Introduction: Building God's House

a) Our Study This Year

- Since the beginning of the year, we have been exploring the biblical principles for building God's house—strengthening the local church and faithfully fulfilling the kingdom assignment the Lord has entrusted to us—by walking through the books of:
    - Ezra
    - Nehemiah
    - Haggai
    - Zechariah
    - Malachi
- Together, these prophets and leaders speak into a pivotal season of:
    - rebuilding
    - renewal
    - realignment

  after long delay, discouragement, and opposition.

b) Principles for Building God's House

- We have already looked at several principles:
    1. Casting vision requires stating the problem clearly.
    2. Casting vision requires stating the solution clearly.
    3. We must leave Babylon.
    4. Don't despise the day of small beginnings.
    5. We must own the vision.
    6. We must align with the vision.
- Today's Principle
    7. We must give God our best on the Lord's Day.
- Before exploring this principle, let's first look at how a prophetic word given to our church is being fulfilled in this season and a prophetic dream I had.

The Word of the Lord Being Fulfilled

a) Prophetic Word: October 2, 2021 (Terry Bennett)

> A release of the Lord is upon you—a true coming within in His people that *resets* the course toward the heavenly calling as Christ's final times bridal vessel [a reset that enables us to fulfill

our mission]. An awakening in the inner man that will bring divine *alignment* for the journey ahead. There will be an inward burning accompanying the Lord's voice.

- This word described:
  - a reset
  - divine alignment
  - an inward awakening
  - a burning accompanying the Lord's voice
- In five "Arise and Build" messages:
  - Reset was used 23 times -> an average of 5 times a message.
  - Alignment was used 109 times -> an average of 22 times a message.
- My point: We are in a genuine prophetic season right now.

b) Prophetic Word: October 25, 2020 (Terry Bennett)

I would direct you guys to read the book of Nehemiah; and start at Chapter 4 and go at least through Chapter 6. I think you'll find where you're at in those three chapters; the battle you're under. These chapters describe where RLC is currently at in its journey.

Terry stated that this word was given to him prior to coming: "It's of great significance that God moved you to this location. It is meant to be a *restart*. Whatever has been the history needs to be forever gone, and God is offering a new start. . . .

There are people out there who have not located y'all yet and God has made them hungry. And God has readied them to a certain extent, and they want the Lord. It's only a matter of God connecting the dots (as to you people); however, He's going to do that (in the mundane of relationships on a day-to-day basis or however it's going to work).

God brought you here and there's this restart going on (it's already begun).

I just want to encourage you that the location is new; it's strategic; it is somewhat of a new start; a new fresh start.

c) Implications

- Prophetic words often take years to unfold.
- Our current study in Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi is part of that fulfillment.
- Our move to this location was meant to be a reset, though the timing was delayed by COVID.
- But now: This is the season when that word is being fulfilled.

d) Growth Through Divine Connections

- The Lord will bring people who are hungry for Him through:
  - relationships

- divine connections
- outreach initiatives like Google AdWords

- Be praying now about who to invite on Easter / Passover — Sunday, April 5.
- After this service we will begin a new series: *Salvation: Experience the Transforming Power of the Gospel*.

Prophetic Dream

a) Dream on 2/24/2026

I had a dream that I was with Kay Arthur. I knew she was old but she looked like she was in her early 60s. Fresh, young, and vibrant. It seemed like I was at once of her conferences. But we were talking about God restoring the book of Acts.

I felt led by the Lord to ask if she would be open to doing a *Restoring the Book of Acts* conference in the Atlanta area. She seemed to be more eager than me.

I was wondering if she had an inductive Bible study on the book of Acts. But I knew in the dream it was a Word and Spirit revival.

She really wanted to do the conference at the Marietta Square and I was worried about the rain. But she told me that she had a degree (I think her doctorate) in international chemistry. And she knew how to handle the rain.

As she was making a list of who to invite, I remember thinking and telling her not to invite the charismatics because they have gotten so far off track.

I also remember thinking that this was good timing for dad and me to do our new book about ministering like Jesus. A book about hearing God's voice, the gifts of the Spirit, and the Spirit-empowered church.

b) Interpretation

- For those unfamiliar with Kay Arthur, there's probably not a better person in modern history to represent the Word. She has an inductive Bible study on every book of the Bible.
- I think this dream is speaking of a revival coming—a Word and Spirit revival. This move of the Spirit will bypass many charismatics who are not aligned with the Word.
- Kay Arthur having her doctorate in international chemistry and can handle the rain likely symbolizes how those with a deep devotion and in-depth knowledge of the Word can rightly handle the coming rain of the Holy Spirit.
- This is the right chemistry for the revival to last and not to explode with the wrong chemical reaction.
- I believe the Lord wants us to play a role in this coming Word and Spirit revival.
- The Lord's desire is for Restoration Life to be a place where this move of the Word and Spirit takes place.

c) Principle # 7: Giving God Our Best on the Lord's Day

- This principle connects to the reset, divine alignment, and the Word and Spirit revival the Lord wants to release at Restoration Life.

The Danger of Misplaced Priorities

a) Haggai 1:2–4

- The temple had remained desolate for 16 years.
- The people said: "The time has not come to rebuild the house of the Lord."
- But God responded: "Is it time for you to dwell in your paneled houses while My house lies desolate?"
- The issue was simple: Their priorities were misaligned.

b) Too Busy with Life

- They were not rebelling against God.
- They were simply preoccupied.
- They thought:
  - We'll get to it later.
  - Now isn't the right season.
  - We're busy with work and family.
- They had time for:
  - comfort
  - family
  - pleasure

  But not for God's will.
- God never adjusts to our schedules. We must adjust to His. He is Lord.

c) Pursuing Comfort and Pleasure

- The "paneled houses" represented:
  - comfort
  - prosperity
  - luxury
- The issue was not having nice homes. The issue was that their homes mattered more than God's house.

d) The Heart Issue

- The real problem was not possessions.
- The real problem was priority.
- It is easy to:
  - push Jesus to the margins
  - try to fit Him into our lives

  instead of making Him our life.

Legitimate Things Becoming Excuses

a) Luke 14:16–20

- Jesus told a parable about a great banquet.
- It represents:
  - the marriage supper of the Lamb
  - participation in God's kingdom
  - responding to God's invitation
- In this message, I am applying this parable to how we respond to God's present invitation.
  - The reset so we can fulfill our mission
  - Divine alignment so the Spirit can be poured out
  - The Word and Spirit revival at Restoration Life
- But when the invitation came: "They all alike began to make excuses."
- They didn't reject the invitation. They simply had other priorities.

b) Work and Business

- Luke 14:18: "I bought a piece of land and must go see it."
- Land represented economic investment, agriculture, and livelihood.
- The issue was not the investment.
- The issue was career replacing devotion.

c) Responsibilities and Possessions

- Luke 14:19: "I bought five yoke of oxen."
- This represents managing possessions and fulfilling responsibilities.

- These are good things. Unless they replace passion for the Lord.
- Does managing your responsibilities and possessions hinder you from being flexible to God's voice and the ministry He wants to do through you.

d) Family Obligations

- Luke 14:20: "I have married a wife."
- Family is a gift from God.
- Only God Himself is more important than family.
- But even good gifts can replace God Himself.
- If we allow family activities to take the Lord's place on the Lord's day, we can slowly drift away from seeking God and His kingdom first.

e) The Core Lesson

- None of these people were doing evil things.
- They were doing normal life activities: business, responsibilities, and family.
- But the invitation of God was no longer their priority.

Building What Matters

a) Haggai 1:8

- God's command was simple: "Rebuild My house."
- When the people obeyed:
  - God stirred their spirits
  - God empowered the work
  - God promised His presence
- Revival did not begin with a conference, laying on of hands, or manifestations.
- It began with repentance and reordered priorities.

Giving God Our Leftovers

a) Malachi 1:6–8

- Almost 100 years later, Malachi confronted the people again.
- This time the temple existed. But their devotion had grown cold.
- They were offering animals that were:
  - blind

- lame
- sick
- damaged

- They were giving God what they could not use.
- God asked: "Offer it to your governor. Would he accept it?"

The Double Standard

- People often give their best effort to human authorities.
- But give God what is left over.

a) Work vs Church Arrival

- Early to work
- Late to church

b) Attention

- Focused in work meetings
  - Not checking phones
  - Texting
  - Scrolling through social media
  - Mentally disengaging
- But do this during church: in worship and the message

c) Preparation

- Prepared for work
- A lack of excellence might get you fired
- No preparation for church. Wake up and go. No prayer. No heart preparation.
- If you give your best at work—knowing that if you don't, you could lose your job—but give God your leftovers on Sunday, who is really your God: Jesus or money?
- Casual toward worship

d) Priority

- Work mandatory
- Church optional

- Never skip work to go shopping or to an Atlanta United soccer match. But will do this on the Lord's day.
- We decide on Saturday whether or not we are coming to church on Sunday.

The Root Problem: Dishonor

a) Malachi 1:6

- "If I am a Father, where is My honor?"
- Honor and the fear of the Lord are inseparable.
- The fear of the Lord means:
  - reverence
  - awe
  - deep respect
  - a fear of what might happen if I disobey Him
- When the fear of the Lord disappears:
  - honor disappears
  - sacrifice disappears
  - devotion disappears

b) David's Example of True Honor

- 2 Samuel 24:24
- David refused to offer a sacrifice that cost him nothing.
- "I will not offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing."
- True worship involves sacrifice.
- Not to earn God's favor.
- But to express love, honor, and devotion.

The Lord's Day

a) What the Lord's Day Means

- Revelation 1:10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."
- The Lord's Day refers to Sunday, the day the early church gathered to worship the risen Christ.
- Reasons:
  - Greek phrase = "belonging to the Lord day"

        - Some phrase as "belonging to the Lord supper" (1 Cor. 11:20)
    - The "day of the Lord" never called "the Lord's day" in Scripture
    - By the early 2nd century, Christians clearly used "the Lord's day" to refer to Sunday (Ignatius, Didache)
    - Sunday was the day Jesus was resurrected
- Acts 20:7 shows believers gathering on the first day of the week.
- The early church organized their lives around this day. Even under persecution.
- Their gatherings were allegiance-based, not convenience-based.

b) A Sacred Day

- Sunday is the one day of the week that belongs to the Lord.
- The first-century church gathered to give allegiance to Jesus, not to Ceaser.
- The early church treated the Lord's day as sacred.
- It was set apart, prioritized, protected, and ordered around.

c) The Challenge: The Culture Has Shifted

- In the West, Sunday no longer holds sacred significance.
- Just an ordinary day on the weekend.
- In our culture, Sunday has become:
    - A family day
    - A travel day
    - A productivity catch-up day
    - A day to finish the to-do list
    - A sports day
- The sacred day has become an ordinary day prioritized by our preferences.
- The Lord's day—Sunday—belongs to the risen King. We gather because He is worthy—whether it's convenient or not.

d) Applying Isaiah 58:13–14

- Although Christians are not under the Mosaic Sabbath, the principles still apply devotionally.
- Isaiah says:
    - turn from your own pleasure

- call the day a delight
- honor the holy day of the Lord

e) The Blessings of Honoring the Lord's Day

- Isaiah 58:14 promises:
  - delight in the Lord
  - riding on the heights of the earth—living in a place of victory, security, and divine favor under God's blessing
  - enjoying the heritage of Jacob—experiencing covenant blessings
- For New Covenant believers, this points to:
  - delight in Christ
  - spiritual victory, security, and covenant blessing
  - experiencing our inheritance in Him

What Giving God Our Best Looks Like

1. Giving Him first place in our schedule
2. Giving Him first place in our time
3. Giving Him first place in our finances and resources
4. Giving Him first place in our hearts
5. Giving Him first place in our attention

Conclusion

- Haggai 2:19: "From this day on I will bless you."
- When God becomes first again:
  - His blessing flows
  - His presence increases
  - revelation is released
  - power is poured out