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**Zechariah’s Joy:**

**Trusting God in Days of Pain - #1**

**March 12th, 2017**

**Text: Zech. 1:1-6**

**Keith M. Doyle, Lead Pastor – Winnetka Bible Church**

1. **Introduction:**
2. **Returning from exile**

* **Illus.** From prisoner to president
* 70 years of exile, what was happening globally? Babylon to Persia
* Exile and return…a smaller story in a big story

1. **Setting**

* Zechariah = **‘one whom the Lord remembers’**
* Contemporary of Haggai – rebuild physical temple
* How was Zechariah’s message the same/different?
* **Two main sections:**
* Chap.1-8 – **God will intervene! Trust His Promises!**
* Chap. 9-14 (perhaps 40 years later) – **Messiah (Jesus) is the center of God’s redemptive promises and intervention!**
* **Key verses:** Zech. 3:8; 6:12-14; 8:13-15
* **Unity of message:**
* The ‘call’ for the cleansing of the community
* The renewal of the covenant promises
* Instruction about the land, care of widows, orphans and foreigners
* Ingathering of the exiles…but most important
* The climax of all God’s revelation – sending His Messiah (c/f Zech.14:9)
* **Summary Theme:**
* ***It is an encouragement to God’s discouraged and frightened people to pursue Him, because He will keep ALL His covenant promises – most important of which is to send a Messiah!***

**Q. *Why is there a continual call to come to God in repentance?***

1. **The Quandry of Divine Grace (1-3, ‘…return to me and I will return to you’)**
2. **Three names, ‘Zechariah’; ‘Berechiah’; ‘Iddo’**

* The Lord remembers; God blesses his people; The appointed time
* God raised up Zechariah to proclaim that God remembers His people, his promises and that He will bless them with salvation at His appointed time

1. **How are we to read the promises given to Israel? (4 ways)**

* They are for national Israel (c/f Zech.8:13)
* There is still a future for repentant ‘Israel’ (c/f Rom.11)

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* They are for national Israel (c/f Zech.8:13)
* There is still a future for repentant ‘Israel’ (c/f Rom.11)
* Through Christ Gentiles become partners in the promises (c/f Eph.2:12; Gal.3:29)
* Many of these promises are ‘layered’…partly fulfilled (example: Messiah’s coming in two stages, but this is ‘veiled’ in the OT, Heb.9:26)

1. **‘Returning’ to the Lord is relational…not construction! (1,2)**

* They were ‘doing’ a lot for God! God address His prophet
* **‘The Lord was very angry with your fathers…’** (2), Lit. God was ‘angry’ on account of your fathers…
* Don’t do the same…God’s work is astounding!
* **Apply:** Why does this matter? Divine wrath precedes Divine grace
* ***‘Return…’* =** repentance, turning man’s responsibility but by God’s sovereign initiative (three times he says, **‘Lord of hosts’**, 3,4,6)
* The call to ‘return’ contains the power to enable the turning…
* **Apply:** It’s personal…relational…c/f Jn.6:37, Jesus said, ‘I will never cast out’

1. **The Questions of Disobedience, Delay, Discipline (4-6)**
2. **Return from…your Disobeying (4, ‘Don’t be like your fathers…return from evil ways and evil deeds…they did not hear…’)**

* By ‘fathers’ he means ancestors but specifically those responsible for the captivity
* C c/f Jer. 42,43 – You made it up yourself! **Apply:** Listening…not ‘liking’ the message
* Stubborn disobedience…easier to see in others

1. **Return from… your Delaying (5, dodging, avoiding, excusing)**

* What happened to the fathers? Prophets?
* **Apply:** Don’t be a spiritual procrastinator…urgency (c/f 2 Cor.6:2)

1. **Return from… your ill-Discipline (6, apathy, lethargy, indifference)**

* The message of v.5,6 – despite your disobedience
* **Apply:** The fruit of true repentance – turning from and turning towards – rhythm
* **What’s the opposite?** Defending, blaming, justifying, ignoring, delaying
* **Summary:** Zechariah gives a history lesson of God’s dealings with His people…
* ***Seeing God’s kindness and faithfulness in spite of disobedience should cause God’s people to, ‘Return to the Lord’ (promise and warning)***

**IV.Closing:**

1. **God has spoken = will we listen? (c/f Heb.1:3)**

* God has spoken by His Son (c/f Matt.11, **‘listen to Him’**)
* A glorious exile! He came to us, sets the Christian Gospel apart
* So…he invites us to return…not for judgment but for blessing!

1. **Table talk…**

* The wandering/exiled heart is an unrepentant heart…
* The ‘presumption’ of return…self-‘worthying’, ‘self-loathing’…are about ‘self’!
* (c/f Ps.15:1 – who can come?)
* Through Jesus, God receives unworthy sinners – He ‘worthies’ us to come to God
* Through Christ Gentiles become partners in the promises (c/f Eph.2:12; Gal.3:29)
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