

SERMON FOR AUGUST 30, 2020

TEXT: ZECHARIAH 1:18-21

THEME: IT'S TOOL TIME

And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four horns! **19** And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" And he said to me, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." **20** Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen. **21** And I said, "What are these coming to do?" He said, "These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one raised his head. And these have come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it."

In the name of Jesus:

It's Tool Time! This expression was made famous by the TV sitcom called Home Improvement, starring Tim Allen. Each episode included Tim's home improvement show, called Tool Time, which was a show within a show. Tim was joined on the program by his friend and mild mannered assistant Al Borland. They were introduced with a question: "Does everybody know what time it is?" And the response was always the same: "It's Tool Time!"

In our text for today the prophet Zechariah is concerned about time and tools. After the Temple had been destroyed in 587 BC, and the rebuilding began in about 520 BC, it was time to rebuild! Zechariah has three dates in his book that make it clear that Darius, the Persian ruler, was the reigning king, and during the time of his rule it was a time of discouragement and despair. It was

the first time in almost 500 years that Israel didn't have a king coming from the line of David. There was deep despair and great misery.

One night, God gave Zechariah a total of eight visions. Our text is the second vision that is recorded, where God shows the prophet four craftsmen. The meaning of the vision is this: It's time to build. What tools, though, do you use?

This vision sounds strange to us. We aren't alone, it probably sounded strange to the people who heard this from Zechariah. I wouldn't be surprised if those who heard the vision ridiculed the prophet or were sarcastic in their comments, especially when we understand more about "the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.(v 19). The horns represent the enemy nations. Why are they described as horns? Think of animals that have horns, bulls, goats, rhino, deer, elk. Their animal horns capture and kill, they can gore and gouge, torture and tear. That is why the biblical authors employ horns to symbolize their enemies. The horns represent the ultimate enemies of God's people. For instance, in the book of Daniel, horns represent ruling empires that crush everything that stands in their way. In the book of Revelation, John describes both the dragon and the first beast as having ten horns. Horns

announce destruction, devastation, and death. And Zechariah writes that it will be craftsmen that will defeat and destroy these horns!

That is why those who first heard of Zechariah's vision must have thought: "You have got to be kidding?" How are craftsmen going to help?

What enemies, like maiming and mauling horns, have ripped your life apart? Is it rejection? Excessive worry? Fear of the unknown? What has caused you deep despair and excessive misery?" Trying to defeat enemies that destroy us like animal horns, using the tool of God's Word, sometimes seems pointless. We hear what others are saying: "The Bible doesn't change a thing. It's old fashioned, out of date. Completely irrelevant. If you really want to change things, you have to take the bull by the horns, take matters into your own hands. After all, God helps those who help themselves." And so we walk around downcast, maybe even with a chip on our shoulder. We get up in the morning, put in our day, then go home defeated and discouraged, terrified of our enemies and those things that affect us. Just like the people of God back then, who thought that they didn't stand a chance against the horns that scattered Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem, well, neither do we! " (Zech 1:19).

And so Zechariah writes: "The Lord showed me four craftsmen. The craftsmen are the builders. The prophet's second vision is about rebuilding the

Temple. In fact, all eight visions are connected to rebuilding the Temple. The craftsmen are those who are going to rebuild God's church. The craftsmen are taking on the big, bad, beastly horns. The craftsmen are taking on the enemies of God and His people. The craftsmen may not look like much, but that isn't the point, this is: "The craftsmen have come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations." (Zechariah 1: 21). The craftsmen have come to terrify those things that terrify us!

How is this going to happen and who is going to do it? God works through His means, among those who trust in Him. Think Moses taking on and defeating Pharaoh, Gideon defeating the mighty Midianites, David slaying Goliath. God's people may not look like much, but when they trust in the Lord, no enemy can defeat them!

We don't conquer evil by walking around with hard hearts—holding on to vendettas and wanting to get even. We don't conquer evil by giving people the cold shoulder and talking behind their back. No, the scattering horns meet their match against craftsmen who rebuild the temple, directed by God's Word. When the temple goes up the horns go down! *When the temple goes up the horns go*

*down! When God builds His kingdom, the Church, His enemies are defeated.*

God's kingdom comes in victory!

**God defeats every enemy in the book of Zechariah!** At the top of the list is Satan, the attacking accuser (3:2). Sin also meets its match throughout the book. It is taken away (3:5), destroyed (5:4), removed (5:11) and washed away (13:1). All of this previews and predicts Christ's Easter victory when he defeats *every* enemy in the universe—every dragon, devil, all darkness, and even death!

Several months ago on a Saturday night David Ayers was sitting in the stands at a hockey game in Toronto. When the starting goalie for Carolina got injured, and then the backup goalie got injured. David Ayers was the emergency goaltender and he was pressed into action. He had never played an NHL game before. The first shot he faced went in. And the second shot. All who were watching were wondering who is this guy and what has he gotten himself into? He had bitten off more than what he could chew. But then, he stopped the next eight shots and his team, the Carolina Hurricanes, beat their opponent, the Toronto Maple Leafs, 6-3.

**There once was another group of people that also didn't look like much**—they were like third-string NHL goalies. Their leader—Peter—knew

more about bass fish and boat docks than he did about Roman culture and Greek language. His cronies also didn't have any formal education. They weren't exactly humble, they jockeyed for positions of authority with Jesus. They weren't exactly loyal either, three of them fell asleep when Jesus told them to stay awake, watch, and pray. Two of the disciples were nicknamed 'the Sons of Thunder' and true to their name they wanted their enemies torched with fire. Before Jesus came along the disciples were everyday people, loading trucks, coaching kids' soccer, and selling Coke Slushies at the local Speedway, they were blue collar, hard living people, and they were hard hearted as well. When Jesus called them each disciple had to ask, "Who? Me?"

They were used by the Lord in His time and according to His plan, to do the work that the Lord had for them to do. For the Lord Jesus humbled Himself unto death so that His Kingdom would come. And flourish. Zechariah talks about what Jesus was going to do: the craftsmen that Zechariah was talking about. Zechariah 13:7: "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." Tools of torture were used against the Good Shepherd; a blindfold, a whip, some thorns, a purple robe, a hammer, some nails and finally a spear. God shows His fierce love for you in His Son, Jesus. His love is written in the blood of Jesus.

God's love is for you—in your rejection, in your frustration and in your quiet desperation.

From Zechariah we know that, *when the temple goes up the horns go down!* Jesus said that “destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up.” He wasn't talking about the physical Temple, He was talking about Himself. He was crucified on Good Friday, and He was raised on Easter morning, alive forever and ever, to defeat all of your enemies, including sin, Satan, and death. Jesus conquered all the powers that rip us up and tear us apart. Then he announced a building program.

**Jesus says, “I will build my church.”** Are you ready to rebuild what's been destroyed in your life? Christ uses humble people, not the proud; Davids not Goliaths. God uses what the others think as too small and does great things! Jesus took five loaves and two fish and fed thousands. That is how God works. The Apostle Paul says: “**18** For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. **19** For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? **21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who

believe. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” God uses that which the world deems unimportant and does great things through those who study and trust in His Word. God builds His Church, His Kingdom, through people who lay hold of His Tool, God’s Word, to hear it, study it, love it, believe it and follow it. And they build with great vim and vigor, joy and delight. No more deep despair or excessive misery! So it’s time to study His Word, to allow God to work in and through us, to build His Church. Does everyone know what time it is? It’s Tool Time! We build God’s Church together as we hear and study His Word. Let’s build! To the glory of God and in Jesus’ name. Amen