

March 6, 2022 Tyler Ferguson - Out of Exile Series

Ezra 4:1-2 *Now when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people of the exile were building a temple to the Lord God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' households, and said to them, "Let us build with you, for like you, we seek your God; and we have been sacrificing to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up here."*

As Israel starts to rebuild their temple, adversity comes! Their adversaries came from the inside, from logistical frustration, and from outsiders. Three words to remember when it comes to adversity: position, condition, and completion.

Remain in POSITION. Ezra 5:11-17

Don't step away from the place that God has called us. When the Israelites were faced with adversity, they stayed in place and held their ground. They knew what God had told them and stood firm.

If God put you in a place then adversity will come. Sometimes we take adversity as a sign to leave or retreat. One way to fight the temptation to leave is to decide ahead of time that you are not going to walk away. Simply commit to not walk away from what God has called you too. We do this in marriage. We decide and commit ahead of time that we will stay together and face adversity together.

Allow God to change our CONDITION.

Ezra 5:1-2 *When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them, then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.*

The prophets of God were with them - helping them. God came with help through sending other people. **Haggai 2:4-9** God sent Haggai and Zachariah to the Israelites. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

It is a circle of care where God sees people who are facing adversity and sends help through other people. People extend care, support, and encouragement to one another. God does that so that we can help others in adversity. Allow God to change your condition. The key to change your condition is to allow others to come in.

Don't stop until COMPLETION.

Ezra 6:3 *In the first year of King Cyrus, Cyrus the king issued a decree: 'Concerning the house of God in Jerusalem, let the temple, the place where sacrifices are offered, be rebuilt, and let its foundations be repaired, its height being sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits.*

Once adversity was over for the Israelites, their job didn't just become easy. It was still a difficult process ahead. God makes a way for us to continue to do hard things. God might bring you through adversity, but He doesn't remove from you the responsibility to put hand to the plow and finish what He's called you to.

2 Timothy 4:7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.* Don't allow all of the perseverance that you showed in facing adversity to be wasted by not ever actually finishing what He's called you to do. Don't allow the enemy to keep you from finishing what God's called you to, especially after going through so much to overcome. Stay in position. Finish well. God called exiles to do a big thing, and they overcame unbelievable adversity to complete it. **Ezra 6:14** *And the elders of the Jews were successful in building through the prophecy of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they finished building following the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.*

Where do you struggle in adversity?

Have you been on the verge of quitting?

Are you walking through adversity alone, not allowing God the opportunity to change your condition through others?

Are you weary from fighting adversity so long that you feel like you can't finish well?