

# BIBLICAL

A verse-by-verse  
series through the  
book of Ezra

## BUILDING

### WEEK 4:

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL

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For the First Baptist Church of Gaston



# MONDAY, MAY 26TH, 2025

## ‘ONE ACCORD!’

Happy Memorial Day! I hope you have a great day continuing to reflect upon our special service last evening, when we honored those from our Church in years gone by who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, their lives.

Remember Ezra 3:1 from yesterday? While it’s still fresh on our minds, I want to discuss with you this morning about this unity a little bit more in depth. There’s something powerful about a people moving as one. As we stand together as a Church body on the edge of something new—a multi-purpose facility that will serve generations to come—we find ourselves in a moment not unlike that of the Israelites returning from exile. They had been scattered, living in their own towns, yet when the seventh month came, they gathered in unity to worship.

In Ezra 3:1, the phrase "as one man" tells us everything. This was not a fractured group with divided goals. This was a united remnant, drawn together by one overwhelming purpose: to rebuild and to restore worship. Unity was not an optional extra; it was the foundation on which everything else would stand. Sometimes I afraid we view unity as this ‘far out goal’, when reality this is to be our foundation. It’s an imperative.

As we embark on this building campaign, let us remember that while walls and roofs are essential, what we build together spiritually is what truly matters. Let us be unified. Let us be of one accord. The altar of worship, obedience, and unity must come first. Have a Great Memorial Day!

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**Application for Today:** Ask yourself the tough questions today. Is there anyone in our congregation you aren't unified with, FULLY? Are there any unresolved issues with you and someone else? What can you do TODAY to really fix this? Call them, text them, email them, set up a meeting, today. Let's get things right between us all.

**Prayer Point #1:** Spend time today asking God how you can be more personally unified with others.

**Prayer Point #2:** Spend time today praying specifically for the TV that will be in classroom #6.

**Prayer Point #3:** Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



# TUESDAY, MAY 27TH, 2025

## ‘THE OBSTACLE OF SELF’

Ezra 3:1 is full of so much, it really is. And while you may be tired of it, I want to spend one more morning looking at it, and honing in from a portion from my sermon this past Sunday. The obstacle of self is scary and we are susceptible, though we do not like to admit it.

In the face of their struggles, the Israelites came together to rebuild and worship. What’s truly remarkable is that they did this without the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Under the Old Covenant, their hearts weren’t sealed with the power of God’s Spirit as ours are today. They didn’t have the privilege of personal, direct communion with God that we do. And yet, despite all that, they still found it possible to unite—for the sake of worship and obedience.

If the Israelites, who were under the Old Covenant and lacked the Holy Spirit, could set aside their differences and come together to build for God’s glory, then why do we, as believers in the New Covenant, struggle so much? Why can’t we do the same? Why can’t we get over ourselves? I know, this is hard! I have to walk with the Spirit everyday in this very area.

The church today, with the Holy Spirit living within us, is often paralyzed by personal grievances. Maybe it's the offense that someone unknowingly caused you years ago, or even just a few weeks ago. Maybe it's the feeling that your ministry is overlooked or unappreciated. Or perhaps it’s the reminder that the worship service is about Jesus—not about who is leading or who didn’t lead. All of this, is about King Jesus and for His Glory.

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**Application for Today:** I know yesterday's application was heavy, but I want you to grab a piece of paper and write down three ways that you are currently an obstacle to your own spiritual growth. What are you allowing to be an obstacle in your walk with God.

**Prayer Point #1:** Now, spend time praying over the things that you wrote down and give them to God. Ask the Lord earnestly to help you defeat these obstacles of self in your life.

**Prayer Point #2:** Spend time today praying for basketball rim that will be on the left side of the court in the gymnasium.

**Prayer Point #3:** Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



# WEDNESDAY, MAY 28TH, 2025

## ‘REAL LEADERS WILL LEAD!’

As I tried to stress Sunday during my sermon, and I hope that I did, I am by no means perfect. I am by no means a perfect leader (there is no such thing), or even a decent leader. My goal is to just be a faithful leader. But as I discussed Sunday, God has led me, and the leadership of our Church to go forward with this daunting project. In Ezra 3:2, I think we find solid significance of what can happen when leaders really do lead.

In any significant project, especially one as important as building a house of worship, leadership is essential. The people of Israel were on the brink of something monumental—the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem after their return from exile. But before they could lay the foundation or start building, the leaders had to step forward. They had to cast the vision, set the direction, and guide the people.

As we looked at it Sunday, this is precisely what we see in Ezra 3:2-3. Jeshua, Zerubbabel, and the priests and leaders took their positions as undershepherds of God’s people. They didn’t just sit back and wait for others to lead; they understood that the task ahead required their guidance, oversight, and active leadership. They were responsible for ensuring that the people were spiritually prepared to worship and obey, even as they built. It’s important to remember that leadership in the church doesn’t happen in a vacuum. The vision I cast is meant to be shared, respected, and followed in unity. Now is not the time to panic or divide, now is the time to pray, and trust the Lord as we keep moving forward!

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**Application for Today:** I want to ask you to ask God to slow down your brain for the next 5 minutes. Whether it's at work, at home, or in the Church, are there anyways that you currently don't submit to God chosen leaders who are your authoritative figures? If there are, how can you better obey God, by following their leadership?

**Prayer Point #1:** Spend time today praying over the leaders in your life, and if you are a leader, ask God to guide you that you will follow Him, completely.

**Prayer Point #2:** Spend time today praying for the front glass doors that will be the main entrance to the building.

**Prayer Point #3:** Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



# THURSDAY, MAY 29TH, 2025

## ‘PRIORITY OF PROTECTING FOR A PASTOR!’

As we exegeted and looked at Ezra 3:3 Sunday, I expressed that the priests of that time were seeking to protect the people from their fears by leading them to the Lord. One of the hardest and most rewarding parts of being the under-shepherd at FBCG is protecting you. Look with me again at verse 3. When the Israelites returned from exile and began the difficult task of rebuilding the altar, they faced more than just physical challenges. There was a deep sense of fear that gripped their hearts. Even though they had received the king’s permission, they were still a small, vulnerable group surrounded by hostile neighbors who had settled in the land during their absence. The fear they felt was very real; the political authority of King Cyrus was far away, and the people of God found themselves in a precarious situation.

But despite their fear, they built. They set the altar in its place and began to offer their sacrifices, morning and evening. The task of rebuilding their relationship with God and honoring Him through worship was paramount—even in the face of external threats. The fear of the peoples around them did not paralyze them from doing what God had called them to do. But it did scare them. This is where I try to protect. To stress FAITH over FEAR.

In moments of fear or uncertainty, it is essential to remember that the church is a family, and that family is meant to protect and support one another. The devil’s tactics often involve causing division, suspicion, and distrust—whether it’s through misunderstandings, offenses, or pride. But we are called to rise above these things and keep our focus on the mission God has for us. Let’s do that today!

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**Application for Today:** I want to protect you as much as God will show me and lead me to, and as much as you will let me. What about you? Who is around you at work, home, or Church that you need to seek to protect out of love from the fears and dangers that are in the world?

**Prayer Point #1:** Spend time today praying over God's protection over our Church, you, your Sunday School class and your family. God's protection is unfathomable, as long as we listen to Him when He tries to protect us.

**Prayer Point #2:** Spend time today praying for the awning that will also be on the front entrance.

**Prayer Point #3:** Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.



# FRIDAY, MAY 30TH, 2025

## ‘OBEDIENCE ISN’T JUST WALKING AN AISLE, IT’S A DAILY WALK WITH GOD, FOREVER!’

I know it’s Friday and this past Sunday it already seems like it was so far in the rear view mirror. But do you recall when I shared Sunday when looking at Ezra 3:4-7, that some folks will walk an aisle, get a Church membership, get baptized, and think that they are set and there’s nothing else to do? It’s almost as if they don’t realize or choose not to see that God has an amazing plan for them and has equipped them for so much more than just walking and aisle, but a daily walk with the God of the universe?

I am still astonished that the Israelites built the altar, when through the seventh month which was their religious ‘super bowl’, and then as Ezra 3:4-5 shows us, they still wanted to continue in being obedient with the law of Moses and the daily sacrifices. We cannot always say this in relation to the Israelites, but certainly here, they got it. They understood that it wasn’t going to be enough to just build the altar back and have a great ‘religious high’ for the duration of the seventh month. They needed to also reestablish the importance of daily worship through the sacrifices of daily sins.

Speaking of that, we know that Jesus is our sacrifice who took our place, which is why you aren’t having to kill an animal this morning to stay in obedience with God. But, have you been obedient to God in asking Him to convict you of your sin? You actually listening? And then repenting before God? If you haven’t repented and done some self inventory, the time is now.



**Application for Today:** Maybe you walked an aisle once upon a time, but how did that decision and profession change your daily life and walk with Christ? Did it at all? If not, it's time you do some deep thinking.

**Prayer Point #1:** Spend time today praying over your personal relationship with God. Your daily walk and are you being obedient to Him on a daily basis.

**Prayer Point #2:** Spend time today praying for the window that will be on the back of classroom #3.

**Prayer Point #3:** Spend time today praying what God would have you give towards the building fund this coming Sunday.

