

Consider Your LORD

Haggai 2: 1-9

In our text today we find a similar introduction to that of Chapter One. It has been about a month since the Lord stirred up the people and the work began in earnest on the Temple. The Lord speaks again to the people during the annual Feast of Tabernacles, a feast where the people dwelt in temporary booths, commemorating the faithfulness of God during the wilderness wanderings. It was also a time of celebration and thanksgiving for the autumn harvest.

We have no way of knowing how much work had been completed on the Temple in the span of a month, but it is likely enough had been accomplished to notice. Probably enough had been done to give the people a general idea of what the Temple would look like once it was completed. It was during this time of commitment and effort that discouragement began to set in for some of the people. Their focus had been diverted from the Lord unto the daunting task that lay ahead. Offering a word from the Lord, Haggai challenged them to focus on God instead of the getting caught up in discouragement and losing faith.

There is no doubt, we too face a daunting task. In fact, we are responsible to accomplish more than we can possibly do alone. If we focus solely on the task ahead, dwelling on the number of people needed and resources required, we will grow discouraged as well. We will never accomplish the work of the Lord in our abilities, but through Him we can. Let's examine the [directives](#) Haggai offers as we think on the challenge: [Consider Your LORD](#).

I. A Call for Resilience (1-4) – Although discouragement was beginning to mount, the people needed to find a way to overcome and continue the work. Consider:

A. The Consideration (2-3) – [Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, ^{\[3\]} Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?](#) Apparently there were those who were old enough to remember Solomon's Temple. It was a grand spectacle, the pride of all Israel. Those who remembered it had grown discouraged at the meager means of the new Temple and were sowing seeds of discord. In their minds it was a futile effort. This one would never measure up and they saw little value in pressing ahead. In essence, they chose to live in the past, and refused to embrace the work necessary for the future.

- We too face the same consideration. Many of us remember the glorious days of old. We remember a time when attendance was up, visitors were common, and things ran like clockwork. Now our baptisteries are dry, folks aren't showing up as before, and many consider the church outdated and irrelevant. Now, we can live in the past, sulking in our discouragement, or we can embrace the challenges and press forward in the work.

- Those days are gone, and I don't believe they are coming back. We must never change our message, but we may have to seek new methods. Churches that continue to argue, "We've never done it that way before," will die a slow death. We must find new ways to engage our culture and communicate the Gospel message. We are not building a physical temple, but we are called to continue building and expanding the spiritual one!

B. The Expectation (4a) – *Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work.* Haggai reveals the profound expectation God had for His people. He fully expected them to remain resilient in the work. They were charged to be strong while getting to work. God simply wanted them to be diligent in their endeavors, remaining faithful to the work He had given them.

- I know this is a deep theological truth that is hard to grasp, but God just wants His people to get busy. We have analyzed the situation long enough. We are well aware of the problems we face and the difficulties involved in fulfilling our calling, but that doesn't release us of our obligations. It is time for the church of Christ to rise up and get busy! (Notice this expectation wasn't reserved for the governor and high priest alone; it included all the people of the land. None were exempt from this expectation. Things haven't changed; we are all responsible to work!)

C. The Confirmation (4b) – *for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts.* Haggai never said the task would be simple or easy. He never told them it wouldn't require commitment and great effort. He did relay that the Lord promised to be with them. What else could they possibly ask for or need? If God was in their midst, He would equip them to fulfill the task ahead.

- We may look around today and consider those who once were with us, but are no longer here. Some were called home by the Lord, others found other churches, and some just dropped out. Many of these had prominent roles within the church. It is easy to think we will never be able carry on without them. God has promised to never leave nor forsake us. He remains in the midst of His church. If God be with us, we have all we need to be productive. That doesn't give us a pass for ministry, but I refuse to believe God has not equipped the believers who are here to accomplish the work He has given us to do!

II. A Call for Reliance (5-9) – Along with the call for resilience, a call to remain steadfast in the work, God extended the call to rely on Him to meet their needs. The same is true for us. We can rely upon the Lord. Let's consider the attributes we can rely on.

A. The Provision (5) – *According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.* God had made a covenant with Israel when He led them out of Egypt. He had met their needs in the wilderness. He had brought them into the Promised

Land. He had even sustained this remnant in Babylonian captivity. God has never failed them, and He wanted them to understand He wasn't going to abandon them now. There was no need to fear!

- We too can rest in this same provision. Our relationship with the Lord is on a much different level than that of Israel, but we can claim this promise. Jesus purchased our redemption on the cross. He rose from the dead in resurrection life. He sent His Spirit to dwell within believers as the body of Christ. The church has faced many dark valleys. There have been seasons of intense persecution, but we are still here. We can rest in the provision of Christ, even in these difficult days. We are secure in Him!

B. The Power (6-7a) – *For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; ^[7] And I will shake all nations.* God speaks to them of events yet to come, and in doing so, He reveals His great, omnipotent power. These events will take place in the last days, during the end times, when God's great power is revealed for the entire world to witness.

- There is much we could discuss here, but the premise is: we serve One who possesses absolute authority and power. Surely one who has the ability to shake the entire creation has the ability to work in our lives and meet our needs! He can move mountains. He can enable mere children to slay giants. He can calm raging seas and call the dead to live again. He can take a heart of stone and tender it in salvation. What could we possibly face that He can't handle?

C. The Promise (7b) – *and the desire of the nations shall come.* Here God makes reference to the coming of Christ. These Old Testament Jews would not live to see His first advent, but God kept His word. The Son of promise came to bear the sin of the world and offer Himself the substitutionary atonement for sin. He rose from the grave and ascended back to the Father where He now makes intercession for the church. He is still working and active in lives today. One day in the future, according to God's timetable, He will come again in great power and glory!

- Our world doesn't desire Him today, but one day they will. He will return and establish His kingdom here on the earth. This brings great joy to my heart, even though we live in an age where most deny and reject the Lord. He fulfilled every prophecy concerning His first advent, and His second coming will be no different. Surely we can rely on One such as He. This world may continue to work against us, bringing persecution and hindrances, but we are secure in Christ. We have nothing to fear! One day the trump of God will sound and we will be called out of this world to meet the Lord in the air. He remains in control and is able to provide for the church!

D. The Presence (7c) – *and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.* This must have been particularly encouraging for them. God promised their labor would not be in vain. He would fill the Temple they were building with His presence. They would experience Him in His Son.

- Things are much different in our day, but we too can experience the presence of God in our midst. He doesn't dwell within the Temple as before. He now resides within His people. The believers are the temple in which He dwells. We are filled with the Spirit at salvation, but we need to be filled daily with the Spirit to carry out the work He has called us to perform. We won't accomplish much apart from Him, but through Him we can do all things. I can think of nothing more needful among the church than a fresh filling of the Spirit. His presence among us, in a real and mighty way, will make a tremendous difference!

E. The Possession (8) – *The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.* Keep in mind, these have just recently returned from bondage in Babylon. Their resources would have been very limited. Rebuilding the temple would have been a costly venture. God reminded them not to worry. He only wanted them to be faithful to the work. He had all the resources necessary, and He was willing to provide what they needed to finish the task.

- It would do us good to be reminded of this as well. I realize it takes money to operate. Expanding our facilities and ministries requires funding. We have experienced tough economic times in recent years. Money can be tight within the budget. We need to recognize that God owns it all anyway. If He is in it, He will provide. If we are certain God has led us in a particular direction, we must step out by faith, trusting Him to provide the resources necessary. Our God is not bankrupt. He will provide for the needs we have as we surrender to follow His direction!

F. The Peace (9) – *The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.* God wanted those who were discouraged and doubtful to take heart. This too spoke of a future time. Most agree this speaks of the time when Christ will return to earth and dwell among His people, ushering in perfect peace. The focus is that God had not forsaken His people. Although they had endured a season of captivity, peace would reign again. Where God's presence is, there is peace!

- Ministry serving the Lord can be difficult. Our society has experienced radical changes in the past few years. Things will continue to worsen, but we are not without hope. In fact, we can rejoice even in the midst of trials and adversity. We enjoy the peace that comes from the Lord. We have no way of knowing what we will be forced to face in the future. It will likely get much worse in our lifetime, but there is peace from above. Regardless of what happens in this life, or how the world changes around us, we are secure in Christ. He will provide for every need of the church. There is no reason for us to dwell in despair. We are going through when the Lord calls for us!

Conclusion: These verses are timely for our congregation. There is much to be done, but we can accomplish what the Lord desires through Him. There is no doubt that we need Him every day, but He will provide. If you are feeling discouraged or overwhelmed in service, seek the Lord for strength, wisdom, and peace. If you haven't responded to the call of salvation, I urge you to do so.