

A large, abstract watercolor splash in shades of blue and pink, centered behind the title text.

# *faith*that*acts*



May 11, 2025

## Faith That Acts!

Happy Mother Day to all of the Moms and Spiritual Moms!

**Introduction:** A call to surrender

**Matthew 4:18 – 21**(NKJV) *And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” <sup>20</sup> They immediately left their nets and followed Him. <sup>21</sup> Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.*

- Peter and Andrew left their nets – this was their source of livelihood.
- John and James left their dad in the boat – breaking cultural and familial obligations to follow Jesus. (Family Ties/Culture)

**Jesus’ call has preeminence over everything else.**

- This was not the first engagement with Jesus because it happened **after** John the Baptist had been imprisoned, and we know according to the Gospel of John in chapter 1:35 that at least some of these men (Andrew, Peter) had prior interaction with Jesus when John the Baptist was still free and preaching.
- This call on the beach was a call to surrender to the destiny and purpose Jesus was calling them to - **“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”**

Let’s look at God’s call to the children of Israel to prioritize Him over their comforts and desires.

**A Call to Build the House of the Lord**

**Haggai 1:1 -12** (NIV) *In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jozadak,<sup>[a]</sup> the high priest: <sup>2</sup>This is what the Lord Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord’s house.’” <sup>3</sup>Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: <sup>4</sup>“Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” <sup>5</sup>Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. <sup>6</sup>You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.” (They were not fulfilled, not satisfied). <sup>7</sup>This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. <sup>8</sup>Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the Lord. <sup>9</sup>“You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the Lord Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is **busy** with your own house. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. <sup>11</sup>I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.” <sup>12</sup>Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: **“I am with you,”** declares the Lord.*

(God says the same to us today).

<sup>14</sup>*So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God...*

Brief History: 120 or so years before, Hezekiah showed the treasure of the temple and palace to an envoy from Babylon. Isaiah the prophet rebuked him for that and prophesied that eventually all the treasure will be carried away to Babylon and that Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed.

Isaiah also prophesied that a ruler named Cyrus would come and say to Jerusalem, “You shall be built, and to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid” **Isaiah 44:28**

1. After Isaiah - Jeremiah the prophet came and also prophesied that the Jews would go into captivity in Babylon - for 70 years.
2. This happened in 586 BC
3. After the 70 years in captivity in Babylon, Daniel who was a Jewish captive turned Magistrate in Babylon prayed and interceded for the return to Israel based on Jeremiah's prophecy.
4. A man named Cyrus does become ruler of Babylon and directs the people of Israel to return and rebuild the temple – He even gives them the articles from the house of the Lord back, as noted in Ezra chapter 1
5. The people began building the temple for about 2 years and then stopped after slander for neighboring peoples turned the King against them and he commanded them to stop. Then, after 16 years, Haggai prophesies in Haggai chpt. 1 and they begin to build again.

Around this time – Zachariah the prophet also prophesied to Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest –

(Zachariah, Haggai, and Ezra were all contemporaries of each other)

Zachariah prophesied in King Darius's 2nd year to Israel's two leaders who were tasked with rebuilding - Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel the Governor.

In **Chapter 3 of Zachariah** (NIV) – the word ministers to Joshua the high priest:

*Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan<sup>[a]</sup> standing at his right side to accuse him. <sup>2</sup>The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?” <sup>3</sup>Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. <sup>4</sup>The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.” <sup>5</sup>Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by.*

God cleanses Him and encourages him regarding the future that God has for the people of Israel.

In **Chapter 4** (NIV): God ministers to Zerubbabel: *Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. <sup>2</sup>He asked me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. <sup>3</sup>Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” <sup>4</sup>I asked the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” <sup>5</sup>He answered, “Do you not know what these are?” “No, my lord,” I replied. <sup>6</sup>So he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘**Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,**’ says the Lord Almighty. <sup>7</sup>“What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God bless it! God bless it!’” <sup>8</sup>Then the word of the Lord came to me: <sup>9</sup>“**The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.***

God did not abandon, Zerubbabel even though he had stopped at the resistance, He confirmed His word concerning Him. God had anointed Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest for the work - even though it was 16 years later - God was going to complete it through them. God cleansed them and exhorted them and then they proceeded with the work that He had them to fulfill.

We can see the heart of God here. Yes, he rebuked and corrected them for their lack of action, but he ministered to both of them. He strengthened them and encouraged them.

The children of Israel began the work again in Ezra Chapter 5 (NIV):

Once again - the governors of the land near Israel wrote to the king and accused the children of Israel – saying check the records and see if Cyrus really commanded the work to be done.

King Darius did check the record and found the record of King Cyrus commanding the temple to be built. God turned the enemies plan on his own head.

**Ezra chapter 6** (NIV): *<sup>3</sup>In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem: Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices, and let its foundations be laid. It is to be*



sixty cubits<sup>[a]</sup> high and sixty cubits wide, <sup>4</sup>with three courses of large stones and one of timbers. The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury. <sup>5</sup>Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; they are to be deposited in the house of God. <sup>6</sup>Now then, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and you other officials of that province, stay away from there. <sup>7</sup>Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site. <sup>14</sup>So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. <sup>15</sup>The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. <sup>16</sup>Then the people of Israel—the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles—celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy.

They began their work but faced challenges and ceased. They were instructed to resume their efforts and persisted. God did not leave them unsupported.

- He corrected them.
- He sent His Word to strengthen them.
- He encouraged them.
- He gave them grace and empowered them to do what He said.

God can be trusted. No one can stop what God has spoken to be done!

What has God spoken to you to do? What has He put on your heart? If you are not doing it, it's time to start.

If you are doing it, be encouraged, He is with you – what He has spoken, He will bring to pass.

If you have been discouraged or stopped, NOW is the time to pick it up again! There are people here that God has imparted vision to. He has put directives in your heart. Now is the time to put God first and do what He has called to be done!

Peter Restored to the Call of God

**John 21:6** (NKJV) Peter went back to fishing and took the other disciples with him

<sup>4</sup>But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Then Jesus said to them, “Children, have you any food?” They answered Him, “No.” <sup>6</sup>And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. <sup>7</sup>Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” ... Simon jumped out of the boat and swam and the other disciples followed in the boat. After breakfast... <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of<sup>[a]</sup> Jonah, do you<sup>[a]</sup> love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep. <sup>18</sup>Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.” <sup>19</sup>This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God.

**And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”**

Jesus brought Peter back to the original purpose He had called him to – just as He did with Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest. Peter was called to be a fisher of men.

We know on the day of Pentecost it was Peter who preach the first sermon **after they all were filled with the Holy Spirit** – even here – **it was not by might or by power – but by the Spirit of the Lord.**

For some, this morning God is telling us, to forsake all – or prioritize His call in our lives. You may have never followed Christ before and He is saying, surrender and follow Me.

For some, He is encouraging you to continue with the work because He is with you

For some, He is saying, it is time to pick up what He has spoken previously, it is time to put your faith in action.

Time of Ministry

### Go Church Testimony

Jesus said He is building His church and the gates of Hell would not prevail.

He said we are living stones. Christ is being revealed in us and through us. We just align with what He is doing.

WOW Bible Study at Goldey Beacom (Riley)

SOW (Sisters of the Word) Mawou and other members. UofD.

Revive Bible Study (Started by Elyon – now led by his brother Elias and others) UofD.

Relentless Pursuit conference yesterday (Mawou, Bethany and Elias) all had leadership in UofD.

What did my wife and I do – just obey – even though our flesh had NO profit. We had challenges in our family, death in the family, many other challenges – but we depended on God's grace and watched God work – He is doing it!

Now we are watching the young adults expand on this vision with:

Empower Him – May 17 (Elyan)

Empower Her - May 24 (Dionna)