

Open in prayer

Read Haggai 2:1-9

¹ On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: ² ‘Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and to the remnant of the people: ³ “Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Doesn’t it seem to you like nothing by comparison?”

⁴ Even so, be strong, Zerubbabel – this is the Lord’s declaration. Be strong, Joshua son of Jehozadak, high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land – this is the Lord’s declaration. Work! For I am with you – the declaration of the Lord of Armies. ⁵ This is the promise I made to you when you came out of Egypt, and my Spirit is present among you; don’t be afraid.”’

⁶ For the Lord of Armies says this: ‘Once more, in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. ⁷ I will shake all the nations so that the treasures of all the nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord of Armies. ⁸ ‘The silver and gold belong to me’ – this is the declaration of the Lord of Armies. ⁹ ‘The final glory of this house will be greater than the first,’ says the Lord of Armies. ‘I will provide peace in this place’ – this is the declaration of the Lord of Armies.

Introduction

Å A **little** boy stands before a hungry crowd. All he has are five **small** loaves and two **tiny** fish. • That is what Jesus' disciples **noticed**. • Not the boy's **willingness**. Not his **faith**. • His **inadequacy**. • The disciples looked at what he had to offer and said what every **reasonable person** would say. *This is insufficient?* • *It seems like **nothing**.* •••

Å **Insufficient**. The word **lands**. • It **lands** for mother with young children, wondering if her daily, unseen work **matters**. • It lands for the man at his desk, staring at a career that **never became** what he thought it would be. • It lands for anyone who has ever looked at what they have to offer God and thought, *This is **not enough**.* •••

Å The people of God once stood before the foundation of a temple and felt the **same**. They had **obeyed**. They had **begun** the work. But what they were building looked like **nothing** compared to former glory. • **Small** stones. **Plain** walls. No **gold**. No **glory cloud**. •••

on We are going to sit in the **rubble** with them this morning. • Haggai 2:1-9. • Because God's **answer** to their fear is His **answer** to ours. And it is not what we might **expect**. •••

1) How does it look to you now? (Haggai 2:1-3)

R¹ On the twenty-first day of the seventh month. • These events happened during the **Festival** of Booths. The time of the year Israel **remembered** God brought them out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. • One **month** has passed since Haggai confronted their complacency. • They **obeyed**. And began work on the **temple**. • Obedience, however, does not immunise against **discouragement**. •••

R The word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai. • ² Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah. Political **leader**. • To the high priest Joshua. Spiritual **leader**. • And to the **remnant** of the people. Every **worker**. • **Discouragement** respects no rank. •••

Å Then come the **questions**. • ³ “Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? •• The **old** men remember. • They were **children** when Solomon's temple stood. • They remember the **gold**. The carved **cherubim**. The **massive** stones. They remember the day of **dedication**. When the **cloud** of God's glory filled the house so thick the priests could not minister. • They **saw** it. They **remember**. •••

Å How does it look to you now? Doesn't it seem to you like **nothing** by comparison? •• The Lord does not **mock** their memory. He does not **scold** their tears. • He **names** the reality. • **Small** stones. **Plain** walls. No **ark**. No **mercy seat**. No **holy fire**. • It looks like **nothing**. • And in the ancient world, a temple was not merely a **building**. It was architectural **theology**. • The size and splendour of a temple declared the **power** of the god who dwelt there. • A meagre temple was not an aesthetic **disappointment**. • It was a theological **embarrassment**. **Yahweh's** temple was small. They feared their God would look **insignificant**. •••

ð Worry that what you have to offer God is too **small**? • A **little** boy once stood before a hungry crowd. All he had was five **small** loaves and two **tiny** fish. • Even the **disciples** looked at the offering and said what every reasonable person would say. *What is this among so many?* It seems like **nothing**. •

on We worry too much about our **offering**. Rather than what **He** can do with it. • This temple felt **insignificant**. And it **was**. But the **glory** of this house was never meant to reside in its stones. •••

~ In Haggai 2:1-3, the Lord contrasts Solomon's **former glory** with this current temple's insignificance. • The people measured their present work against some **former glory**. Asking the question, *Is what we have to offer enough?* Instead of asking the question, *Is what we offer what He wants?* •••

~ But the Lord has not finished speaking. There is more. A promise to hold. •

2) I am with you... Do not be afraid (Haggai 2:4-5)

4 Be strong, Zerubbabel. Be strong, Joshua. Be strong, all you people. • The command comes **three** times. To the **governor**. To the **priest**. To every **labourer**. • Because **discouragement** respects no rank. And neither does His **command**. • Bernard Warder taught our Saints Over Sixty that **strong** translates the Hebrew word קָטָן. It means more than **muscle**. It is a **stubborn** refusal to quit trusting God. •••

Then the **imperative**. **Work!** • Not just **attitude**. **Action**. • I gave you a **temple** to build. My **design**. My **plan**. My **will**. Now **do** it. Roll up your **sleeves**. Grasp the **stone**. Lay the **brick**. • This is **sweaty**, manual labour. **Calloused** hands. **Aching** backs. The kind of work that leaves you **exhausted** at sunset. •••

5 For I am **with** you – the declaration of the Lord of Armies. This is **the promise** I made to you when you **came out of Egypt**. • God reaches back to the **Exodus**. To the **covenant** at Sinai. When He **dwelt** among them in the tabernacle. When His Spirit **led** them through the wilderness by cloud and fire. • The **same** Spirit is present among you. • In the **dust**. In the **sweat**. In the **meagre** stones. • **My Spirit is present among you** in a present, active, enabling sense. •••

R **Don't be afraid**. Not a **suggestion**. A **command**. • With a **foundation**. David's words to Solomon before he built the first temple were, Be **strong** and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. • The promise spans the **generations**. •••

P A **child** walks into a dark room. • He hears a **noise**. He **freezes**. • Then his father **speaks**. I am **here**. • The **darkness** does not change. The noise does not **stop**. But the father's **presence** changes everything. • The child walks **forward**. Not because the room is **bright**. Because his father is **near**. •••

P Don't be afraid because I am **with** you is all the comfort we need. •••

R So the Lord issues a **threefold** command. Be **strong**. **Work**. Do not be **afraid**. • And He anchors it all in the **promise**. I am **with** you. • My **Spirit** is present. The **same** God who parted the sea and filled the tabernacle now stands among the rubble. • This is how the author builds his **argument**. • We cannot build **fearlessly** until we know whose presence fills the site. The foundation of courage is not our strength. It is His **nearness**. •••

on But the Lord has not **finished** speaking. • If His presence is the **foundation**, what is the future? • What **glory** could possibly surpass the cloud that filled Solomon's temple? • The **answer** is coming. A **promise** to hold. •••

3) The final glory of this house will be greater (Haggai 2:6-9)

∅ ⁶ For the Lord of Armies says this. Once more, in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. • Not a local tremor. A cosmic shaking. • The stars rattle. The sea churns. • Every power opposing God falls. Thrones collapse. Economies crumble. The proud brought low. The mighty made weak. • This is not human renovation. This is divine revolution. •••

∅ ⁷ I will shake all the nations so that the treasures of all the nations will come. • The shaking is not only to destroy. It clears the way. • The wealth of the Gentiles will pour into Jerusalem. • Isaiah saw it. The nations streaming to Zion. Not as conquerors. As contributors. • Gold. Silver. Tribute for a king. •••

∅ And I will fill this house with glory. Says the Lord of Armies. • The cloud that filled Solomon's temple was thick. Heavy. Terrifying. Priests could not stand. That was glory. • But something greater is coming. • A weight of glory that will make the first seem like a shadow. •••

R ⁸ The silver and gold belong to me. This is the declaration of the Lord of Armies. • Haggai's people had no money. No gold. • They stared at plain stones. • God says, I own everything. I will supply what I demand. •••

∅ ⁹ The final glory of this house will be greater than the first, says the Lord of Armies. • How? How can plain stones surpass gold? How can a meagre temple outshine carved cherubim? How can this surpass the cloud so thick the priests could not stand? • The builder scratches his head. • The priest frown. • The prophet writes words that seem impossible. •••

∅ I will provide peace in this place. This is the declaration of the Lord of Armies. • Shalom. • Not a ceasefire. Not a truce. Wholeness. • The temple was where God and man met. Where sin was atoned. Where peace was restored. • But this temple had no ark. No mercy seat. • How could it bring peace? •••

P Picture an architect handing a blueprint to a builder. • The construction site is in rubble. A mess. • But when the builder unfolds the plan, he sees a house of beauty. Rooms where children will laugh. Windows where light will pour. What will be. • So he picks up his hammer. And goes to work. •••

~ So the Lord declares a grand reversal. • Shaking. Glory. Peace. • He has unfolded His blueprint. • We can build fearlessly because we know the end. The glory is certain. Peace promised. Future decided. •••

∅ But, Where will this glory come from? Who will bring this peace? •••

Connect to the gospel

o The **question** hangs in the air. **Where** will this glory come from? • **Who** will bring this peace? • The people stared at plain stones and **wondered**. The builder **scratched** his head. The priest **frowned**. The prophet **wrote** words that seemed impossible. • But the Lord of Armies had **spoken**. The **final** glory of this house will be greater than the first. He will provide **peace** in this place. •••

o Four hundred years **passed**. ••• There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was **Simeon**. This man was **righteous** and devout, looking forward to Israel's consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been **revealed** to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Messiah. • So he **waited**. **Watched**. Day after **day**. Year after **year**. ••• Until one **ordinary** afternoon, guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple. And a **poor** couple came through the gates carrying their **infant son**. •••

o Simeon took the child up in his arms, praised God, and said, Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in **peace**, as you promised. • For my eyes have seen your **salvation**. • You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples, a **light** for revelation to the Gentiles and **glory** to your people Israel. •••

o **Behold**. • The **moment**. • The **ah-ha**. • Every **unfulfilled** word Haggai had spoken now stood before Simeon in flesh. • The glory that filled Solomon's temple was a **cloud**. **Dense**. **Dark**. **Terrifying**. Priests could not **stand**. • The glory that filled Zerubbabel's temple? • Not a **cloud**. A **Person**. **Flesh**. **Blood**. **Breath**. A **baby**. • The **Desire** of all nations had come. The greater glory was a **child**. •••

^ But He did not remain a **child**. • He **grew**. • And walked up **Golgotha**. Where He **purchased** the peace Haggai foretold. • Not with **gold** from the nations. Not with **silver** from the treasury. With **blood** from His veins. • **Shalom**. Right **relationship**. • The **temple** of His body was torn down so that peace with God could be secured. • And He walked out of that **tomb**. Because death could not **hold** Him. • And onto a **mountain**, where He declared what Haggai had said. I am **with** you always, to the end of the age. •••

^ The promises are all **fulfilled**. • Jesus, the Son of God, filled the **tabernacle** with His glory. • And now, the same Spirit who led Israel through the sea **dwells** in you. •••

^ So build **fearlessly**. • For Christ is **with** you. • And your future is **secured**. •••

R How ought this truth **transform** us? •••

Believers

Believers, build **fearlessly**. For Christ is **with** you. And your future is **secured**. • That is the **truth**. Now **live** it. • Stay faithfully **fearless** in the work God has given you. •••

Anchor your daily obedience in His **empowering** presence, not in your own strength. • You are not **building** with what you bring. You are building on what He **supplies**. • Build on the **promise**, not on what you see. •••

Young adult, you stare at a career that feels **small**. **Offer** it. The Lord multiplies **little** loaves. Do the **work** in front of you. Build **fearlessly**. He is building something **greater** than you see. ••• New believer, your faith feels **fragile**. You wonder if you can **stand**. **Offer** that trembling trust. The Spirit **strengthens** the weak. **Work** out your salvation. Build on the **Rock**. He will hold you **fast**. Your **small** faith will move mountains. ••• Mature saint, your years of quiet service seem **unnoticed**. You offer **steady** faithfulness that no one applauds. Keep **building**. The Lord **sees**. Your labour is not in **vain**. Stay faithfully **fearless**. Christ is **with** you. Those **plain** stones carry future glory. ••• Older saint, your body **weakens**. Strength **fades**. You have only prayers to **offer**. **Offer** them boldly. The Spirit **prays** within you. Build through **intercession**. Rest in His **strength**. Your **prayers** shake the heavens. The Lord of Armies **hears**. •••

The **final glory** has come. The **peace** has been purchased. Because He is **with** you now. His Spirit **empowering** you now. You can **build** right where you are now. Without **fear**. Without **paralysis**. Without **looking back**. •••

Unbelievers

Unbeliever, you stand in **rubble** of your own making. • **Failed** attempts. **Broken** promises. **Fading** glories. • You know the **shame** of what might have been. You **fear** God has abandoned you. • You are right to **fear**. Your **sin** deserves silence. Your **rebellion** deserves exile. •••

But **hear** this. The same God who spoke to rubble now **speaks** to you. • He does not demand you **rebuild** yourself. He offers you **Himself**. He offers to be your **Foundation**. The **Rock** where all your attempts have crumbled. He offers to be your **Presence**. Not a **temple** made with hands. He offers to be your **Peace**. **Shalom** with God purchased not by your effort but by Another. •••

Ask Christ. • **Ask** Him now. • Ask Him to be your **Foundation**. • Your **Presence**. • Your promised **Peace**. • He will not **despise** your rubble. • He builds **glory** from ruins. • **Come** to Him. •••

Conclusion

P A **little** boy's lunch fed five thousand. Because **Jesus** took what seemed like nothing and made it more than enough. •

on This morning you've heard the promise, I am **with** you. Don't be **afraid**. • You've seen the **blueprint**. The **final glory** is the greater glory. Because the glory is **not** a cloud. It's a **Person**. Christ has **come**. Christ has **died**. Christ is **risen**. And He is **with** you now. •••

^ So build **fearlessly**. For Christ is **with** you. And your future is **secured**. •••

^ Believer, stay **faithful**. • Anchor your obedience in **His presence**. • Unbeliever, **come** to Him. • **Ask** Him to be your Foundation, your Presence, your Peace. **He** will not turn you away. •••

^ You thought you had so **little** to offer. • The **cross** decides otherwise. •••

^ **Amen**. •••

Close in prayer