

Changing Rooms: God's Glorious Temple

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 August 2004

Preacher: Paul Dudley

[0 : 00] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. We pray that as we come together tonight to hear from your word, that you'll be changing us, that you'll help us to have kingdom perspectives and that we'll be people that will not give up but cling to the great hope that we have in Christ.

We pray this in your son's name. Amen. Amen. I thought myself of a good runner.

I thought that perhaps one day I may even go to the Olympics. As you can see, I'm here and not in Athens. But I thought I was a pretty good runner. I did a bit of training.

My father thought he was somewhat of a coach and so he tried to coach me up a little bit and we used to go running around the farm and do a few hill sprints and one season we even did a pre-season walking sessions and they were great.

We did all this training. You know, I decided that I would try and see how I fared at a half marathon. That's 21 kilometres. It's not that far if you're a marathon runner.

[1 : 10] That's twice that distance. But for a mere junior high student, 21 kilometres is quite a fair distance. But I thought I could do it. My father had entered in the marathon that was on at the same time.

So we started together and off we went. And I was leading the race. I was out in front. I was actually leading this race in Bathurst, the half marathon marathon race.

I was in the front running with the front pack. Can I tell you, there is nothing more exhilarating than running with the pack. You know, you're cruising along. Everyone's so much taller than you. I'm cruising along. I'm thinking, this is great.

This is fantastic. I'm going to kill this. My first half marathon, I could even come in the top three places here. Oh. At the six kilometre mark, I blew up.

Fortunately, there was a little side street that I could nick down so my father wouldn't see me sneaking back. He said, I ran too hard at the beginning. I didn't have a coach there trying to get beside me to encourage me to keep on going.

[2 : 13] He didn't give me any plans. You know, if I would have had all the coaching tips and I would have been fine but I didn't have any of that and so I snuck home with my tail between my legs and came back and waited till my father finished a marathon.

Me? Six kilometres. I didn't get there. I didn't finish. I didn't finish. A great failure.

Did you see Thorpe last night? I don't know if you've seen the shorts. I hope I've wrecked it for you. But Thorpe won in the 400. And it was just, he was emotional but I'm a bit of an all-sob.

I was sitting there and I was emotional. I had tears in my eyes. I was watching the replay. It wasn't even, I didn't sit up and stay at three o'clock in the morning. I watched it this morning and he got there. He just, Hackett was getting closer and closer but Thorpe just got there in the end.

And I had tears in my eyes and the emotion while he's standing there holding the trophy and I thought, behind that man is a great coach. Coaches.

[3 : 22] A great training program. There's all these things that have kept him going on. So he didn't give up. Even with Hackett flying at him in the last straight, he didn't give up.

His spirit didn't give in and he made it. We're looking at the book of Haggai at the moment. Last week we saw that the exiles have come back from Babylon, Babylonia and they've come back to the promised land and they've started to build the temple.

Things didn't go so well. So Haggai comes along and he says, I've got a message for you. You need to get on with building the temple. That was chapter one.

They needed to start getting back to it. Getting back and actually getting on with rebuilding the temple. It's now seven weeks later from last week's.

I know it's only been seven days for us. But for Haggai, it's now some seven weeks later. They started. Three weeks later, they were back building the temple. But it wasn't a very easy job. [4 : 31] Now for this point, I'm going to need a helper. I wonder whether, Vaughan, if you'd come up here. I wonder if you could just flex a few muscles for us to show that you're not a wimp.

We don't want any wimps up here. He looks like he's a fairly sturdy lad. A few muscles there. There's a rock that I just found outside. I wonder if you could just pick that up for us. There it is there. You have to imagine that we're back now in the days of the temple and we're walking over the ruins of a temple that has just been totally destroyed and has been put down on the ground.

That's it. This is, I think this stone, it came from out the front here and I'm assuming that it's probably one of the stones they brought up from a quarry to actually be a part, just a little bit higher if you wouldn't like.

Some people at the back can't see. That's it. Good, thanks. And so they would have had to, you know, brought it up from the quarry down there. Are you okay? Oh, yeah. Good, good.

[5 : 30] Brought it up here and it was, as you can see, you can see the stonework. Just turn around there. You can see all the stonework there. It actually comes from a quarry just down the end of the street there. They brought it up by horse and cart and I'm assuming that this is some of the rubble that was left behind that could be used at any moment for repairs and so, yeah, it's looking good.

So, a little high if you wouldn't mind. It seems to be drooping a little bit. You have to imagine that we're on a part of this temple and the temple that's been pulled down, it was a glorious temple but because the Jews didn't keep their relationship with God, it's going down again.

Just keep it up a little bit. You know, the temple, they just brought it down, the Babylonians. They crushed the temple and so, some 60 years later, Haggai's come and told them you need to start getting on with building the temple again so that you can imagine going over the ruins and people like Vaughan sort of picking up the rocks and going, where does this one go?

But the problem is you're probably fine, that's right down there, not yet, no, no, not yet. Now, you're doing a great job here for me. You have to imagine that they need to redress the stone. That is, the stone's probably all crumbled down, it's got bits broken off it.

You can see, just move your hand there a little bit. That's all right. Just there. It's a little bit broken there. You can turn it around a little bit. That's the way. It's a little bit, you can see there, it's just not cleaned there.

[6 : 50] It needs to be cleaned and it's not particularly, do you want to put it down now, Vaughan? Sure. Thanks, Vaughan, you've done a great job for me. Yeah, it's a bit of a clap, we'll give him a clap.

But can you imagine being there trying to rebuild this temple? You've got to redress all the stone. They didn't have great stone cutters. They had chisels. They had hand, you know, great people like Vaughan, whose strength gave out.

You know, they obviously didn't make them like they do anymore. Was it the other way around? Doesn't matter. Anyhow, there was this, they had to try and get on there and try and build this temple again. Done by hand.

You can imagine them trying to organise the teams to the work site, getting over there, trying to get all the workers together. You can imagine them just needing encouragement to keep on going day by day.

Checking for safety features. Making sure that it was going to be okay. We see there in our reading today, it'd be good for you to have the Bibles open at page 768.

[8 : 01] We see there in verse 3 that there are some among them who are actually complaining and saying, look, we've just started on this building temple here. We've been working for four weeks.

And can I just say, I was back then in the original temple before they pulled it down. It's obviously some of the more elderly people are saying these things. They're going, this temple, it is not going to look as good.

This temple, there is no way we can make it look like the way that it used to be. One, we don't have all the money to actually put the gold on the inside that Solomon had.

We don't have the resources to build it as grand and as spectacular as it was before. We can't do it. This temple we're building is going to be a poor imitation. It's going to look like a little shed out the

back compared to the older temple.

Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing? That's how they view this temple.

[9 : 09] Can you imagine the discouragement going, guys, look, I don't want to dishearten you but it's not going to work. It's going to look pretty bad. I'm not sure that we want to really keep on going on with this.

And so seven weeks later, Haggai comes with this message that we see in chapter 2. His second message to Jerusalem to encourage them to get on with and keep on moving, getting on with the temple.

I guess he had to fight another thing in that month. Someone's worked out the timing of this and they've worked out that in that month there were that many days of festivals and stop work meetings and that type of thing that it actually made it very hard to get on with actually doing anything anyhow.

In that, the seventh month, there were lots of festivals. There was the Sabbath days of rest. There was the first day of the month which was the Feast of Trumpets. Then the tenth day of Atonement. Then there was the fifteenth day of the Feast of Booths which basically they all moved out into little booths for a whole week. I mean, that's obviously not going to work well with working as well. So there's another whole week gone.

[10 : 16] Each one of these festivals is a day out by the way. Then you've got all these different festivals just piled up on top of one another. If you've got all these days break, they're good things but they're going to just, you know, you're not going to see much work happening in that first month.

So Haggai says in verse 4, he comes with a word from the Lord. Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the Lord. Take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehoshadak, the high priest. Take courage, all of the people of the land, says the Lord. Work, for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts, according to the promise that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit abides among you, do not fear.

Haggai says, God says, through Haggai, keep going. Don't fear, don't give up, take heart, get on with it.

I'm with you. We can do this. On verses 6 to 9, we see how God is going to do something miraculous.

[11 : 26] God is going to solve the problem of filling the glory of this new temple. God is going to bring about a changing of rooms. He's going to make something that looks fairly ordinary into something spectacular.

Look there in verses 6 through to 9. For thus says the Lord of hosts, once again in a little while I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land and I will shake the nations so that the treasure of all the nations will come and I will fill the house with splendour, says the Lord of hosts.

God's going to start shaking the world and all the treasure found out throughout the nations is going to come spilling in to this temple. It's going to be a glorious temple.

It's going to be a changing. The silver is mine and the gold is mine, says the Lord of hosts. The latter splendour of the house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts.

And this is the place I will give prosperity, says the Lord of hosts. God is going to bring a changing of rooms. I don't know if you enjoy watching the show Changing Rooms. I love it.

[12 : 32] Michelle and I, it was one of our favourite shows. It was great. What you do is you have two families and what they do is they're going to swap houses and so what one family would do is they say, right, here's the keys for our house and we take the keys and they go to the different houses and then they redo their friend's room up.

And my favourite part was when they get at the end and they walk in and they've got their eyes closed. They go, okay, now open your eyes. And my great, it was always that moment of cringe and you're just waiting for it and they go, wow, isn't that great?

But the ones I loved the most was, oh, oh, oh, oh, it was that moment where they, it just went all very bad and you get that little insight later on where they say, yeah, actually, we're going to have to redo the whole thing again.

You know, our friends, well, they didn't quite get the colour right there, the blue coloured brown on the wall there, it just doesn't suit our decor really, you know, we're not really all that keen on it.

For God, he's doing something glorious with his temple. He's going to bring about a great change in the temple, Haggai says. And this change, people aren't going to go, oh, oh, look at that, oh, look at that temple.

[13:58] Oh, that's no good. That won't work. No, no, no. God is going to bring about something glorious. So, there's Haggai's first bit of encouragement. Take heart, don't give up because God is going to bring about a changing of rooms.

God's going to take this, this temple that you think looks fairly ordinary and he's going to fill it with glory. He's going to bring about something that is fantastic.

Did you notice the way that he spoke about the shaking of the world? This is talking about the eschaton. Now, I'm going to give you a word here that we're going to have to say together so we can practice it.

We're going to say eschatological. Okay, one, two, three, eschatological. That's not too bad as a few didn't say. Let me, just for a moment, you're obviously feeling a little nervous about this.

It's okay. I know it's a big word. I can't spell it but it's a big word. Let's try it again. Eschatological. Right, now, eschatological actually means something to deal with the end.

[15:01] So, if you say eschatological age, you're actually talking about the end days, the age that's at the end, at the very end of things.

That's the eschatological age. So, if you've got an eschatological promise, what are those promises dealing with? Someone, hand up in the air. It's dealing with promises of the end.

Promises dealing with what's going to happen at the end. Here's one. Eschatology is the study of the last days.

Thank you very much. We have a winner over there in the corner. Great. That's right. Eschatology. Here we have a picture of God's eschatological temple. The temple that's going to be at the end there, this glorious temple.

It's going to be this great meeting of man and God. This is what God's saying. You'd get, Haggai's saying, you'd get on with building this temple and you're going to bring about this eschatological age.

[16:02] It's going to be great. Well, what a great encouragement to start with. What a great carrot that's been dangled out in front of the Israelites to follow. There it is there. Get on with it.

Well, it's now December. That was in October that Haggai spoke. He's now speaking in December, December the 18th actually. And this is where we come now to our third message, verses 10 through to 19.

Here, Haggai starts speaking to the people again and this time he's looking at the issue of holiness and defilement.

So, in verse 10 we see, on the 24th day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai saying, thus says the Lord of hosts, ask the priest for ruling. So, God said to Haggai, Haggai, I want you to go to the priest and get a ruling on this. So, Haggai goes and he asks the questions, if one carries consecrated meat in the fold of one's garment with the fold one touches bread or stew or wine or oil or any other kind of food, does it become holy?

[17:14] The priest answered no. Now, back in the priest system what would happen is people would bring their sacrificial animals to atone for sin. So, whether it be your cows or your sheep, they'd bring them in and what would happen is because the priest would work there, part of their payment is they could take some of the holy meat.

Now, they would have their great garments on, great flying garments and what they would do is they'd pull up their garment out like this and hold it out like this and the garment would be a holy garment because it was carrying holy meat.

But they could take that home and they could use it for themselves. It was like their portion, their payment for the work that was done in the temple and so they'd carry around their meat, big lumps of meat carried around and their garments.

Now, the question Haggai's asking here, now this holy meat in the holy garment, if this garment touches something else, does that become holy? So, you know, if I went over to Vaughan and, you know, with my holy garment and Vaughan just happened to touch with his jumper, does his jumper now become holy?

Or the seat that I sit on or all those type of things. And the priest said, no, no, no. holiness isn't contagious. You can't catch it. So, then he goes on to ask the second question.

[18 : 33] Then Haggai said, if one who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean? The priest answered, yes.

That is, back in the Old Testament, if you were to touch someone who was dead, the dead person was actually classed as being unholy, unclean, defiled.

So, if you touched it, then you became defiled. And then if you were to touch something else, that would be, it's like this contagious little, you know, it's like catching a disease type thing.

You would become unclean. And so, Haggai says, yeah, Haggai asks this to the priest and the priest says, yes, it does actually go along the line.

Well then, Haggai, in verse 14, then brings in the application for the people. You see, the people have lacked enthusiasm.

[19 : 30] They've lacked enthusiasm for building the temple and their worship. And because of this, the temple is in ruins and they haven't gone on and built it. You see, God is not central to their lives.

And because God is not central to their lives, their offerings are unacceptable to God. The people have become unclean. Not only are they unclean, their offerings are unclean.

The temple that they're touching, anything they touch is unclean because they haven't got God central. Look there in verse 14. Haggai then said, so it is with the people and with this nation.

Before me, says the Lord, and so with every work of their hands and what they offer there is unclean. And then in verses 15 through to verse 19, Haggai then says, no, get on with building the temple and that's how you're going to fix the problem.

But now consider what will come to pass from this day. Before a stone was placed upon a stone in the Lord's temple, how did you fare? Haggai gets them just to think back.

[20 : 36] How are things going with them? Have they been getting lots of blessings or curses in their life? When one came to a heap of 20 measures, there were but 10.

When one came to a wine vat to draw 50 measures, there were but 20. I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and mildew and hail, yet you did not turn to me, says the Lord. Consider from this day on, from the 24th day of the ninth month, since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider, is there any seed left in the barn?

Do the vine and fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree still yield nothing. From this day on, I will bless you. Haggai gets them to remember that they're actually in the midst of curse because of the way things are.

But if they get on with putting the temple and building the temple, then God will be central amongst them. And that's what Haggai wants. You've got God central in your lives, then you're going to have great blessing, material blessing, here and now, Haggai says.

[21 : 43] From this day, I will bless you. There's the second bit of encouragement. Keep going. You want blessings? We want to get the fruit of our harvest? Get on and build the temple. Get on and get God first in your lives, then we're going to reap some real harvest here.

So there's the second bit of encouragement. Well then, later that day, Haggai comes to Zerubbabel. This is his fourth message of the book, but it's the second message of the day. But this time he comes to Zerubbabel. And he comes up and he tells him that the signet ring that was ripped off from the last king, the last king in Israel, has now been placed back on him.

Back in Jeremiah chapter 22, we see there that Jehoiachin, I think it is pronounced, God talks to him because he was such an evil king and that things weren't improving.

God says to him, what I'm going to do is I'm going to take your signet ring off you. I'm going to take it away. I'm going to tear it away. Now this is highly significant for the people of Israel because the signet ring was the royal ring.

[22 : 55] It was the part of the Davidic line. The promises to David that there would be a great king that would bring about great promises and great blessing. The people of Israel were looking forward to the fulfilment of David's promises that God made to him of this great king.

But Jehoiachin, it ended with him. The signet ring, the lion of David ended with him at that point. The promises is almost like God saying, I'm sorry, I'm taking it away from you now.

That's the end of it. But look here in verses 20 through to 23. The word of the Lord came a second time to Haggai in the 24th day of the month. Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I'm about to shake the heavens and the earth and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms.

I'm about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations and overthrow the chariots and the riders and the horses and all their riders shall fall, every one by the sword of a comrade. On that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Therubbabel, my servant, son of Shittil, says the Lord, and I will make you like a signet ring for I have chosen you, says the Lord of hosts.

Haggai says, we've got a new king back in Israel. Those promises to David, they're back on again. I'm renewing my covenant with Israel here.

[24 : 13] Those great promises of the Davidic king, they're about to come about. But notice there also, notice there the way that God talks about how he's going to bring about these promises.

Again, it's this language of eschatology, the language of the end days, about what's God going to do at the end. Listen to the turmoil we have there. We have there earthquakes, just like when God was on Mount Sinai and he shook the mountains.

We hear there that kingdoms are going to be overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah. where we have catastrophic judgment upon pagan nations. We've got chariots and horsemen and riders just there, been overthrown also, just like in the time of Exodus where they were thrown into the Red Sea.

The enemies destroyed on that day. Panic and confusion where the enemies destroyed one another like in Joshua and Judges. See, God's going to bring about this day. God's going to bring about a great day of judgment.

It's a day that's coming close, Haggai says, and it's going to be a glorious day for Israel. The effect will be that all the nations will be convinced that Yahweh alone is God.

[25 : 28] They will recognise this and they will come to Jerusalem and they will worship him and they'll bring their gifts with them. Can you see here that Haggai's pointing out the importance of the temple, of the Davidic line and the day of the Lord?

Eschatology. All tied into one. Haggai's saying get on with it. Get on with building the temple because when you do those things great things are going to come about.

The eschatological age of blessing and promise is about to be fulfilled. Take heart. A great message for the people to get on with and build in the temple and they did.

They completed it within four years but I wonder whether people at the end of their lifetime after the temple has been built I wonder whether they're scratching their heads going okay where's this eschatological thing that's meant to be happening?

Can anyone sort of tell me where it is? I can't see it. It did come and it has come.

[26 : 42] You might be scratching your head hang on have I missed something here? No you haven't missed anything. You see it's Christ. The beginning the inauguration of this kingdom the inauguration of this eschatological age the beginning of this eschatological age and day has begun with Christ.

Christ is the fulfilment of the temple the temple that was so important for Israel the meeting of God and man it's Christ. The great king the messianic king Jesus the eschatological days begun in his life Christ bringing about the kingdom Christ when he died and rose again was the first in his kingdom and those who trust in him by faith can be a part of that kingdom now.

we can be a part of God's kingdom that is we can enjoy all the spiritual blessings that come through Christ now. We don't get to see the fulfilment of them but it's going to come.

When Christ returns we'll see it. We'll see the grandness and the splendour that we see in Revelation. We see that Christ became the curse for us so that we may enjoy our great relationship with God.

Well let me ask you then do you understand the importance of Christ in your life? Do you trust in Christ? Do you understand the great blessings that can be found in Christ?

[28 : 25] Do you give him thanks as you ought to that we can enjoy these great blessings? what drives you?

What is it that drives your lives? Look at those Olympians, they're driven people aren't they? Can you imagine what time they get up in the morning to actually do all their exercise and all those type of things? They're driven people.

People have got a purpose in life. What's your purpose? What are you driven by? What guides you? What controls you? What directs you? Is it guilt? Does guilt drive you?

That is, you know, I sort of feel guilty about things and therefore I should be doing this. My dad really wanted me to become a doctor and I feel guilty that perhaps I should do that. Are you driven

by resentment and anger?

Is that what drives your life? What drives where you're heading? Or is it fear that drives you? A fear of the unknown or fear of what might be or fear of not having money?

[29 : 30] Is it fears that drive your life? Is it materialism that drives it? Having possessions? Is it approval? What is it that actually drives your life and controls it? In the people of Israel's day, they needed to have God central.

Do you have kingdom perspectives? Is God central in your life? Are you meeting together to spur each other on in these issues? I think it's a good gauge on how keen you are about having God first in your life?

In the way that we take that command seriously to meet with each other, to spur each other on.

Well, I didn't finish my 21 kilometres.

There's a few races I actually didn't finish. But God has done a great work. God has done a great work in my life and the great thing is God is the one who will bring us to completion.

We can have great confidence in this. One day Christ will return. How will you fare on that day? Is this a great moment of hope for us or a moment of despair?

[30 : 41] Amen.