

# Haggai 2:1-9 - Seasons of Change

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[ 0 : 00 ] Um, well, it's a joy to be with you. Um, actually, it's a joy to be anywhere, to be honest. Um, and we're going to be in the book of Haggai this morning.

So, start finding it now, because it's one of them minor prophets. It's one of them books in the Bible that seem to move around a lot when you try and find it.

And when you find it, keep your finger in it, because if you go back to it afterwards, it will have moved again. Um, so, to really help you, in my version, it's paid \$1,008.

So, don't say I'm not helping you. Um, we're going to be in the book of Haggai, so I'm going to give you a bit of time to find it. And then, but one of the things I wanted to kind of start with, basically as an introduction, as a thought, is that I've been a believer for a long time now, uh, quite a while.

And, there are some times throughout the span of your Christian life where ideas that you're very familiar with suddenly strike you with a new sense of importance.

[ 1 : 08 ] They, it's something you know, but it, it strikes you very profoundly, in a way that you kind of go, oh, wow. And all of a sudden, it becomes more significant, more present, more profound.

Um, and just last week, I was, um, doing something. And something struck me, and it's one of those things that I kind of know. It's one of those things that is, uh, just blatantly obvious, but somehow struck me.

And the thing that struck me was, is that we can come to Jesus in whatever condition we are. We don't have to make ourselves feel better.

We don't have to appear better to the church. We, we, we can come as very frustrated people. We can come in honesty. We can come in sadness. We can come in joy. The Lord, in his grace, invites us to come to him as we are.

And all of a sudden, that kind of struck me with a new sort of sense of depth and import. And, and many of us know the verses in Hebrews where it says, come boldly to the throne of grace, that you may find, uh, mercy and grace to help in time of need.

[ 2 : 23 ] The opportune time is what it actually says. And an implicit in that idea is that, and it's the only time in scripture that I'm aware of, it's called the throne of grace. Thrones are talked about an awful lot in the New Testament.

There are 60 occasions in the New Testament that the word throne is used. 45 of them are in the book of Revelation. It's the book of the throne. But as far as I'm aware, that's the only time it's called the throne of grace.

So, so what I'm kind of waffling about is the sense that wherever we are today, for all of us, me included, we get to come as we are.

And bring with us whatever's going on in our hearts. Whether it be excitement, whether it be rampant apathy, if you can actually have apathy that is rampant.

Whether it's sadness, discontentment, disappointment, frustration. None of those things we know surprise God. But we can come as we are.

[ 3 : 29 ] And so that's the encouragement. We're going to be in the book of Haggai. So let me pray. And then hopefully you've found it. Whether you're on your Bible, on your device, or whatever.

And we're going to look at basically a portion of chapter 2. I'm going to read chapter 2, which is 9 verses. But it's basically a portion of that we're going to focus in on. And I'll set the context. But let's pray first of all.

Father, we thank you for your goodness. For your kindness. For the very, the wonderful understanding that the condition of our hearts and where we are does not surprise you.

And in that, there is a peace and a release that we can come to you as you invite us to come as we are. Whether it be full of joy or whether it be full of sadness.

Whether it be with tremendous understanding and purpose. Or whether it be in confusion. And we, Father, we thank you that you invite us to come to your throne of grace.

[ 4 : 36 ] In order that we may receive mercy and find help in time of need. So in this opportune time today, we ask that you would lead us. You would guide us. We ask that you would break open your word.

That you would teach us. You would speak to our hearts in whatever condition and whatever we place we find ourselves today. Lord, we ask that you would be merciful enough and kind enough and gracious enough to walk amongst us.

And to touch our hearts. Lord, please, by your spirit, will you just speak to us? Make yourself very present in this place. And may we see and hear only from you.

Lord, as we look at your precious word. Lord, break it open to us. Break open to us the very bread of life that we may live. Lord, unless you give us eyes to see, we're not going to see.

Unless you give us ears to hear, we're not going to hear. And unless you move our hearts, we will remain a people whose hearts are unmoved. And we don't want to be like that. So, Father, will you teach as we pray in Jesus' name?

[ 5 : 44 ] Amen. Amen. Okay, so we're going to be in Haggai 2. And I'm going to kind of read it to you in my slightly different version here. And then we'll break it open.

In the sixth month, on the 21st day of the month, the word of the Lord was revealed by means of the prophet Haggai, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, son of Jehazdak, the high priest, and to the rest of people, saying, Who remains among you that has seen this temple in its former glory?

And how do you see it now? In comparison to that, is it as nothing in your eyes? Now, be strong, Zerubbabel, says the Lord. Be strong, Joshua, son of Jehazdak, the high priest.

Be strong, O people, all the people of the land, says the Lord, and work, because I am with you, says the Lord of hosts. According to the word of the pact that I established with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit dwells in the midst of you.

Do not fear. Therefore, says the Lord of hosts, yet one more time, in a short while, I will make the earth and the heavens to shake, the sea and the dry land.

[ 7 : 05 ] I will make to shake all the nations, and they will come to the desire of nations, and they will refill this temple with glory, says the Lord of hosts. Mine is the silver, mine is the gold, says the Lord of hosts.

The glory of this last temple will be greater than that of the one that precedes it. Therefore, says the Lord of hosts, in this place I will give peace, says the Lord of hosts.

Amen. Father, as we look at your word, we pray that you would lead us, you'd teach us. For we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay. One of the things that I guess, for me, that I've discovered over the years is that, and it's, again, it's one of those obvious statements.

I'm going to major on the obvious today, by the way. It's one of those obvious statements, is that life is made up of just bunches of different seasons and different opportunities, seasons in life, in ministry.

You may have a season of when you're studying. You may have a season of being unemployed.

You may have a season like I'm of being a pensioner, where I technically don't have anything to do, but seem to be doing loads.

[ 8 : 14 ] You may have a season of life of good health, and then other ones where you're not that healthy. You know, life's made up, and the longer you go on, and I've been going on for a while now, you notice that there are lots of seasons and lots of things that change.

And some of those things, and so one of the constants is change in life, isn't it? And if I were to ask you if you like change, it's always an interesting moment if you ask that question. I'm not going to do it.

But most people kind of go, no, no. Because if I were to frame that a little better and say, would you like to change your image or your bank account?

You're probably going, ooh, yes. But if I throw out the idea you want to have change, you're kind of going, mm, not sure of you, which is probably a good thing that you're not sure of me. Because we kind of like change that we like.

We're not sure about change that we don't like. I mean, COVID, that was a change that happened for pretty much everybody worldwide, wasn't it? And some of us were in different nations at that

point.

[ 9 : 21 ] We were living in New Zealand at that point in time. And, you know, change that is imposed upon us, change that happens to us kind of without our permission, often leads to disappointment and discontentment.

Doesn't it? You know, you want to do things and you kind of, your health won't allow you to do them. Oh, you've got all this time, but then you haven't got the resources to go do something that will be fun to do.

You know, however you want to phrase it. So one of the things that happens, one of the things that happens in life that we have to contend with in our natural and Christian life is change and how it impacts us.

And at the core of that is this idea, actually, that God wants to change us. So we shouldn't be surprised by change. So what I actually want to share about this morning is about the idea of disappointment and discontentment and how we deal with it.

When change comes into our life and things are not as we wish they would be, what's some biblical advice of how do we deal with that? So on the 3rd of July, I was doing worship at church and after doing worship at church, I had a heart attack.

[ 10 : 43 ] Stuck me in an ambulance, kind of coded in the back of the ambulance, finally brought me back. And ended up with a bunch of recovery stuff that I'm still going through at this point in time. Not in my plan.

Not in my wife's plan. Not anticipated. I was supposed to be in Italy the following day. That was a brilliant, convenient thing to happen. You know, doing good things.

Sharing at a couple of churches. Teaching at a conference. Doing a bunch of stuff. And all this stuff happened that I didn't want. And that's just an example. And in each of our lives, I'm sure there are mirrored things that we face.

Whether it's we're in a job that we don't really want to be in. We kind of have to be in. How do we deal with these things? How do we biblically respond to, in essence, disappointment?

And in essence, discontentment? That's kind of the first two chapters of the book of Haggai. So that's where we're kind of going and looking at. Just to, it's important that we understand the context of what's going on.

[ 11 : 47 ] So, Haggai's name means feast. Right? He lived most of his life in Babylon, in captivity. And this, the writing of this book is taking place.

It was a period in Israel, Judah's history, where they went into captivity for 70 years, the Babylonians. And then God brought them, on the basis of his promise, he brought them back to Jerusalem.

How many of you know the promise, Jeremiah 29, 11? It says, I know the things I have for you, says the Lord of hosts. Yeah? For hope, not for destruction. Yeah? Well, that wasn't written to us. That was written to actually the Jews who were in captivity in Babylon, saying, God's saying, I haven't forgotten you.

I'm going to bring you back. And I have a plan for your future, even though, in this moment, it really isn't how you want it to be. So God actually fulfilled that promise and brought them back to the land. And so they come back to the land. And then they're in this place of really rebuilding the city. And for them, rebuilding the temple. And so, have you ever been to...

[ 12 : 54 ] Think about holidays. You know, you book a holiday, don't you? You look in the brochure. And you go to this place. And it's fantastic. And it's got a... You go into Malta, for instance.

And you... And you... And you... You... There's an inside joke there, but we'll get to that later. And you book this sort of place. And it's great. And it says it has a sea view.

And you're thinking, this is fantastic. Then you get there. And you look out the window. And there's a concrete wall. And you kind of think, hang on a minute here. But you work out, if you go in the bathroom, stand on top of the toilet seat with the seat down, obviously.

Look out the window. You can see blue. It's true, isn't it? Not what you expected. See, they came back on the promise of God to Jerusalem with this expectation.

God's fulfilled his promise. He's brought us back. This is going to be great. 15 years later, the temple wasn't built.

[ 13 : 57 ] Imagine the heart impact, the feeling inside of, we've been doing this for 15 years.

It's not built. Now, if you've done anything for 15 years, it's a long time. If you do something for 15 years and not actually achieve a satisfactory result, man, that's depressing.

That's frustrating. That's Haggai 1. They hadn't built. And so they kind of gave up building the temple and built their own houses. Right? And God deals with that. And then they start rebuilding the temple again.

They go back to the work. And that's where Haggai 2 starts. For the last 25 years, my wife and I have really been involved in Bible school ministry. And so we're used to this idea of doing 15 weeks, having a break, doing 15 weeks, having a break, doing 15 weeks.

And so my mind and heart are still working like 15-week blocks. And the reason the book of Haggai appeals to me, because it's written as four messages of 15 weeks.

[15:04] So somehow it just kind of goes, oh, that makes sense. So we're going to look today at the second message of the four in the book of Haggai that took place, I think it's about 525, 523 BC, in October, September, October.

So literally at that time, this time, so many years ago, Haggai say this stuff. Funny. Okay. Okay. So now what we need to get our head around is this.

That often in the life of the people of Judah and Israel, they were often doing things they shouldn't be doing. Right? They were often involved in sin and that led to all sorts of problems, idolatry, stuff like that.

This isn't the case at this time in their history. There's not so much a message in here about gross sin. But they were a people who had become apathetic.

That's what happened to them. They weren't involved in idolatry and sin. They'd just gone, is this it? Really? I'm done. And that kind of resignation had killed their faith and their trust.

[16:19] And some of that was on the back of the sense of, we've been building this temple for 15 years. So when the book begins or when this particular book begins, that's where we start.

Okay? So that's the intro. Yeah? Yeah. All right. Okay. We're going to do three things this morning. Okay. And I like to give you a bit of a roadmap because then it gives you the hope of when I'm going to shut up.

Right? So when you get to two, we're almost there. When on one, it's a long road. When you get to three, it's almost over. So you can hang on. Right? So roadmap time. We're going to look at three questions.

I'll get my fingers right here. We're going to look at three questions. We're going to look at four observations. And we're going to look at three things to do. Right?

So it's kind of not really a football sort of like formation. We're looking at a 3-4-3 here. Three questions, four observations, and three things that we're called to do in responding to this situation of being discontent and disappointed.

[17:31] Okay? So that's where we're going. So the first two things. Now, three questions. There are actually three questions that we see there in Haggai 2, verse 3.

Who remains among you that has seen this temple in its first glory? First question. How do you see it now? Second question. Third one. And in comparison, does it seem as nothing in your eyes?

Third question. Okay. Here's the interesting thing. So often, questions, particularly when they're asked by God, reveal heart condition. So often, it's questions posed.

And when they're posed by God, they nearly always reveal heart condition. So notice, what we've got here is how many of you have been here who have seen this temple in its previous glory?

Okay. So what we've got is, remember, there was a temple. They went away for 70 years. They've come back. They've been building for 15 years. So some of the people there were probably in the latter stages of life, 85, 90 years old.

[18:42] Who had seen the first temple? They'd spent 70 years, the majority of their life in captivity. They come back, and now they're looking at this ruin going, honestly?

Is this it? Is it this good? They'd seen the old temple. They'd seen the glorious.

Do you ever think about the glory days? Do you have glory days? I remember when I used to play rugby. That was good. The older I get, the better I was. But it's just one of those realities.

But, you know, you look back and you think, could I do it now? No, probably not. Would I try? Yes.

Would it be stupid? Undoubtedly. But they look back, and they could see the temple as it was.

Have you ever looked back in a point in your life and thought it was better? You ever look back, and almost within you rises a sense of disappointment.

[ 19 : 43 ] Discontent it. Because it was better. I wish it was like that. I wish it was like before COVID.

I wish it was before better. I wish it was like that. I wish it was that time and not this time. That's exactly what's going on in their hearts and lives.

And struck with them was this sense of disappointment. I mean, my wife and I, in 1998, on the 4th of August, we'd given up our jobs and we moved to Austria with two little kids.

And became part of the staff of Cabbage Pables Bible College in Austria. And we'd responded to this missionary call. We'd moved land with an entire support of £100 a month.

Nuts. Giving up our jobs. Moved there with this fantastic expectation of serving God. And all the excitement that goes with it. And we were there living in a castle in Austria.

[ 20 : 47 ] Students arrive. Fantastic. Two weeks in. And I'm having to give announcements on a Sunday morning. In Devo's in morning. Two weeks into Bible store.

And I have to give this announcement. Right? It says, Will the ladies on the third floor of the castle please stop making grilled cheese sandwiches with the iron and the ironing board?

Because it means that people are getting cheese grease on their clothes. I had to give that

announcement. These are people who have given up income money to move to a foreign land with the purpose of studying God's word to go out and be missionaries.

And I haven't given announcement about them. I mean, it's very clever. Very clever. But I mean, you can't.

This is clever, guys. You can't do that. And I'm going to say stern face, the whole sheepdog face.

Will the ladies on the third floor please not make grilled cheese sandwiches? And at that point in time my heart goes, I'm wasting my life.

[ 21 : 49 ] We've just given up a lot in our eyes to go and do something. And I'm having to tell grown people not to do something so innately stupid.

And I'm thinking, I'm wasting my life. There were so many people there that had seen something that in their minds and their hearts was better.

Second question was, It says, How do you see it now? Literally, what do you see? Having seen it, you look at it now. What's it like?

Disappointment. When they laid the foundation stones of this temple again, the book of Ezra tells us in Ezra 3, it tells us that the people who had seen the first temple cried.

Because it was so poor. The people who hadn't seen the first temple cried with joy. And the crying from both parties was so great, it could be heard in my way.

[ 22 : 49 ] But nobody could work out if they were crying, or if they were crying with joy. Because two different groups of people looked at the same event with completely different perception.

And he asked the question, the second question, What do you see? And then he asked the third question, he says, In comparison, is this as nothing in your eyes?

Ever found yourself in that situation? I mean, the reality is, if you've been around long enough, which doesn't have to be really very long, you probably have.

You've hit the point of disappointment. Maybe you were involved in ministry, and there was great opportunities, and now there isn't. Maybe there are things you were able to do because you had great health, and now you don't. It can be the opposite too, but often, these things impact our hearts.

How do we respond? In this particular situation, so many looked at this temple and thought, this is substandard, this is not as it should be.

[ 23 : 58 ] Even the Jewish writings, Talmud, tell us that this temple lacked in five ways. It lacked, there wasn't the Ark of the Codernant, there wasn't the Holy Fire, there wasn't the glory of God, the spirit of prophecy there, and even the Urim and the Thurim on the priest's garments to give direction.

And this change had an effect upon their hearts and the condition of their minds and their souls.

And often change happens, it creates disappointment and discontentment. Often change imposed from the out that we have no control of affects those things.

You get a new boss at work, and all of a sudden, you're not doing the job you want to do, you're doing this other thing. And you don't want to do that. Maybe you have the chance of this job that you really want, and all of a sudden, you're not, you're doing something else.

How do we respond? And sometimes you get to that point, you actually get to this point of resignation where it goes, well, this is it, isn't it? I'm 62 years old.

[ 25 : 06 ] My body doesn't work too well. Nobody really wants me. Not getting the opportunities I used to get. So, well, I guess I just have to get used to it.

Okay. Three questions. Four observations. I want to make four observations about what was taking place in the passage before we look at three calls to do something that actually the Lord gives them through the prophet Adjil.

So, four observations. First one, comparison rarely helps. It's usually an outward issue, isn't it? They were looking at the outward splendor of the temple, which was not splendiferous. Right? No doubt it was less impressive because of the resources they had, the materials they had, and everything else.

But they weren't holding it in the context of what God was doing. The temple didn't look like it looked before, but had God changed?

[ 26 : 19 ] Had God become less faithful? Had his promises become less efficacious? Had his commitment to them become less?

Clearly not in all of those different things, and he's even going to say that to them. So, comparison is one of those things, be really wary of comparison. If you take comparison out of the context of the promises of God, you end up in a weird place mentally in your heart.

You often do. Secondly, observation. Frustration usually comes from mismatched expectations.

They had an expectation this was going to look like the first temple, and it didn't. They were frustrated. You know, it's one of those funny things, like, if... I like coffee.

Coffee's one of the things that God has gifted us. Truly. And, you know, you go to the coffee shop, and the coffee shop says, on the door, in big letters, 7.30, I'm open.

[ 27 : 33 ] And you turn up with a certain degree of addiction and desire to get your coffee, and it's 7.36, and the door's not open. Well, within my soul, I am frustrated because I expected to be open at 7.30.

Now, if there was nothing written on the door, I wouldn't have minded. But because they said, oh, 7.30, I'm frustrated. Mismatched expectations. Sometimes we have to look at where our expectations come from.

Are they rooted in, well, things that God has said, or are they rooted in what I want or think? We've had the privilege and opportunity of traveling a lot to a lot of different countries, lived in four of them. And one of the interesting things is you live in... We lived in Austria, we lived in Hungary, we lived in New Zealand. And they're all very different. In lots of different ways, they're very, very different.

In Austria, where we lived in Austria, in Corinthia, at midday on Saturday, a cannon would go off or basically a horn would go off and everything's shut till Monday morning.

[ 28 : 41 ] I mean, everything is shut. Gas stations, everything. You can't get anything. So that's a bit of a shock to the system when you suddenly think, oh, I want a pizza or I actually have to put some petrol in the car.

You know. And it's frustrating. Here's the thing. You know. And the mission field mantra is really this. It's like, it's not better, it's not worse, it's just different.

And you have to hold that sort of, that tendency. I mean, I had, when I started serving at the castle with Gwyn back in 1998, I started working alongside, for the first few weeks, I was working alongside a guy called Manfred, Manfred Augustine, who's a tissue, right?

He's a fantastic carpenter. And he sent me out on a task. And he said, he says, I want you to go down to the local store. I want you to go down to More, local store, in Bahnhof, Strassen, Spital. I want you to buy a meter of horse hair. I'm going, okay, we're doing this in German. So I'm thinking, okay, is, am I getting this?

[ 29 : 52 ] Or am I? So, I dutifully tootle off down to Bahnhof, Strassen, Spital, and go into More, which is still there today, walk in, sweating rather a lot, actually, in the sense I've got to say, I'm now going to go talk to this person who doesn't own it, and I'm going to ask them for horse hair.

And how's this going to go? So, I dutifully did, in my best German, and lo and behold, they gave me a meter of horse hair. So at that point, I was just actually more confused than what I was to start with.

So I go back to Manfred, and he goes, oh, that's great. We went and did some plumbing, and he would take the horse, he would wrap it in the thread of the joint, put some grease in, seal it, perfect

seal against water. Just not a very English thing to do.

See, it's not better, it's not worse, it's just different. And so, we have to be careful sometimes about our expectations, and how we perceive certain things.

We need to hold them in light in the context of the Lord himself. The third thing is, perspective, how we look at things, is affected by disappointment and discontentment.

[ 31 : 09 ] How we look at situations is shaped to some degree by disappointment and discontentment. most of us believe deep down we're called to some form of greatness.

You know, and our expectations are like, well, I should be doing that, I'm so much better at this, I'm great, I should be in all black. Despite the fact that I am small, dumpy, round, do not move quickly, and would be out of breath after 25 feet.

But I'm called to greatness. Perception and how we look at things is vitally important. There's a very interesting and I think very illustrative instance in the life of Joseph in the Old Testament in Genesis. There are 10 divisions in the book of Genesis. They all begin with the words, these are the days of. The biggest one is, these are the days of Joseph. And they span for 15 chapters, really at the end of the book of Genesis.

And we know the story of Joseph, don't we? You know, the technical, the dream whole thing, sees the dream, has an expectation of greatness, not becoming all black, but of greatness. And then thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, ends up in prison for probably the best part of 11 years if you look at the timeline.

[ 32 : 31 ] Finally, God brings him into this sort of position. And while this is taken to be the second most important man on the earth, behind Pharaoh, after interpreting the dream for the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker, right?

The whole drama plays out around his family. There's this point in the story where the brothers, because there's a famine, have run out of food.

They've gone to see Pharaoh and actually Joseph, who they don't know is their brother, and they've got grain. But in doing so, they had to leave behind Simeon.

And they go back home and life continues and they get to a point where the grain runs out and they're going to have to go back to get more.

But the condition is they have to take Benjamin, the youngest son. There's a fascinating moment and I want you to turn to it with me. It's in Genesis 42, verse 36. If you can, turn with me there.

[ 33 : 33 ] And remember to keep your finger in Haggai because once you've lost it, it'll move, trust me. I've learned these things over many years. Now, you hit this point where the brothers have to go talk to their father, Jacob, and say, we have to go back.

And all this unfolds. And then Jacob says this. Oh, there you go. Jacob says this. And Jacob, their father, said, you have deprived me of my sons. Joseph is no more.

Simeon is no more. And you want to take Benjamin as well. All these things are against me. Now, what you have is a man making a very clear reasoned statement.

You have a man who is personally committed to the truth of that statement. His perception is well-reasoned, well-argued, clearly expressed, and deeply felt.

Is he right? He is completely wrong. He is completely wrong. And there's probably really enough of God's dealings within his past that if he'd have sat down and thought about to go realize this isn't true.

[ 34 : 49 ] Because what's actually taking place here? Well, what's actually taking place is from the line of Joseph and from that line of Israel, from that group of people, will come Messiah, the line of Messiah.

If the line dies out because of famine, there's no Messiah. So God has organized the entire functioning of that region that he sends a man through strange circumstances that he doesn't understand but has to trust God in to be raised up to the second most powerful man in the earth to save grain, to be able to provide grain to his family so the line of Messiah will continue so we can be saved.

That's perception. If you strip how we view situations shaped by disappointment or discomfort and we strip it from God's truth and God's perspective, we end up in a weird place.

And the reality here is what's actually taking place is God is preserving the line of Messiah so there can be a savior. In Jacob's eyes all the world is against him.

What's my third observation? My third observation is that our perception whether completely believed forcibly reasoned isn't necessarily right.

[ 36 : 22 ] And it's usually completely wrong if we strip it from the promises and the context of what God's doing in our life. Suddenly it looks dark with no hope.

And yet the promise of God say I will be with you. I will never leave you or forsake you. Promise of God say all things work together for good for those who love God and call to his purpose.

So the third observation is be careful about perception. If it's removed or stripped from the context of the promises of God it gets weird.

We don't see it well. Fourth one is they remembered the wrong things. So often in the scriptures we're called to remember.

Right? But what did they remember? They remember what the temple looked like. They didn't remember the promises of God to them. They just remember what the temple looked like.

[ 37 : 26 ] Well it looked great. Now he doesn't. Oh dear. Remember the right things. Okay.

Three questions that reveal the condition of heart. Four observations. Three things to do. What's the solution to bad perspective?

Okay. Three things. Three things in the text that through the words of Haggai the people were called to do. The leadership was called to do.

Notice he says to Joshua high priest and to all the people. So these things are said to basically three groups of people. The guy who's leading the high priest and all the people.

Three things. They're called to courage. They're called to continue and they're called to remember the right things.

[ 38 : 27 ] So three things just as we close out. Notice what it says there. I've got to go back to Haggai now so I hope you haven't lost it. Yep, I've lost it. There you go. There you go.

Look what it says in verse four of chapter two. Be strong. Be strong. Joshua the son of Jehoshaph the high priest.

Be strong. All the people of land. Be strong. Three times he uses this phrase. Be strong. It's an imperative command.

It's not just good advice. It's great advice but it's not advice. It's actually a command. Be strong. Seize hold of something. In many ways it actually means harden up.

It's actually the same. Remember the story of in that part in the Old Testament where you've got all the plagues taking place and Moses goes to Pharaoh and there's the ongoing discussion with Pharaoh should the people go and there's the plagues taking place.

[ 39 : 27 ] Lots of drama taking place. But during that process it speaks about Pharaoh's heart becoming hard. Yeah? Same word. When it says be strong it says basically it says harden up, toughen up, right?

Man up, woman up, child up, right? That's basically it says there are certain situations we encounter where let's just be stronger.

Let's just resist. Let's recognize the situation and just go, okay, we trust you Lord. There's this amazing moment in, I love this, I mean I don't know if any of you have read Fox's book of martyrs. It's the most glorious book and it's the most horrible book in the entire world. Because it basically describes the history of martyrdom across the span of the Christian church. So it's full of horrible things that people did to people because they loved the gospel, they wanted to bring the gospel to people.

And it's full of great stories of courage. And at one point, there's this amazing statement, in one point, it's actually October 16th, 1555, two men were burned at the stake for bringing the Bible to the masses.

[ 40 : 49 ] They were called Ridley and Latimer, Bishop Ridley and Latimer, I'm not sure who was the bishop in those two, Ridley and Latimer. and they burned at the stake for trying to get the Bible in the hands of common people.

And while they're actually lighting up the actual fire to burn these guys, I mean, horrible, Latimer says this to Ridley, he says, be of good comfort, Master Ridley, play the man.

we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust will never be put out. Wow. Not the age of entitlement, eh? Ridley, play the man. Very English about that, isn't he? Play the man. But we shall this day light such a candle of God's grace that will never be put out.

Sometimes we face situations in which maybe we're discontent, maybe we're disappointed, but there is a place of actually hardening up and saying, okay, Lord, I trust you, says of Jesus, he set his face as flint to go to Jerusalem.

[ 42 : 10 ] Some things we just need to toughen up sometimes. Not in a weird way that destroys heart and feelings and emotions and gets weird, but there is a place to standing and resisting because we know God's heart is for us.

That's the first call. The second call is a call to continue and he says to them, and work. Their context was this temple that didn't look like it should do and they wish it did and he says, you know, be strong and he says, put your hands to the work.

keep doing it, keep going. Expression and context may change, but the works of often doesn't do that. You know, keep going, keep committing yourself to doing the right things.

Hold it in the context of trusting God and press on. And the third thing we get to close here is he called them to remember, but to remember the right things.

He didn't say, look, the old temple had jewels. What he called them to remember was, remember the promises of God and remember that God keeps his promises.

[ 43 : 37 ] And he says that to them. He says he reaches out and he says, you know, according, verse five, according to the word of the pact that I established you and you came out of Egypt, so my spirit dwells amongst you.

Do not fear. They had been remembering the wrong things. God called them to remember the right things. It's actually a repetition of what they'd heard literally a month earlier in Haggai 1.13.

Remember, I called you out of Egypt. I established my promise and my pact with you. My spirit is among you. Do not fear. God had given them promises in Exodus 19 about what he was going to do.

God has given us promises throughout the entirety of the scripture. And ultimately he goes on to say that this temple we have greater glory, looking ultimately to Messiah.

fear. It's not uncommon, this as we close, it's not uncommon that, do you guys want to come back and then we'll kind of go from there.

[ 44 : 47 ] face circumstances and situations that don't match our expectations, don't match our hope, and leave us in a position of feeling discontented or disappointed.

how are we going to respond to those things? I think the scriptures here are wonderfully instructive in what do we do in that situation because those disappointments, those discontentments are often very, very real and significant.

I'm not saying they're not, I'm not saying ignore them, I'm saying, hang on a minute, what's the advice in this context? The advice in this context is threefold. resist it, be strong in the promises of God.

Second, continue in the things that God has called us to do. And thirdly, remember the promises of God, God who is faithful. I mean, this is a quote that's credited to Spurgeon.

You know, the faithfulness of God demands, the past faithfulness of God demands my present trust.

[ 46 : 10 ] It's expressed in another place. It says, you know, if God has been faithful in six things, will he not be faithful in the seventh thing? And I don't mean to downplay or make less of some of those disappointments that we encounter, some of those discontentments that we encounter.

They're very real, very deep, very significant. but we are called to come boldly to a throne which is called the throne of grace that in times of need and the word actually says in the opportune time that we might find mercy and receive help.

So my encouragement this morning is just as we close is be intentional about taking hold of the promises of God.

In situations of change. I'm not a circus performer. You can probably tell that by my demeanor. But I do recognize something very obvious that the guy on the trapeze that's swinging from one trapeze to the other kind of has to let go of one to get the next one.

And if he doesn't, bad things are going to happen. Sometimes we have to let go to grab the next thing that God has for us.

[ 47 : 38 ] Paul actually put it in the New Testament by saying, of course, of actually. He said, it is this one thing I do. Leaving the things behind, I press onto that which Jesus, the Lord has held onto me for.

Forgetting the things that are behind, taking hold of the things that are before me. See, God is sovereign. So this isn't a chance scenario.

He's sovereign over us. He's sovereign in life. And his heart is towards us. Be strong. Let God revive. Let's be about God's work.

And let's remember the right things. Let's remember the very promises that God gives to us. Amen? Amen. So these guys are just going to lead us in worship.

I don't know, Simon, if you want to do anything at this point in time or not. But I encourage you in the worship, whether you stand in worship, whether you sit, maybe some of these things need to be reconciled in our hearts today.

[ 48 : 41 ] I encourage you to do that. And in fact, actually, let's do this. Do you want to just lead us? I'm going to stay here for a moment and maybe we'll do something while that is taking place. So you just lead us for a little bit.

I'll just be here, okay?