

Haggai #2: Earth-Shaking Glory (Haggai 2:1-9)

PRAY

Every year, every week, every day even, we experience things that get us off-track and off-task
And I'm talking about bigger things than getting distracted from doing your laundry
We frequently get off-track when it comes to our faith, our love, our joy, or our peace
Which then creates an apathy in our hearts to not do much of anything
So we don't read our Bibles... We decide to skip church or small group...
We forget to pray... We run out of time for family devos...
We doom scroll for hours... We might not even get out of bed!

In short, we get distracted from the things that matter most, and then don't do them []
I think there are three root causes of this that tend to be repeat culprits in our lives

- 1) We get discouraged... Something hard happens, and we lose heart
When this discouragement goes deeper, it can lead to depression or despair
- 2) We get lazy... A basic part of our sin nature kicks in, and we want to just disengage
We selfishly want to sit back and not work hard or only do things we want to do
- 3) We get fearful... Worried, anxious, afraid... Something happens that triggers our fear
And that ends up preoccupying our minds and hearts over anything else

Discouragement, laziness, and fear... These so often derail us, day by day, hour by hour

They keep us from doing the work we know we really ought to do

And thus end up inhibiting or stagnating our personal change and spiritual growth

And everything I just described on a personal level is also true of us on a corporate church level:

Discouragement, laziness, and fear can affect us as a body of people as well

And in the face of our weaknesses and failures, we wonder if anything will ever change

Let me encourage you today that you—and we—are not alone in this, at all

These are characteristic issues that have plagued God's people throughout history

And let me assure you today that there's hope—hope for strength, motivation, and courage

There's hope for things to change for better

I believe this because the Lord's done this for his people before... And he promises to do it again

We'll see this together in Haggai chapter 2... Please **OPEN** there now [\[page #791\]](#)

Haggai is a fairly obscure, neglected book... A hint: it's about 15 pages before Matthew

We began a short 3-week series in this prophetic book of Haggai last Sunday

It's written by the prophet Haggai, 500 years before Jesus, to some key Hebrew leaders:

Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest

At this time, the Jewish people had been exiled, but then some of them were permitted to return

In order to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem

After an initial burst of enthusiasm, the work waned—then ceased entirely, for 16 years

Haggai prophesied in order to try to wake people up and get them back to work: **READ v.4-8¹**

Marvellously, the leaders led their people to respond in repentance and obedience

Which was definitely a rarity when it came to the prophets: **READ v.12-15²**

But it doesn't take long until they're off-track again, needing another message from God

READ v.1a³... So not even a whole month later... **READ v.1b-3⁴**

Given what the Lord says to them, we can make some good guesses as to what they were feeling
Perhaps they ran into difficulty with their building project—unforeseen hurdles
Maybe progress was turning out to be really slow
Perhaps they worked hard, but their strength quickly waned, and they got tired
Maybe they started to envision the finished project, and got disheartened,
Thinking it was destined to be inferior to what had been there before
Would it ever be finished? And was it even worth it to finish the project?
The answer to these questions, according to the word of the Lord, was a resounding, “Yes”

[tr] Actually, the word of the Lord was the main means to the solution here
God would accomplish what he set out to do *by his word* spoken through Haggai
They didn’t need to give into discouragement, apathy, or fear, because he was at work... See:

By his Word, the Lord strengthens us despite our sorrow (v.1-4)

[r] By his Word, the Lord strengthens us—despite our sorrows and discouragements

Look again at the questions the Lord asks in v.3: **READ v.3⁵**

It had been 66 years since the original temple was destroyed
So only a handful of the oldest people still there
could’ve remembered what it was like, in all its former glory
They saw it as children, likely on pilgrimages to Jerusalem, a lifetime ago
Think of a place or sight you saw as a child that took your breath away
The first time you saw a mountain, or a skyscraper, or a castle at Disney

And then imagine someone trying to re-create that sight for you with something clearly inferior
And you get asked: “How does this compare to that?”

You’d shrug and say: “It’s not the same.”

God was like, “This must seem like nothing at all to you!”

The temple being rebuilt must’ve seemed like an empty, irrelevant symbol

The dimensions might’ve been the same,

but it was no longer the centre of a glorious kingdom, as it was under Solomon

Now it was just a “small cog in the plans of someone else’s empire”⁶

In the book of Ezra, it records that when the foundation was laid, 16 years prior to this,
*“Many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers’ houses, old men who had
seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this
house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy...”* (Ezra 3:12)

It’s any of these guys still alive a decade and a half later that God was addressing now

So, what was God trying to do by drawing their attention to the past?

Did he just want them to wax nostalgic? Or pine for the good ol’ days? Or whine about
how much worse things are now? ‘They don’t make things like they used to!’

Was it bad that they saw relatively little glory in this new temple being constructed?

I don’t think so... In comparison, and by appearance, the new temple was pretty ‘mid’

I see God doing a couple key things here by pointing to the past:

First of all, he was reminding them that the temple was indeed glorious before

Which meant that God had worked in the past to bring about that result

The Lord had imbued beautiful yet ordinary materials with glory

Why should they assume he wouldn’t ever work like that again?

And that's the second thing: He wanted to point them to what would happen in the future
If his house was beautiful before, it could be beautiful again

Today, you may feel some sorrow, mildly or sharply, over how things are different now
You may feel your spiritual life has weakened over the years... You've lost 'the fire'
You may have relationships that have broken or disappeared... I grieve ones I've lost
A marriage may have fallen apart... A child may have spurned you or the Lord
Maybe your expectations of what your future would hold have been shattered
Or maybe where our church is at makes you feel tinges of sorrow
Despite all the wonderful things the Lord is doing, it's easy to pine for other times
Maybe when we were smaller, and you could know everyone and remember names
Or you miss people who once populated this place, who've moved or are in glory now
Or you wish we didn't even need to think of rebuilding our charming old building
You've got lots of memories here... And it will be a sad day if and when it's torn down
Or on a grander scale, you may read the glorious acts of God in the Bible,
And wish that we could witness mighty and miraculous things now, like they did
But 21st century Canada feels so depressingly mundane or glory-less
If you feel any of this, pay close attention to what God tells his people here in Haggai

God didn't want to make his people even sadder over the glory that now seemed absent
He wanted to strengthen them to carry on despite their sorrow... Look: **READ v.3c-4a**⁷
So he acknowledges their nostalgic sorrow in v.3, and he doesn't say it's wrong to feel sad
Not everything in the past might be as good as we sometimes imagine it to be
But there are things that legitimately call for sorrow
God doesn't tell them, "Just cheer up! Be happy!" Rather, he says, "Be strong."
He goes one by one, to Zerubbabel and Joshua, and then to all: "Be strong!"

But he's not just telling them to muster up strength... He speaks his Word *to* strengthen them
For those who have been believers awhile, I know you can testify about times in your life
When you were filled with sorrow, and God's Word ministered to you in a special way
Maybe through a verse shared with you at a funeral or in a sermon that lifted your heart
Maybe through a lament in Psalms that you prayed along with
Maybe through a description of the gospel, which assured you that you have a Saviour
Who was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, who sympathizes with you in
your weakness, who loves you enough that he died for you, and who has a plan to
rid this world of sorrow for good

*"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing
with the glory that is to be revealed to us..." (Romans 8:18)*

Therefore my brothers and sisters, even in the midst of sorrow, I urge you to *"...be strong in the
Lord and in the strength of his might."* (Ephesians 6:10)

Don't despair... Don't give in to discouragement... Don't grow weary in doing good...
Put your confidence in the God who keeps working all things, even hard things, for good
With the Lord, you *can* carry on... His power is made perfect in our weakness
So be strong! Whenever you feel like giving in, get in the Word and let God speak to you
I hope you're even hearing his Spirit speak strength to you right now, this very moment

[tr] God's sorrowful people couldn't do anything to change the past... Out of their control
But they could see the way the Lord worked then, and trust that he'd work through them now
But what about when things *aren't* out of our control? What about when we get in our own way?

What do we do about our laziness and apathy?

Well, again, we must hear the word of the Lord, and in this case, let it challenge us... So:

By his Word, the Lord motivates us with his presence (v.4-5)

[r] By his Word, the Lord motivates us with his presence

See, the Lord commands us to reject laziness, but soaks his order in a promise of his presence
At the end of v.4: **READ v.4c-d⁸...** Much like he assured them in chapter 1, 'I am with you',
The Commander-in-Chief of Heaven's armies of angels tells us he is with us
Sometimes it's really hard to do good work, whether at your job, in school, or around the house,
If you're all alone, wondering if anyone will ever see, notice, or appreciate your work
How huge of a difference it makes if someone is there with you, helping you work!
And how much greater motivation should come when we're aware of *God's* presence with us!

The Lord promises to be with his people as they work, but not just for accountability or pressure,
As if he's a taskmaster watching over our shoulders, making sure we work hard... No
He's with us to strengthen us, support us, inspire us, encourage us—even to work with us

He speaks to us to motivate us... And he does so by assuring us of his presence

What would change about your work ethic if you were constantly aware of God being with you?
How would that adjust your attitude as you clean the kitchen, fill in the spreadsheet, write
the exam, wrangle your kids, make sandwiches, or carry out your boss' orders?

Would you be as anxious? As irritated? As bored? As under-pressure? I doubt it

As **Colossians 3:23** puts it: *"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward."*

When we hear a command to "Work", we might wince and think that's law, not grace... But no
Right after Ephesians 2 goes, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith."*, it says:
"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

To repeat what I said last week, the gospel of grace isn't opposed to work

The gospel is intended to inspire or motivate good work

Our mission here at Calvary is to Worship God, Grow Together, and Serve Others

These are things that we believe all healthy believers or disciples will do

If you're growing in your faith, you'll be moved by the love and grace of God to serve

Iain Duguid says this well: *"No matter what the obstacles may be to our progress in holiness, the obligation on God's people is clear: work. There is no excuse for despair or inactivity. They were required to do what they could in obedience to God's command, not to wring their hands over what they could not do. It is the same for us also. Transformation of a life or a church is not simply a matter of sitting back and wishing and waiting for the application of a pinch of spiritual pixie dust... It is a matter of setting to work in pursuit of obedience to God's commands."*

Transformed hearts lead to transformed hands, which do the work of the Lord

And if you're wanting to take a step and work here at Calvary, we'd love to help you

You can go to calvarybaptistchurch.ca/serve to explore opportunities

Believer: even when it's hard to work hard, I know you can, because God is with you
We can't overcome our challenges just by putting in better effort... We're not enough
We're called to work out of a prior assurance of God's gracious work and covenant love
And in v.5, he assures his people in Haggai's day that this wasn't just some isolated promise:
READ v.4c-5⁹... He was like, 'I've been promising this all along!'
'Centuries ago, when I brought you out of Egypt, I made a binding covenant:
I promised you, like a husband making vows to his wife, that I'd always be with you'
God could not, would not break his covenant with them

If this gave them reason to perk up and get up off their bums, we have all the more reason
As we have a better, greater covenant than they did, "*enacted on better promises*"¹⁰
Our covenant was sealed not with the blood of animals, but with the blood of Christ
God sent his Son to earth to live the life we failed to live, and die the death we deserve to die
His perfect blood satisfies the penalty for our sin, cleanses us, and draws us near
He then rose from the dead, just as he said he would, proving his power and faithfulness
And the risen Christ promised his people that he'd be with them always, until the end
You can come to him now, even if you never have before... And I urge you to do so today

READ v.5b¹¹... Not only does God's Holy Spirit remain in our midst, he now dwells inside us!
"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16)
As we do the hard, spiritual work of restoring God to his rightful place in our lives,
As we clear out the rubble caused by our laziness, and set to rebuilding things,
Let this be your reassurance: God has promised to not abandon your work-site
We are his temple being rebuilt... He began a good work in you; he will complete it
And his Spirit is the seal of this promise, until Christ comes again
As one of Haggai's contemporaries, Zechariah, prophesied—also to Zerubbabel, in fact:
"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts." (Zechariah 4:6)

[tr] So now God has spoken into both our sorrow and our apathy... But he knows
there's one more major thing to address, if we're to work hard and not lose heart: our fear
Fear has a way of crippling us, consuming our thoughts and attention with anxiety
So God says: **READ v.5b¹²**... I suspect Haggai's people were really struggling with fear
Yes, they'd obeyed, and they'd heard God's reassurance that he was with them
But that didn't remove all the risks and dangers they faced
Maybe old opponents of the temple building project were getting vocal again
Maybe they worried about how they would afford such a huge undertaking
Maybe they fretted over how secure this temple would be:
It'd been destroyed before; what was stopping it from being ruined again?
Therefore, God sent Haggai to lift their eyes from these fears, and to hear him again... The point:

By his Word, the Lord encourages us through anticipation (v.5-9)

By 'encourage' I'm mainly meaning en-couraging—instilling us with courage
[r] By his word, the Lord encourages us through anticipation—anticipation of glory

Earlier this week, I felt a familiar anxiety spring up in me as I read the sports news
No, I didn't worry about my favourite teams failing—they're already doing that well
I was reading of how three Christian baseball players were forced to wear Pride uniforms

Being uncomfortable with it, they wrote Bible verses about rainbows on their hats
And then the league threatened to punish them if they ever did so again
That's not what made me afraid... It was when I read comments people were leaving
The tsunami of hate being spewed at them—and at Christians—was shocking
So I felt fear over how much many—maybe most—people in the world despise us
You may harbour similar fears... Or over political happenings like Bill C-9 being passed
Or closer to home, you may fear challenges or hardships in your own home
Or you may feel intimidated by steps our church is taking... We can be afraid of change
But it can make all the difference when we remember that the Lord of Hosts is with us

And, as we'll see, fears tend to dissipate when we hear God's plans for the future
v.6-9 give reasons Haggai said to not be afraid, and they're all about what God promises to do
READ v.6¹³... Woah! Talk about power! What can you shake in your life?
A hand? Salt and pepper? A fan of a rival world cup team? Don't do that
How about the earth? How about planets and stars—the heavens? How about a universe?
God says, 'Before you know it, I'm gonna shake everything there is...'

And then, more specifically: **READ v.7**¹⁴
So he'll shake up earth and sky... Then he'll shake down all the godless nations¹⁵
As if he'll rattle the nations to get the change from their pockets
Plundering them to provide for his people
Like he did with Egypt in the exodus, as the Egyptians showered his people with treasure
God says he's going to do this one more time, but with *all* nations this time around: **READ v.7**¹⁶
Their 'treasures'—their ill-gotten gains will come loose and come home:
To the Creator and Owner of all... **READ v.8**¹⁷
In other words: 'Don't be afraid about affording what I'm telling you to do...
I have everything you need... It's all mine in the first place—and in the end'
Remember that whenever we're challenged by financial matters as a church:
God has all the wealth we need... All the financial resources needed to complete his work

Now, the big question about what Haggai describes is: When would all this happen?
On one level, the new temple was glorified when it was completed, under the patronage of Persia
Ezra 6:8 records Darius decreeing: "*The cost [for the rebuilding of this house of God] is to be paid to these men in full and without delay from the royal revenue...*"
So God used even the most powerful pagan nation to bring about the rebuilding of his house

But on another level, this temple would be filled with glory in a greater way one day,
When God the Son stepped physical foot inside it... '*We have seen his glory...*'
He was brought to the temple as a baby... His parents lost him in the temple as a boy
Remember how he said: "*Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?*"
Then as a man, Jesus taught in the temple courts
and fought to cleanse the temple as a house of prayer for all nations
He also claimed his own body was a greater temple, which would be ruined and rebuilt
And when that temple of his body died, what happened? The earth shook violently
And it shook again when he stormed out of the tomb... Filled with glory indeed!

But that's not all, actually... There is a third level, in which this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled
I know this because of the only place in the N.T. that quotes this prophecy, Hebrews 12
It says this: *"See that you do not refuse him who is speaking... [So the focus is again on the Lord speaking to us] At that time [speaking of Mt. Sinai] his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." [Haggai 2:6] This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe..." (Hebrews 12:25-28) ...Do you get what this is saying? It says 'now he has promised'*
So even after Christ, this was a promise to cling to about our future
Which means the earth will yet shake one day with the glory of God
But we have been given a kingdom (even now) that cannot and will not be shaken

So what we have here in Haggai is another expression of the "Now and the Not Yet"
No matter where we stand in redemption history, God has something to say to us through it
I got a new telescope last Christmas... I can look at trees in my yard with it
Or I can look at the Moon or Mars with it... Both are really there
The temple in Haggai's day was like the trees in my yard—the closest fulfillment
But zooming out, we can see Christ reflected in these same words
And zoom out some more, and we see Christ's still-coming glorious return

When the temple of the new heavens and new earth will be filled with glory never seen before
Look at the final verse here: **READ v.9¹⁸**
That would've been really hard to believe in that day, as they looked at a sub-par temple
But that's the point: it wasn't all about that day alone... It was about the future
The point is that they—and we—need to look beyond what our eyes can see right now
Because when we look there, that only breeds fear...
Know that glory is returning! ...So much glory, that we won't even need a temple anymore
As John says in Revelation 21: *"And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. [Then, in a total echo of Haggai 2] By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it... They will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations."* (21:22-26)
Truly: **READ v.9a¹⁹**... And forever, there will be *shalom*: **READ v.9b²⁰**

CONCLUSION

Do you see how this anticipation can ease our fears and fill us with courage?
This is coming! Glory and peace have come, and will return... Do you anticipate this?
By God's Word, through his Spirit, we have hope and assurance of this even now
*There's peace that outlasts darkness, hope that it's the blood
There's future grace that's mine today that Jesus Christ has won*
And *"Since we have such a hope, we are very bold..."* (2 Corinthians 3:12)
Today, in the present, we can look back to God's work in the past and God's promise of a future
Iain Duguid concludes: *"Where do we turn for strength and encouragement to work hard at the difficult task of spiritual renovation? We gaze at the beauty of God's glory in the*

gospel... In Christ, God has shaken the entire world order. But we also look forward to the world-shaking that is yet to come, when God will bring all of history to its consummation in Christ—when his glory will fill the world and his peace will reign forevermore.”

So hear him now! Fear not! Our present struggles—our ruins—aren’t the end of the story
He will strengthen us... He will be with us now... And he will come again

“Yet once more, in a little while”... The best is yet to come

So *“declares the LORD of hosts”*... He has spoken! Do you hear him?

PRAY

Benediction: prayer, 5min, Heb. 6:10-12

¹ “Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes. “Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord.

² Then Zerubbabel... and Joshua... with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord. Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, “I am with you, declares the Lord.” And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel... and the spirit of Joshua... and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

³ In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month,

⁴ the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet: “Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say: ‘Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?

⁵ ‘Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?

⁶ HT Duguid

⁷ Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord.

⁸ Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts,

⁹ Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts, according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst.

¹⁰ Hebrews 8:6

¹¹ My Spirit remains in your midst.

¹² My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

¹³ For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land.

¹⁴ And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.

¹⁵ HT MSG

¹⁶ And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.

¹⁷ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts.

¹⁸ The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts.”

¹⁹ The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former...

²⁰ And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts.”