

# Trinity Assembly & Fellowship

## Inaugural Ministry

August 13, 2017

**Hymns:** Faith of Our Fathers – No. 466 (*Open sharing and Eucharist*)  
The Churches One Foundation – No. 263 (*Closing Hymn*)

**Readings:** Ezra Ch. 3  
Haggai 2:1-5  
Zechariah 4:6-10a

**Background:** In 438 BC, a remnant of 49,897 Babylonian exiles return to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel by the long prophesied command of God and decree of Cyrus, King of Persia. They arrived to a pile of rubble to rebuild the Alter and the Temple.

### 1) REBUILDING THE ALTER

*A place of Sacrifice: typifies the testimony of our individual devotional life*

#### **a) Despite their fear of the people around them**

- i) Pagan idolaters; exiled Cuthites. 2 Kings 17: 24-34
  - (1) *Today, these are most often the duplicitous 'pew occupiers' who claim to worship the God of the Bible while being fully devoted to their own Gods Self and Pleasure.*
- ii) Courage
  - (1) *Not the absence of fear, but doing what needs to be done despite the fear.*
  - (2) *Required to stand alone amidst the pagan idols and gods of our day; the "cultural moment's" trajectory towards SSM and the liberal LGBT agenda; the apostatising church's trajectory to deny the Word of God and follow instead the God of this World.*
- iii) "Be ye separate" 2 Cor. 6:14-18

#### **b) Built on its Foundation**

- i) The Alter had a historical place and foundation where it belonged
  - (1) *Wasn't to be built just anywhere they felt like.*
- ii) In this age, the Alter and place of sacrifice is the Cross of Jesus Christ
  - (1) *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 3:11)*
    - (a) John 14:6 "...no one comes unto the Father except through me"
    - (b) Acts 4:12 "...there is no other name given under heaven by which men must be saved"
  - (2) *We are building on that foundation (1 Cor. 3:12-17)*
    - (a) Reward or Loss depending on the quality, not the quantity
    - (b) What will your Lord see in what you have built with what He gave you?

#### **c) Morning and Evening Sacrifices**

- i) God given rhythm to devotion and worship
  - (1) *Martha-Mary; Word-Silence; Kataphatic-Apophatic*
  - (2) *Historical development to this rhythm*
    - (a) Desert Fathers

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- (i) Separating from “the world” invading the church under Constantine
- (ii) Neither they, the Benedictines, nor the Brethren were attempting to “plant churches”
- (b) Seven “Divine Offices” of the Monastic Tradition
  - (i) Psalmody, Prayer and Eucharist
  - (ii) Lauds, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline, Vigils
- (c) Morning and Evening Prayer
  - (i) Post reformation Church of England Book of Common Prayer
- (d) Charles Spurgeon’s “Morning and Evening” devotional (on TIM site)
- ii) We are to have a disciplined life of Psalmody, Study, Prayer and Worship, marked by the “unforced rhythms of grace” that bookend each day.
  - (1) *Are these four elements found on the altar of your daily devotional life?*
  - (2) *Desire-Discipline-Delight*

For some Christians today, their altars need to be re-built from the ground up. For others, they simply need to be maintained. But for both, it will take courage to stand separate on Christ alone in a daily rhythm of devotion and growth.

## 2) REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

*A place where God’s Spirit dwells; typifies the testimony of our corporate life*

### a) Laid the Foundation of the temple

- i) Like the altar, the temple and our corporate devotional life has an historic foundation.
  - (1) *Can’t be built just anywhere you choose.*
- ii) Ephesians 2:19- 22 tell us exactly where that foundation is and how it is built upon:
  - (1) *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the **foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit*
  - (2) *Today the foundation is the doctrinal content of the Bible that ‘squares with’ Jesus himself. Without this foundation there is no temple, no Church, no dwelling place of God.*
- iii) Marks of the Temple on its Foundation are seen in Acts 2:42
  - (1) *They devoted themselves to the **apostles’ teaching** and to the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and to **prayer***

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### b) Older and Younger Responses

#### i) Weeping of the Older

(1) *Recognized the pitiful state of things compared to the former glory of Solomon's temple*

(2) *Recognized their failure and the sin that led to this state*

(a) Note both Daniel 9 and Nehemiah 1 prayers where they fully identified themselves with and owned the failure.

(b) Do we recognize our individual and corporate complicity in the pitiful state of things in the church today? Have **WE** prayed to God about this?

(3) *Trajectory of every dispensation is always in this direction:*

(a) God's Blessing-Man's failure- A remnant obeys- A new dispensation arrives

(b) God never ignores nor fully recovers and restores the lost glory of a failed dispensation

#### ii) Joy of the Younger

(1) *Have no memory of past glory; it's all exciting and new*

#### iii) Both responses are OK and needed to temper each other

### c) The Prophet Haggai –The Old Prophet- to The Older- *“When it all seems like nothing”*

#### i) Read Haggai 2:3

(1) *Even today some of us who are older remember days in the past that make today's corporate Christian life and testimony seem so lamentable and pathetic by comparison.*

#### ii) Had a short 3-4 month ministry only

(1) *May have seemed like nothing to him, but 2500 years later we are still being spoken to by him and encouraged in the work God has given us.*

(2) *Three exhortations given:*

#### iii) Be strong and work

(1) *This is not for the fainthearted. There's work to do! Don't waste your energies on the world and the flesh. Keep yourself strong.*

#### iv) My Spirit remains among you

(1) *God never abandons us even in a failed dispensation*

(2) *Today it's the same, even where two or three are gathered in his name, He is there.*

(3) *Jehovah-Shamah- The Lord is There (Ezekiel 48:35)*

#### v) Don't be afraid

(1) *Fear is a useless energy drainer or talent hider*

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### d) The Prophet Zechariah – The Young Prophet- to The Younger-“*When it all seems so small*”

- i) Commenced his ministry 2 months after Haggai
- ii) How do we do this work?
  - (1) 4:6 “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord”
  - (2) 4:10 Don’t “despise the day of small things”
  - (3) Rejoice “when you see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel”, because he will complete the job.
    - (a) Plumbline- keeps things built to square and in line with Jesus, the Chief Cornerstone.

Today, our corporate life must be Biblically based, sacramental and composed of both the older and younger, built together by the Spirit of the Lord who remains among us, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant.

### 3) TA&F INAUGURATION

- a) As a remnant, returning by God’s grace to a pile of rubble and to a day which we might describe as “the church in ruin” marked by division; child sex abuse; denial of the Bible as the authoritative Word of God; disregard for the clear instructions of the Apostle’s doctrine; a day of spiritual lethargy and worldliness let us at the outset of our identifying as Trinity Assembly and Fellowship, pray for and trust in God’s mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.
  - i) Let us first own the failure and confess our complicity in it.
  - ii) Let us come out of the world and pray to become vessels of honour in God’s house.
  - iii) Let us build well on the foundation of Jesus Christ
  - iv) Let us be disciplined in the Word and Sacrament; Prayer and Fellowship
  - v) Let us be strong and do the work by his Spirit
  - vi) Let us not despise the small things, for we know God has chosen the weak, lowly and despised things to shame the strong and the things that are (1 Cor.1:27-28)
  - vii) Finally, let us look forward to the future fulfilment of Haggai’s prophecy in 2:6-9:
    - (a) *“This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and **the desired of all nations will come**, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the LORD Almighty. **‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’** says the LORD Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the LORD Almighty.”*

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### **Closing Prayer:**

Father, as we inaugurate and gather today as Trinity Assembly & Fellowship, we commit our way fully unto you and ask for your blessing to live and apply what you Word has disclosed to us today. May our individual lives be re-built unto you; may our corporate life rise to become a holy temple in the Lord; a dwelling in which you live among us by your Spirit. Build us up Father. Expand our borders and keep us expectant and watchful for the imminent return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who promised to come for us and take us home to the Fathers House. In His glorious and precious name we pray. Amen.

**Closing Hymn:** "The Churches One Foundation" -Number 263