

# Do God's Work Watchfully

by Friedel Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being watchful and discerning in our spiritual lives, following God's calling, and standing firm against the influences of others.*

**Duration:** 1:16:08

**Scripture:** Ezra 4:1, Ezra 4:3, Proverbs 23:7, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Philippians 4:8

**Topics:** "God's Work"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being watchful and discerning, as the enemy will try to destroy the work of God. When we dedicate our lives to the Lord, the enemy immediately goes on the offensive to hinder God's purpose in our lives. The speaker encourages Christians to remain steadfast and united, not allowing anything to separate them from God and from one another. They caution against being influenced by evil accusations and lies, urging believers to stand with those whom God has called and commanded to build His temple.

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## Transcript

Our Heavenly Father, we pray that thou wouldst speak to our hearts this morning. May thy word be filled with thy power. Lord, thy word is alive.

May it create new life in us. That our lives will be changed into thy image. For thy name's sake we ask it.

Amen. I'd like to read a portion of scripture out of the book of Ezra. Chapter four.

I'll read from verse one. Now, when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the Lord God of Israel, they said, They came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses and said to them, Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do, and we have sacrificed to him since the days of Esahaddon, king of Assyria, who brought us here. But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel said to them, You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God, but we alone will build to the Lord God of Israel as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, has commanded us.

Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. But when they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel, they said to them, And once again I realized how important it is to be watchful, to be on guard, to have discernment. Because the moment God starts working, the

enemy starts working as well.

The devil can't stand it if there are people who are determined to build the temple of God. When the devil sees that people come together, that people stand together, and the people are united and they want to build the temple of God, the enemy will do everything in its power to destroy that. And it's exactly the same with us when we dedicate our lives to the Lord, when we surrender our lives to the Lord, and say, Lord, I want you to be king in my life.

The enemy immediately goes over into the offensive. The enemy will try its best to stop the Lord attaining his purpose with my life. And he'll immediately go and start attacking.

And we see here out of this portion of scripture that when the people who had come out of captivity, they immediately said, we've got to rebuild Jerusalem. We've got to build a temple for him. That was their desire and that was their goal.

And the people that were living in that country, they were a people of their kind. But it was strange that immediately when the people of Israel, of Judah came to build the temple, immediately the adversaries came as well and said, can't we help you? And it's exactly the same today as well. If I have decided to serve God, to build that temple of God, immediately my adversaries will come and they will try and help me, they will try to show me how to build.

Or they'll assist me to build. And that is the danger of each and every person who has dedicated and consecrated his life to the Lord. And anywhere and everywhere where God is starting to build, we will find that the adversary will immediately come and try and help.

And it's like that today. The moment God starts working, immediately we'll go and we want to be part of it. Although we haven't had a calling to do it, but we'll immediately go there and we'll try and help, assist, we want to build as well.

And how many people, when the revival started here with us in 1966, how many people from all over, they came and they all wanted to help. And so many people tried to assist and said, you've got to build this way, you've got to build that way. You've got to do it this way, you've got to do it that way.

But they never had the calling to do so. But because they saw God was doing something, they wanted to be part of it. And it is cunningly that the devil is trying to do that wherever God is working.

And he'll immediately mobilize his people and say, now you go and you help building. Although they had a commandment from the king, the king of Persia, King Cyrus, he had commanded them to go to Jerusalem and build the temple. He had said, you go and you build the temple.

And when they get to Judah, we find that these people, the inhabitants of Judah and the surrounding areas, when they saw, they immediately said, can't we help, we want to build, we want to help you build that temple. And immediately when God starts working in my life, I will find people coming to me, trying to help me, to encourage me, to assist me to build the house. Although they haven't had the calling to do so, and yet they are always just too eager.

They want to help. And so often we make exactly that same mistake. When God is busy dealing with people, when God is busy building his temple, and God has called people to build the temple, you will immediately find people coming and they will try and help you.

They will tell you what to do, they will tell you what not to do. And that is the dreadful sickness of Christians today. Instead of leaving things over to the Lord.

It is God that has commissioned them. It is God that draws people to himself. It is God who is dealing with people.

It is God who is dealing with my heart. And then so easily we go and we spoil the thing by us trying to help people. Instead of leaving it over to the Lord.

Instead of prayerfully standing behind the Lord and saying, God you work it out, you work, you attain your purpose with that person. We go and spoil it and say, can't I help you? Can't I do this? No, you've got to do that. You mustn't do this.

Unless God has called you, has chosen you as a vessel to go and to help to rebuild. It is so often that we try to help people, we try to push people, we try to get people to that place where they will surrender their life to the Lord. Instead of helping, standing behind the Lord, helping the Lord, prayerfully and intercede for that person, we go ahead of the Lord.

And we try to do it. And here we see the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin. They say in verse 2, let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do.

Because we have the same mind as what you have. Because we are seeking God exactly the same way as you are seeking. And we have sacrificed to him since the days of Esaheddon, where the king of Assyria brought us here.

And we fear God as well. But the difference was, they hadn't been called to build the temple. And I just told myself, Friedel, never make that mistake and do something which God hasn't called you to do.

Unless the Lord has commissioned me to do it. But just because I see that God is busy doing something, that God is busy building the temple, that I say, Lord, I've got to help them. And to me, it was something quite new again, to tell me, never ever do something when God hasn't called you to do it.

Because God has called so and so to build the temple, that I feel obliged that I've got to do the same thing. And how wonderful it was that Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers of Israel said to them, you may do nothing with us to build a house for our God. But we alone will build to the Lord God of Israel a temple.

They weren't influenced by those people who wanted to help. And that is our problem ever so often. We are so easily influenced by that what people say.

They mean so well. They want to do the right thing. And we can't wait and that's why we start pushing.

And we like to take people by the hair and pull them. We try and push them that they decide that they've got to do something. And so easily we try and help people.

We give advice. We tell them what to do, what not to do. Because the people are just waiting for one thing, to have a revelation and maybe God has got a revelation through this or that person.

Instead of leaving people over to the Lord. Leave him over to the Lord, he can do it far better than what we can do it. Because so often we confuse people.

The one says this, the other one says that, the other one says that. And eventually I am totally confused because I listen to that what people say. And here Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers house said no, no.

We don't need assistance. We don't want to be influenced. We don't want to have people working or helping us who haven't been called to do so.

No matter how sincere they are, they say they fear the Lord. And they said oh we want to build as well. We have also sacrificed to the God of Israel.

Then it's our God as well. So allow us to help. Allow us to build.

But they said no. Because we have been commissioned to do so, not you. And I cried in my heart and I said oh may we become a people that will be so clear minded as these people were.

That won't be influenced by anything foreign. No matter how good it seems. No matter how right it seems.

But that I will have a relationship with the Lord from on high. That I will immediately be able to detect and discern which is of God and which isn't of God. And if we'd only be a people like that.

That we won't listen. That we won't be influenced by our best of friends. And that's why it is so important and I've said this so often throughout the years.

Especially to the young people. Don't have friends. Or special friends.

Let everybody. Let every Christian. Let every young people who follows the Lord.

Let them be your friends. Because it's ever so often and you see it over and over where two people are together and they are special friends. Usually it's an incubator of evil.

And it's always been my prayer. And may God grant me that grace. That all of you, everyone who has been cleansed by the precious blood of my Lord Jesus Christ.

That you are all my friends. That there is no difference. That I will be able to build with any person and everyone who has been cleansed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And I honor these people where they said no no. You weren't called to do that. I will build the temple with those the king has commanded to build.

That I will stand together with those that God has called and commanded to build the temple. But that I won't be influenced by anybody. No matter how good that person means it.

How sincere he is. If he hasn't been called. I don't want to build with him.

Otherwise I will be influenced by other things. I'll be influenced by those that haven't been commanded by the king to build the temple. And it is strange, amazing.

Or I shouldn't say strange or amazed. It's the normal thing. When the people, those who were called, were said go and build the temple.

And those that wanted to help, that they immediately went against them. And they started influencing, fighting people. Immediately after they were told you can't build.

And it's strange. They want to help. They want to build.

They want to assist. They want to build the temple. But if they are told no, that isn't your calling.

They turn around and they become your enemies. And so often you find it. That people, they eager, they keen, they want to help.

And they say we want to serve God. We want to build the temple. We want to assist, etc, etc.

And if they are told is that your calling. Has God called you to that or not. They become your enemies.

Oh, you know, you've got to belong to the group. You've got to belong to the elite. You've got to belong to that certain group.

If you don't belong to it, you're nothing. And immediately they go against the people who are building the temple. And immediately they go over into the opposition.

And they start discouraging those that are building the temple. In verse 4 we read the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building.

You see, they immediately started finding fault. They tried to influence. Oh, you know that it's the greatest danger to the Christian church today.

That from within, because you don't understand, you're not in. You go against it. And you become the enemy of those that are building the temple.

That is what the devil is trying to do and he'll do that all over. And he's doing it all over to disunite Christians. Because the devil doesn't stand unity.

That's what God is building. He's building his temple. He's building his church.

That is what he's busy with. And the devil is trying everything in his power to thwart that, to stop them not to build. And they started troubling the builders.

They started to discourage the builders. And they wanted to tell them no, not this way, but that way. They tried to influence them.

And that is the danger amongst us Christians. That we constantly find fault with one another. And we constantly criticize that what God is doing.

And we read here in verse 5 that they even hired counselors. They got people to counsel the people of Judah. To tell them what to do and what not to do.

They counseled the people but let them, tried to lead them off that which is of God. And we still find that today. That you find counselors that they try to influence people and tell them what to do and what not to do.

They take the place of God the Holy Spirit. They know better than what God knows. I always marvel at people, at counselors who give advice.

To tell people what they've got to do and what they haven't got to do. What they've got to wear and what they haven't got to wear. What, let's leave it.

But they can always, they always have advice. These counselors, they always tell people what to do. And I always marvel at such counselors.

You know, I believe a counselor should be, I said it yesterday already, should be the servant of all. He should be the least, he should be nothing. Who with fear and trembling takes a person whom he has counseled and in humbleness and meekness brings him to the cross of Jesus.

And asks Jesus to reveal himself to his child. That is what I believe we counselors should be. That we should be able to lead the person to the cross of Jesus.

That he sees and sees herself in the light of Christ. Oh, that I might be able to lead a person to that place where the person can see himself or herself in the light of Jesus. But here we see they hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia.

For one purpose, to frustrate them. To frustrate them, to make them demagogue. That a person can't see straight anymore.

That a person can't see clear anymore. Because the one says this, the other one says that. And eventually those poor people don't find the way to the cross anymore.

And that was the trick of the devil. We will hire counselors, we'll even pay them for them. Because a hiring you pay.

We'll pay the counselors that they'll go and that they'll frustrate, that they will totally confuse the people of Judah. We so easily want to help people and to give advice. No matter where we go, whether it is in Europe, whether it is in America, whether it's in Australia, whether it's in Japan, whether it's in South Africa.

You'll always find counselors trying to help people and show them the way. And people come along and say, but this counselor sees this, that counselor sees that. Now what must I believe? And I can always say, what does the Lord say? Because the Lord is a counselor of counselors.

And if God hasn't anointed you, if God hasn't commanded you, if God hasn't called you to be one, then leave your hands off it. But those that are called, they've got to be at the feet of Jesus day and night. And say, oh God, help me that I might be a person who will be able to lead those that are in need, those that seek help, or that I might be able to lead them to the feet of Jesus Christ.

Otherwise, I'll be a highling as well. And I will counsel people. And I will tell people my mind, my thoughts, my way of building.

Oh, but that I might be able to lead them to Christ. And that doesn't pertain to counselors only. And that concerns every Christian.

Every Christian should be called by God to build the temple. And that I will be united with those that have been called, those which God called out of Egypt, that I'll be one in spirit and in truth, and be able to build the temple. And that is something which we should never forget.

And that I will be able to lead my children. I will be able to lead them to the feet of Jesus. It's easy to tell my child, don't do this, do that.

And unfortunately, that's what we all do. Don't do this, do that. Instead of taking that child and leading it into the presence of Christ.

That that child might see itself, and see the awfulness of sin, and see the beauty of Jesus. And they didn't stop at that. Then they started writing accusations against those that were building the temple.

And they tried to influence Judah and Benjamin, the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, by writing leaflets, pamphlets, and dishing them out to the people, and telling them what is right and what is wrong. But oh, how wonderful that they weren't influenced by it. They continued building the temple because they had been commissioned to do so.

And that is important. If we haven't been commissioned, if we haven't been called, we'll be easily influenced by people. But if we have been called, if we've had an experience, if we've had a meeting with the living God, we won't be moved.

And people can write, they can say what they like, they can try and influence people, but it will fall off our back like water from a duck's back. And that is where we Christians ought to be. That nothing, nothing will separate us from God and separate us from one another.

And that we will be of one mind, one soul. And that is important, friends. So important.

And when they didn't succeed in doing that, they started writing letters to the authorities. And they wrote letters to the authorities and accused these people. So much like Jesus.

When Jesus walked on this earth, where people were influenced, those that hadn't had a meeting with Christ. Yes, they sang praises to him, they followed him, they wanted to crown him King of Jerusalem, King of Israel. But the following day, they cried, crucify, crucify him.

Yes. Oh may we be a people that can pray, that can move God's arm. That God will meet with our people, that God will meet with our young people, that God will meet with our children and change their hearts.

He can do it, but we can't. And they wrote letters to the authorities. They wrote letters to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses.

They wrote letters to the common people, the men in the street. And they continued writing, fighting and talking evil about them. Well, and they did that with the Lord Jesus as well.

And the Lord said, that's going to happen to us as well. And he said, when those things happen. We've got to lift up our heads, we've got to rejoice.

And say, oh, we've been counted worthy that people talk lies about us. They couldn't frustrate them. And then they started writing accusations against Judah and Jerusalem.

And they wrote letters to the authorities and to the king. And they wrote lies, they wrote accusations which weren't true. You see, that is what's going to happen to you and to me.

The moment we mean business with the Lord. The moment we want to build the temple of God. The moment we want to consecrate and dedicate our lives to a full surrender.

When we sang this song, I surrender all. I just thought how easily, how glibly we sing it. But do we really mean it? And the tragic thing is, when we read this, when we read the letters they sent to the king.

The king was influenced by it. The king was influenced. And he lent an ear to those lies and those accusations.

Oh, be careful brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. Don't be influenced by something which is evil. Don't be influenced if there are accusations against the people who want to build the temple.

Don't believe what has been said about those that truly want to serve the Lord. But the king was influenced. And he was influenced to such an extent that he stopped the people from building.

So, so easily we can be influenced as well. And we stop the building of the temple. And we become an enemy of those God has called.

And he said, no, no, no, then rather stop, stop building if it is like that. And it didn't take long. The building of the temple was stopped.

It was only years and years later that the king of Persia allowed the temple to be built. Just because of things they listened to and were influenced or the king was influenced by that what people said. And exactly the same way Pilate was influenced by the people.

Pilate was influenced by that what the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes and the Christians of that time said. They as well said, we fear God. They as well said, we sacrifice to the same God.

But it was them that crucified, that influenced Pilate to say crucify him. And that's why it's so dangerous to be influenced by that what people say. But one wonderful thing is we read that Judah and Benjamin they stood together and they weren't moved.

And that is my prayer that we as Christians aren't moved. And I want to tell you a secret. Our greatest enemy in building the temple is ourselves, is our mind, our heart.

That we allow things to accumulate in our mind. That we start seeing things which are wrong. That we start seeing that we find fault with one another.

Instead of being on guard that nothing will destroy our unity. And that's why it's so important that your thought life must stay clean. Is your thought life clean? Pure? Is there nothing that separates you from the Lord? Whether it is in thought or whether it is in deed.

And the thoughts, in God's sight a thought is a deed. And woe to us if we neglect to expose our thought life. It is the greatest danger in a Christian life if his thoughts aren't clean.

And that doesn't only pertain to sexual thoughts. It can be a thought towards your brother. That you differ on certain things.

That you don't agree with this or that. And you keep it to yourself. And these are the things, the letters, the pamphlets which your thoughts are writing to your heart.

Oh let our thought life be clean and pure to be read by everybody that there is not a hidden thing in our lives. That my thought life towards my brother, towards my sister, towards no matter who will be such for everyone to read. That there will be nothing which I am ashamed of.

That there are no critical thoughts in my life towards my brother, my sister. That my love to that person will be exactly the same as what it is to them. That the Lord may be well pleased with my thought life.

That those thoughts which I think during the day will be in the light. That they will be transparent and that the Lord will be well pleased. And if it isn't like that then come to the cross and be cleansed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yesterday we had a wedding here. And we were told by the person who conducted that service. That our lives should stay clear, clean and pure.

And he said even if your past has been ruined and ravished by the enemy. That when you come to Jesus and confess that. And be cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus.

You can wear a veil again. Because the Lord looks at you as if you are a virgin. Because if he forgives, he forgets.

And you as well with your thought life. Because to God a thought is a deed. When last did you come with your thoughts and confess your thoughts.

That God can cleanse you and sanctify and purify you. Maybe that is the reason why you don't grow spiritually. Maybe right now the devil will say you needn't confess your thought life.

Nobody knows about it. But God knows. He knows.

And that is why come to him. Be cleansed by his blood. And that we might be able to build the temple again.

Let us pray. Our heavenly father. May these words which we heard today.

Have a deep impression. And make a deep impression to our spiritual lives. That we will never be the same again.

That we will be on guard. That we will have discernment. That we will be able to build the temple.

And that I as an individual will grow spiritually. That I will be able to allow thee to build that temple according to thy pattern and thy plan. Thou hast pointed on so many things.

So many points. And we want to take them. We want to exercise them in our mind.

That we might be a different people from today onwards. Oh our thought life. Oh that what we don't utter what we think.

May it be cleansed and purified. May the blood of Christ be cleansed. May that anger vanish.

May that all vanish. Everything that hinders the building of thy temple. Wouldst thou be able to start building that temple again Lord? In my life.

In the life of my family. In the life of the church. In the life amongst the Christians.

Amen.

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