|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | https://0.gravatar.com/avatar/3f13af1d3e2a35ad581f9ba697fd060a4b7d8a719664a4a449058f8ff4e8c587?s=96&d=identicon&r=G | **Martha Rodman**  March 7 |   "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit', says the Lord Almighty. Zechariah 4:6. NKJV  Let's get a little background on this scripture. Zechariah, was a postexilic prophet--called to encourage the returning Israelites to complete the Temple. The people were discouraged. They had begun a good work, but due to lack of funds and leadership they had drifted to dealing with their own lives. The Temple rebuild had come to a stand still. These people had returned with enthusiasm from Babylon, but opposition from the Samaritans and other distractions took its toll. Have you ever felt discouragement try to whittle away at your God given assignment? Are you fighting doubt or your own discouragement? You might need this reminder: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. Zechariah 4:6. NLT.  Zechariah (whose name means Yaweh Remembers) was sent to encourage Zerubbabel, the leader that was sent to restore the Temple. This was the fifth vision, Zechariah had. It was a vision of a golden lampstand and two olive trees. The golden lampstand had a bowl of oil on the top surrounded by seven lamps, each having seven spouts and wicks. I appreciate Zechariah's forthrightness. "What are these, my Lord? What do they mean?" Don't you know the angel asked. No, my lord, I don't. The he said to me, This is what the lord says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. I keep repeating this scripture, because most things we are facing we can't fix. But He can. It is a reminder of how much we need the direction, power and strength the Holy Spirit can give us.  I am sure Zerubbabel struggled with the weight of the task he was sent to do. The exciting expectation that the returning Jews had, waned. They began with great strength, but now they had stopped working on the Temple. The angel continued talking to Zechariah. Nothing, not even a mighty mountain will stand in Zerubbabel's way; it will become a level plain before him! And when Zerubbabel sets the final stone of the temple in place, the people will shout: "May God bless it! May God bless it". Then another message came to me from the Lord: Zerubbabel is the one who laid the foundation of this Temple, and he will complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of Heaven's Armies has sent me. Zechariah 4:7-9. What an encouraging word to Zerubbabel! He would complete the re-building. I want to encourage you today. He that has begun a good work in you, (and subsequently) through you, will complete it. It may not look like you expect at this time, but it will be what He plans.  The angel was not finished. He went on to say: Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand. God rejoices when we begin, no matter how small. He rejoices when we do not grow weary in well doing. He rejoices in the small attempts we make. Zerubbabel still had to rally the workers to finish the Temple, but having the word of the Lord to boost his confidence was priceless. My friends, do not forget His Presence, just like the lampstand is there to give light. He wants to show us the how, when most times we are so busy asking the why we don't proceed to the how and when. Zerubbabel already knew the what. The restoration was completed in 515 B.C. God's promise was fulfilled. Keep walking my friends, your promises will be fulfilled as well, if we surrender and partner with the Holy Spirit. He is our power and might.  Father, help us to remember that Your work in us begins with Your Holy Spirit. You want us to rely on Him. He will lead us and guide us in all things. Help us to keep our eyes open to see what you are doing in the midst of discouraging situations. Help us to listen to Your voice and share its encouragement with those around us. We trust you, dear Father. In Jesus' Name, amen. |