spiritual lethargy. And this is a quote I am going to share from Stephen, our brother Kaung. This is the quote that so captured my own heart, and I want to read it: "There is nothing more serious for God's people who once have seen the vision, who once have known the will of God, who once offered themselves for God's purpose. There is nothing more serious than having that sensitivity gradually fade away. For those who have not seen the vision, they do need to see something by the grace of God. But for those who have had a heavenly vision, for people who have gone a step further and returned to Jerusalem, laying the foundation, their greatest danger is spiritual lethargy." Brothers and sisters, that pierced my own heart. It is something the Lord has to say, not just to Jerry Aman, which He definitely needs to do.

But brothers and sisters, for all of us. “Oh, brothers and sisters, have you heard the call to rebuild the house of God?” This is still our brother. “Have you heard the call to rebuild the house of God? Have you not given up much? Have you not laid the foundation, which is nothing but Christ? You would reject everything if it were not Christ. You have done well. But to build the house of God is not an easy thing. You cannot expect the enemy to allow you to go on without interference.”

Spiritual lethargy is so insidious. Apparently, it is one of the greatest dangers to us—to those who have a desire, not just as people in general, but those who truly have a heart for the Lord, a heart to serve the Lord's purpose, to do His will, to see that His house is being built. This is a great, great danger because it is a slow, gradual, almost unnoticeable decline.

God's Intervention

But thank God, He is always faithful to Himself and to His people and to this remnant. God's sovereign moves—He intervenes. The remnant, remember, had not done anything worthy of hearing a message from the Lord. In fact, it had been 15 years.

They had not even inquired of the Lord, “What is going on, Lord?” They were unaware of their spiritual condition and where they were. The Lord, for His own name's sake, brothers and sisters—not just for the sake of His people, but for His own name's sake and the sake of His testimony—cries out, “Awaken.” He cries out to the remnant to remind them of their purpose. Brothers and sisters, this is the remnant that had given up everything with the sole purpose of returning to Jerusalem to build His house.

These were the committed ones, the ones whom God could use to serve His purpose. He had set aside the rest of the nation of Israel. They remained in captivity, and now only this remnant remained.

The remnant had lost their sense of commitment. But God was committed to them. The Lord did not pull any punches. When He speaks, He gets to the point. “You say the time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Is it time for you to dwell in your fine houses with paneled walls, while this house of Mine lies in waste? Now, therefore, says the Lord, consider your ways. Consider your purpose. What is your priority?” He reminds them of their purpose and what should be their priority.

The Lord was saying, brothers and sisters, “I have brought you out of captivity. I brought you out of bondage. I have brought you into the liberty to be able to do My will.” They were not able to in captivity, but He has brought them out. “And now you can do My will.”

“You have returned out of love for Me and for serving Me and My purpose. What has happened to this first love? Your priority has become yourself—providing for yourself, providing for your family, building a house, convincing yourselves that now is not the time. You started out well, but you have wearied from the battle and the work.”

“You have become passive, you have drawn back, you have been biding your time until you feel like it is the right time, but that time will never come. If you are waiting for the right time, that time will never come.” With the Lord, it is always now. Now is the time. It has always been the time. “You should never have stopped. Consider your ways.”

Lessons and Warnings

The Issue of Time and Mental Strongholds

The whole controversy and issue now come down to this matter of time. It is not the time. There is a real controversy over this matter of time. And it was delaying God's will from being done concerning His house. He challenges them over the issue of time. Now, where did this thought come from do you think: “Now is not the time?”

Well, the enemy had aroused opposition in the beginning, and they began to make false accusations. A real spiritual attack, to speak. They made accusations to local authorities who tried to shut them down. The opposition was intense and relentless. They became weary and discouraged, and they began to reason. The Lord said, “Come, reason with Me.”

But they reasoned among themselves, “Something is wrong. We returned to build the house of God, but instead of being blessed, there is all this opposition, resistance, and warfare going on. Something is not right. It might not be the right time to build His house. It is just not the right time.” Now, where did this thought come from, brothers and sisters? It came from Satan. And it began to take root in their minds. In over 15 years, it had become a mental stronghold.

A mental stronghold was put into their minds by the enemy and supported, according to their way of thinking, by their circumstances. So, they stopped. They had stopped building the house and started doing things concerning their own purposes. I thought about these things that we think of today: “Oh, I need to landscape the yard, need to remodel the house, add an addition. I need to get another job. My money is just going out and going out. I do not have enough.”

“I need to be more involved in my local social activities. What I really need is a bigger TV. I really think my restful time, my time of relaxation, is so necessary. And it would be so much better if I just had that big widescreen TV.” Their desires and these things began to occupy their minds. We do this ourselves, brothers and sisters.

I have two takeaways, or two observations, that I think we should consider.

The Matter of Time: Time is God's, Not Ours

There is something very fundamental about time. We need to grasp this matter of time. We need a revelation from the Lord in our lives about time. And if we receive His revelation, His understanding of what time is, I think it will alter our view of how we use our time. And what is it?

God created time. It is a God thing. It is not something man came up with when he developed the clock. Time is that space in infinity in which God is doing something special to serve His own purpose, brothers and sisters. We are given that time to serve His purpose, not our own purpose. We are given that time, brothers and sisters, for Him. It is not really for us.

They thought that the time was theirs and that they could use it as they chose. What they ended up saying was, "Time is in our hands, but now is not the time." It is because they did not have a proper concept—a revelation from God Himself—that "your time is really My time."

"Your time has a purpose, and it is to serve Me and My purpose." We cannot forget that, brothers and sisters. Time is something that we have only because God has given it to us. But He has brought us into this period of time. Think of what He is doing, brothers and sisters, to build His house, Lord, to build that bride that He is looking for, that holy city, the New Jerusalem.

That is what it is all about. The God of grace did not create us as robots. You are not a robot. He wants us out of love and, by His Spirit, to work with Him. It is His will, that His will and purpose for this time can be carried out by us. Amazingly, He gives us the power of choice in how we use our time. We must always remember it is not our time; it is His. We cannot be indifferent about how we use the time given to us. God was saying, "Consider your ways. Where is the time to build My house? Where is the time for My people to gather together?" In His word He said, "Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together." Very direct. Do not forsake it. Where is the time?

The Enemy's Tactic: "Now Is Not The Time"

Are we saying, "Well, now is not the day. Now is not the time. It is not convenient." "Where is the time for My house of prayer?" The Lord in His Word said, "I looked for an intercessor and found none."

Prayer—corporate prayer—is so critical and important in God's purpose and plans being carried out. But we say, "It is not the time. I am tired today." And legitimately, that happens on Wednesdays a lot, we get extra tired. It is a hard day. "I just need to rest."

Where is the time for the Word, the Word of God, being together? Brothers and sisters, when we go into the Word, that is when we receive that living word, the rhema that the Bible speaks of from the Lord. It is by being in His Word that we receive that rhema. And what is so great about our times together as brothers and sisters is that we can share that rhema with one another. That is how the house of God is built up—by sharing the rhema that is given to each one of us. But we say, "No, now is not the time. I just do not have the time." Brothers and sisters, it can go on and on.

Where is the time? "Now is not the time." Brothers and sisters, the enemy has put this thought, and it has become a stronghold not only in the remnant in those days, but

he does it in our own lives today. And the Lord says, “Consider your ways. What is your priority? Is it My priority or your own?”

Well, just a short story. I remember in college, I took a course in psychology. I took it for extra credit. I needed credit, and I chose what was supposed to be an easy extra credit. I started going to class. But this professor was different. Out of all my professors, none of the other professors cared if you wanted to show up, you could. If you did not, it was your life. But this professor said, “No, you are going to come to my class, you are going to attend the session, and you are going to be on time.” He was a real stickler about that.

I remember one day—I do not know why—I woke up late or something. I cannot remember what my excuse was, but I was too fearful not to attend. Still, I decided I would just go late anyway and be there, at least be there. I got there. After the class, I went up to him and tried to explain my excuse for being late. He said, “If you had not wanted to be late, you would not be late. Where is your priority?” Brothers and sisters, that really taught me a lesson about being on time. It is probably one of the greatest lessons I learned in college: being on time.

Praise the Lord. That little class, that psychology class, is the only thing I got out of it, unfortunately, I guess. But anyway, I did get that much—on time. Priority, priority. I remember Brother Stephen, when we talked to him about, we have got all this to do and that all to do, he would say, “Priority.” I cannot say it the way he said it. Priority, it was always priority.

The Issue of Mental Strongholds

The second takeaway—the second thought I got from this—was about the issue of mental strongholds. Brothers and sisters, there is a great spiritual battle going on in your life, particularly concerning the House of God. Satan will use any tactic to stop the building of the House of God.

In the beginning with the remnant, he knew that they still had it in their minds that they were supposed to build the House of God. To ensure that they really would not get back to building the House of God, he came up with this insidious scheme. They were discouraged and weary, as I said before, and became real targets for Satan's assault. As they were reasoning among themselves about their condition, he injected this subtle suggestion: now is not the time. Well, this seemed so good to them; it appealed their conscience. They did not need to be that concerned anymore. It was just not the Lord's timing. It was not His time.

They had taken every opportunity to build His house. They had worked hard, but they were not getting anywhere. There was a lot of opposition. This thought, just a little thought from the enemy— “Now is not the time”—took root in their hearts. As I said, brothers and sisters, it got deep because it went on for 15 years. We know that if God had not spoken to them, they would never have gone back to building that house. There would not have been a continuation of the testimony of God.

Brothers and sisters, we have to be aware that this is one of the enemy's greatest tactics: inserting thoughts into our minds. We have to be careful. Brothers and sisters, he does a great work. He uses this not only to deceive us about time, but also to use it against one another. He puts these thoughts in our minds about our brothers and sisters: "Well, something is wrong. They are not happy. I did not like the way they looked at me today." Or maybe, "they did not look at me at all." We begin to become suspicious of one another. He uses those little thoughts to break up the building of the house of God, to divide us.

The Need to Bring Thoughts into Captivity

But brothers and sisters, ultimately what he is after is stopping the building work among us. How can we build when we are divided? II Corinthians 10:4-5—you might want to pull that one up. "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." May we learn the lesson of bringing our thoughts into captivity. Brothers and sisters, let us not allow our thoughts to run rampant in our minds, but really keep them before the Lord. There is a great battle, and we need to be vigilant.

These little thoughts become great strongholds. This thought of, "Now is not the time to build God's house." Have you been thinking that way? Is your thought, "Now is not the time?" Has it become your reason for not participating, for not entering in when you are here, for backing off, for not pressing on, for not going after that rhema to build the house of God? "It is just not the time."

The Lord has told us to consider our ways. We cannot become spiritually passive. The remnant started out with a real heart to serve God and gave themselves to it. But they became discouraged and eventually accepted the thought that now is not the time. And they became passive regarding their purpose.

They were not aware of it in the beginning, but God did awaken their hearts. Brothers and sisters, we are all living stones together. It is God's intention to build you into His house, to be a supply of the riches of Christ so His house can be built. Your time is not your own; it is His. Use it to serve His purpose.

Recovery

The Lord said, "Consider your ways. You sow much, but you bring in little." Remember, He talked about making money, but it is all going—you do not know where. What is the Lord saying? He is saying you are under My discipline because My house lies waste. "I love you and I am trying to awaken you, to draw you back to Myself and My purpose." In Haggai 1:7-8 it says, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord." What did He say? "Go up to the mountain."

Let us go up to the mountain. Brothers and sisters, this is the way of recovery, this is the way of recovery, it is communion. That is what it means to go up to the mountain: to

commune with Him, to get back into fellowship, seeking Him, seeking His face, engaging in fellowship with Him and prayer with Him, in worship with Him. Seek Him. Brothers and sisters, this is going up to the mountain. That is what it means.

It is the way out, the way of deliverance, the way of deliverance from spiritual lethargy, from the malaise that we fall into at times, and the way to be freed from mental strongholds. That is where the Lord can speak to us and deal with us concerning these things. This is the way back. This is the way of grace.

Grace To Engage Yourself

And, brothers and sisters, what is so critically important? You just cannot wait and sit by and say, “Well, Lord, you do it.” You need the grace to engage yourself. You need to take that first step up the mountain. You need to respond. And I say it is by grace because I have found that in myself, the old man just will not do it. I got this little verse a couple of years ago on this matter of grace. It was a prayer, and I have kept it these past couple of years, and I want to read it to you. It deals with the fact that we are not able, but He is.

This is the prayer:

“God of all grace, give me grace to feel my need for grace. Give me grace to ask for grace. Then give me grace to receive grace. And when grace is given to me, give me grace to use that grace. In Jesus' name I pray.”

I will read it one more time. “The God of all grace, give me grace to feel my need of grace. Give me grace to ask for grace. Then give me grace to receive grace. And when grace is given, give me grace to use that grace.”

That is the way, brothers, and sisters; as we commune with Him, that is where we get the material to build the house of God. But we need to engage.

Encouragement from the Lord: “I Am with You”

Then the Lord—thank the Lord—He does not just leave it there with that charge. He encourages them. He says, “I am with you.” He said, “You need to go up to the mountain, and I am with you.” Now, my brother Kenny has shared such wonderful messages from the Lord on “I am with you.” Can you ask for any greater encouragement from God than for Him to say to you, “You need to do this; I am with you.” If He is with you, brothers, and sisters, it does not matter if the boat is sinking—you are going to get to the other side. And you know what I am referring to. Brothers and sisters, when He says “I am with you,” that is His promise to you. He will not go back on His promise. You need to take that first step.

They started back. However, after a month of laying the foundation, they began to get discouraged because they saw that the house they were building was so small and insignificant compared to the glorious house that Solomon had built. They became discouraged. They said, “What is this? God has brought us all the way back here, but there

is no way this house is going to reach the glory that Solomon's temple had." They became very discouraged.

Rebuilding of the Same House

I began to think, brothers and sisters, that this becomes a problem for us sometimes in our personal lives, particularly in our lives together. Sometimes we begin to say, "My part is so insignificant. What I am doing in the assembly and with the saints is so insignificant. There does not seem to be any glory about it." Maybe you even go further and think, "I am insignificant." Now, there is a sense in which, before the Lord, there is nothing in us, no good thing.

But it is Christ about which we are talking. Christ in you is not insignificant. That is why you are not insignificant—because Christ is in you. Once again, He encourages them. What He says is, "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts." Brothers and sisters, this is so powerful. He does not say the glory in this house is going to be greater than Solomon's. What He said is this: they are not two separate houses. He says, "Who saw this house?" Speaking of the one they were building in its first glory, speaking of Solomon's temple—it is the same house. He said it might be smaller; it might not be as magnificent. But, brothers and sisters, it is not a small, insignificant thing.

In the end, the glory of this house—speaking of the house that we are building today, the spiritual house made without hands, the new Jerusalem that will come down from heaven, that heavenly city, the house of God, full of glory—that is what we are building. It may seem insignificant. It may seem that what we are doing here in this fellowship is insignificant compared to the mighty glory. But, brothers and sisters, we are part of something wonderful. Do you see? The tabernacle, Solomon's temple, the rebuilt temple, the house made without hands—they are all the same house. We are part of something that has been going on for centuries, brothers and sisters. Thank God the remnant was once again stirred, and they continued to build the house of God.

The Blessing of God Returns

Now we come to the last encouragement. I hope that encourages you, brothers, and sisters. You are part of something so much greater than you can even imagine or think. Revelation 21 and 22 give you a glimpse of it, as best as our brother John could do in trying to relay what he saw from the Lord. But it is a glorious, glorious thing, this bride adorned for her husband.

The Lord had withheld His blessing in order to wake them up to their condition. It was evidence of their condition because they were not engaged in building His house. They had started rebuilding; it had been going on now for almost four months. They began to get discouraged again because they were looking for the Lord to bless them now that they had started rebuilding the house. But the vine was still empty, and the fig tree was not blooming. It did not seem like God was with them at all, but He was.

The Lord finally says, look, really, what He is saying to them is, “I had to make sure you were serious. These last four months, now that you have started, your blessing has not come yet because I needed to see if you were serious if you trusted Me more than the blessing.” Praise the Lord, He is saying, “You were under discipline. I withheld your blessing in order to make sure you had really returned to building My house.” He speaks to them. He says, “From this day forward, I will bless you. I will bless you.” The blessings returned. May we not give up, brothers and sisters.

Conclusion: The Purpose of Time and the Call to Build

Brothers and sisters, let me end with this. This thing of time, this mental concept of time we have, it is not ours, it is His. He created time for a real purpose, for this glorious house. He is building this city, New Jerusalem, a new heaven, and a new earth. The Kingdom, brothers and sisters, is glorious. That is what time is all about.

If we are not serving His purpose, time is wasted. We use that term—waste time, waste time. Brothers and sisters, it can be wasted time, but it does not have to be that way. We just need to go up to the mountain. Go up to the mountain, get the wood. Communion, fellowship with the Lord. Enter into the house of God, doing the Lord's work. May the Lord bless His word.

Lord, we just come to You today. Thank You for those precious times. They do not seem precious at the time, but Lord, those times when You speak to our hearts in a very thorough way to awaken us and help us consider Your ways. Oh Lord, we thank You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Consider Your Ways	1
Introduction	1
God's Cry to the Remnant: Consider Your Ways	2
The Relevance for Us Today	3
Historical Background	3
The Remnant's Initial Zeal	4
The Remnant's Subsequent Decline	4
Focus On Personal Comfort and Daily Life	4
Warning To Us: Spiritual Lethargy and Indifference	5
God's Intervention	6
Lessons and Warnings	7
The Issue of Time and Mental Strongholds	7
The Matter of Time: Time is God's, Not Ours	7
The Enemy's Tactic: "Now Is Not The Time"	8
The Issue of Mental Strongholds	9
The Need to Bring Thoughts into Captivity	10
Recovery	10
Grace To Engage Yourself	11
Encouragement from the Lord: "I Am with You"	11
Rebuilding of the Same House	12
The Blessing of God Returns	12
Conclusion: The Purpose of Time and the Call to Build	13

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