

Read Haggai 1

Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke by the commission of the LORD to the people saying, " 'I am with you,' declares the LORD." Hag 1:13

Church softball can get a little contentious. One game we had a guy who was not our normal shortstop, but he was filling in for a missing player. During one stretch he missed two ground balls and failed to cover 2nd base for an out. Our pitcher went crazy on him, and this guy felt terrible. So while the pitcher ranted to our coach, I went up to this shortstop and encouraged him to put it behind him. It was pretty clear the pitcher was over-reacting, and I knew our shortstop was simply getting used to a new position. He didn't miss a play the rest of the evening after our talk.

It can be pretty lonely when you make a mistake. I'm sure our shortstop wouldn't have finished well if no one had let him know that we were still behind him. He needed to know his mistakes didn't outweigh our loyalty. And in this chapter we see a God who is consistently better than we are. In spite of all the sin of Israel, we see in verse 12 that they choose to repent and obey the Lord. And just like that, in verse 13 we see God declaring, "I am with you." They hadn't messed up so bad that God was unwilling to come to them. In fact, He was ready to show up because the people were ready to do what God wanted out of their lives. **Do you feel God's presence in your life? If not, is there some disobedience that you know you need to lay down? Is there a believer that you know could use some encouragement? Whether in our own lives, or encouraging another, we must remember that God is willing to be with us. But, we must live a life that invites His presence. Choosing sin and disobedience is choosing loneliness and separation from God.**

Read Haggai 2

'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!' Hag 2:5

General Patton was known in World War II as a man of great courage. When a governor mentioned Patton's bravery to the general, Patton admitted that he was not a brave man. He admitted that there was never a battle that he failed to get scared and have sweaty palms. Later, Patton wrote in his autobiography, "I learned very early in my life, never to take counsel of my fears." I'm sure that he remembered this for his own sake, and the sake of his men around him.

Patton refused to take counsel from his fears, i.e. himself. He knew that he would probably be quick to find defeat even in a situation where victory was likely. In the same way, as believers we must refuse our own counsel and seek God. His Spirit abides with us and tells us not to fear. There is never a moment that is out of God's hands or plans that we cannot trust Him with. The moments we should fear are those that we know sin dominates our lives, yet we hope that God will choose to work good in our lives in spite of our choices. **Do you forget the daily abiding presence of Holy Spirit in your life? That's Satan's work, trying to cause you to forget that God is real and desires to work in your life today. God is a promise keeper. His desire is to work out all the**

things in your life that He has shown you. He hasn't forgotten a promise He's made, but may be building patience in your life as you wait. So stop dwelling on all the ways it could go wrong, and wait on God to make it right.