

INVISIBLE, YET ATTENTION-SEEKING

Ezra 3:7 They gave silver also to the masons and to the carpenters. And they gave meat and drink and oil to the people of Sidon and to the people of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

3:8 And in the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brothers the priests and the Levites, and all they who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began. And they chose the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of Jehovah. 3:9 And Jeshua stood up together with his sons and his brothers, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, to set forward the workmen in the house of God the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brothers the Levites.

3:10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their robes with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, according to David king of Israel. 11 And they sang, praising and giving thanks to Jehovah, because He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised Jehovah, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, ancient men who had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice. And many shouted aloud for joy 13 so that the people could not tell the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people. For the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

This morning. I want to talk to you on a message titled **INVISIBLE, YET ATTENTION-SEEKING.**

- There are things in your life that might seem insignificant, and yet they are of immense value; such is the nature of foundations.
- Without foundations, many systems will collapse; without strong fundamentals, principles, and convictions, your life is like a floating ship drifting in whichever direction possible.
- Foundations are the unseen principles that determine the strength, stability, and longevity of what we build
- The nature of your foundation determines how you will stand when under great test – the foundation must pass the test if what you are building will survive storms.
- Jesus talks of two builders – one wise and one foolish based on the type of foundation upon which they built their houses. The wise builder built on a strong foundation and foolish one built on sand – Matthew 7:24-27.

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- Allow me to say that without Jesus, the foundation and the chief cornerstone, your walk with God is impossible.
- We build everything on the foundation, that is Jesus. Paul says;
1 Corinthians 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- By design, foundations are not meant to be visible; you build the foundation, and you bury it under the ground.
- People don't marvel at the beauty of foundations; everyone celebrates the splendour of architecture, the ingenuity of engineers, and all that focuses on the visible part of the building.
- Jesus is the rock that the builders rejected and it is the cornerstone that holds everything together.
- People celebrate power couples; we celebrate the student winning all the awards at school, but rarely do we celebrate the hard work behind the scenes, the sleepless nights, and the tears and blood that have been shed along the way.
- We celebrate thriving churches; we all want to gravitate to the churches with their own buildings, but never take time to consider what it takes to achieve those things.
- The returning exiles teach us something very profound regarding paying attention to the invisible.

*Ezra 3:10 And when the builders **laid the foundation of the temple** of Jehovah, they set the priests in their robes with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, **to praise Jehovah**, according to David king of Israel.*

- They had a revelation of what foundations represent. For them, the foundation was worth celebrating because it was not just the messy side of the temple, but was going to enable them to re-establish the temple of worship.
- The foundation represents hope and the possibility that hidden potential becomes a lived reality.
- They could dream about the future; they could see the Day of Atonement being celebrated again; they saw God's ways being taught again from the temple; they saw themselves dedicating their children to the Lord at the temple – all that was going to be possible because the foundation was in place.
- In other words, the best that is found in you can only be realized when the foundation is in place.

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- Without Jesus being fully expressed in your life, you will not experience the fullness of God's Kingdom.
- People want breakthroughs in their lives but are not keen to establish a relationship with Jesus.
- If you want to grow in the anointing, grow in your relationship with Jesus. **The higher you want the building to be, the deeper and stronger the foundations ought to be.**

John 15:4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

- Grow deeper in your relationship with Jesus – in other words, develop deeper roots in Jesus.
- You neglect foundations at your peril – for a business to thrive, it needs strong foundations. You can't ignore sound business practices and expect the business to take off.
- The quality of your marriage is a reflection on the foundation upon which it is built. The work on the foundation of a marriage does not start after you are married; it starts way before you are married.
- Your career growth is determined by how you respect the basics of career management (mentorship and coaching, diligence and continuous improvement, etc.)
- **How do you ensure that you pay attention to the foundation? Let's glean into how the exiles did it, and learn together.**

1. Invest in building the foundations.

- Anything worthwhile will cost you something – it will cost you time, money, and effort.

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- Don't be deceived into only wanting to spend on what can be seen, ignoring the foundation. The temptation is real to only concentrate only on what is visible.
- The exiles gave towards the labor to execute the works, as well as the material required to build the foundation.
- To grow as a disciple of Jesus, it will cost you something – in other words, there is a price to being a disciple (the one who sits at the feet of a teacher to learn).

2. Commit yourself to building the foundations

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- Foundations are messy, difficult and usually take longer than expected. When you think it will take 3 months, often foundations take longer than expected.
- Sometimes it is unforeseeable ground conditions – you might think you are doing ok regarding your understanding of the things of God, only to realize that you had developed bad habits over the years, requiring a lot more unlearning and relearning.

Ezra 3:9 And Jeshua stood up together with his sons and his brothers, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, to set forward the workmen in the house of God the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brothers the Levites.

- As you can see, this was a personal matter – sons and fathers were vested in the building project. **They all focused on the job at hand – nothing was more important than the foundation.**
- Foundation building is hard work - You need to have a united front towards building foundations – your emotions have to be involved here, your willpower and your intellect must lock into the process.
- Foundation building requires a maturity approach to it. The immature will ignore the details required in building strong foundations – they don't mind skipping processes for the sake of expediency.
- *Ezra 3:8... And they chose the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of Jehovah.*
- They had to be strong enough to take on both physical and emotional weight

3. Celebrate foundations

- We need to make foundations beautiful again – in other words, we must esteem foundations and view them as important.
- We have to deal with the issue of wanting quick wins – people want promotions without grasping the basics in a job.
- We must learn to be patient with the process and ensure that when we come on the other side of the tunnel, we are well prepared for the next season.

Ezra 3:10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their robes with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, according to David king of Israel.

- They made a big deal about the completion of the foundations. You must make a big deal about foundations in your life.
- Again, we see the Exiles taking time to celebrate the foundations. At the beginning, foundations seem small and of no consequence, but we must look at foundations with an eye on the ultimate end.

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- In other words, we must celebrate small beginnings because every big thing began small.
- If you fail to celebrate small beginnings, you will rob yourself of bigger things.
- If you fail to celebrate the seed, you will miss out on the harvest – you pay attention to what you celebrate.
- In the middle of these celebrations, there was a group of senior people who were crying because the beauty and probably the size of the foundations were not as great as those built by Solomon.

*Ezra 3: 12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, ancient men who had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, **wept with a loud voice. And many shouted aloud for joy***

- Yes, I get them but they were crying over a past that they destroyed due to their disobedience.
- Before them was a generation that had never experienced temple worship and they needed to celebrate with them on this achievement.
- We must be careful of living in the past and look down upon what God is building in you in the now.
- We must be careful of looking down on people's foundations, unless there is something fundamentally flawed with it.
- What I liked about the young generation is that they didn't allow the old generation to drown their celebration and victory – they kept celebrating.
- Let's make the foundations beautiful again and pay attention to that which will keep the visible to remain visible.