

Peace When God is Faithful

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Preacher: Joe Haynes

[0 : 00] All right, well, you all heard it there, youth and parents of youth. Chris Mitchell's going to make you cry tonight. Actually, very, very grateful for Chris and Lisa and for the wonderful work they've done leading youth group, and that is an incredible blessing for our church.

I want to actually invite up someone else who has been a blessing to our church in a lot of, in sometimes some not-so-obvious ways, but some obvious ways. Joe Haynes is going to be our guest preacher today.

Now, I think, is this your third time preaching here? I think something like that? Fourth time. Fourth time, okay, all right. Amen, you know. So you've sort of become an occasional regular in the pulpit in some way or other.

Irregular. Irregular in the pulpit, right. An irregular Baptist, okay. Yeah, so right now BK is over on the island in Victoria, and he is actually preaching at Joe's church at Beacon Church.

The Lord's church. The Lord, yes. I just attend that church. That's right. I mean Joe's church in the sense of the church you happen to attend at the Lord's. Yes, that's right. So BK is preaching there, and Joe, he's invited Joe to come preach here and to share God's word for us this morning, and that's a big blessing for us.

[1 : 17] And so just very grateful for you, brother. Do you mind if I pray for you before we begin? Father, we thank you so much for Joe, for his faithful ministry for the last 10 years in Victoria, and we're grateful that your gospel ministry is at work there.

Your kingdom is growing there, just as it is here. We see signs of it. We see it in subtle ways and transformed lives.

And we see that you are at work in our lives. You are active. You are producing change and growth. And so, Lord God, I pray through Joe's message, give us a sense of encouragement and change. Lord God, may you encourage him, and may your spirit guide him in saying exactly what needs to be said.

And would you give us ears to hear, to take to heart exactly what we need from his message. We know that it is ultimately this is wisdom that comes not from Joe, but from you.

And, Lord God, I pray that through your servant Joe, you may be honored and glorified. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, it's a pleasure to see you all here and to be with you this morning.

[2 : 32] I'm traveling with my sister, Sherry, my eldest sister of three. And she lives in Ladner and thought it would be lovely to join me on the drive here and come and worship with you this morning. And BK, as Dave said, is preaching at Beacon Church, and so they get a real treat, and you get the leftovers.

So, you know, thank you for putting up with me again. For the fourth time, you know, last time I was here, you may not remember, you may not remember this, I forgot my Bible last time. And so Dave had to run around and find me an ESV Bible.

I don't know if you remember that. I've done it myself. You've done it. And so I thought, well, perhaps that's the reason why I haven't been back here in a couple of years now. So that church didn't want to invite back that pastor who forgot his own Bible.

But you are gracious and God is good. And so would you turn with me in the word of the Lord to Haggai, the book of Haggai. Chapter 2 is where we'll find our text this morning.

And in my Bible, that's on page 1371. I don't know if that means anything to you. But Haggai, Chapter 2. And as is our custom at Beacon Church, and I see that you did this earlier in the service as well, would you stand with me for the reading of God's word as I read this text with you?

[3 : 44] Stand with me for the reading of God's word because it is God who is holy and we want to revere him, give reverence to him as is appropriate. So I'll read in Haggai, Chapter 2, verses 1

through 9, and I'm reading in the English Standard Version.

In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, 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? 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 Lamb, declares the Lord. 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.

Fear not. 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. I will shake all the nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.

[5 : 11] The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts. 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.

Thus far, the reading of God's word. Would you pray with me? Father, we ask now as we come under the authority of your word, that you would give us, Lord, grace, that we would have ears to hear it, hearts to receive it, and, Lord, give us strength to obey it.

We ask these things for the glory and majesty of God our Savior and Jesus Christ our Lord, and we ask this in his name. Amen. Amen. Please be seated. The title of my sermon this morning is, Peace, When God is Faithful.

And this morning, this passage I want to just show you very briefly, you can see that in verse 9, this passage ends with an emphasis on what God will do in the future.

There is an end times or eschatological emphasis at the end of this passage, but really it's not the main point of the passage. So I'll leave Dave to deal with the eschatology of this passage, or BK when he returns, and I want to talk to you more about the things that are the main meat of this text of Scripture.

[6 : 32] I want to talk to you this morning about what's real. What's real? I could ask how things are going in your life, and maybe I'd get a bunch of different kinds of answers.

If I asked how are you doing financially, maybe you'd tell me what's in your bank account, or how things are going month to month, and you're making progress in that way. I could ask about how your career is going, and you might tell me that you got a promotion, or that things are challenging right now, and you've had a setback.

You might talk to me about your school education, and how if you're younger and you're still in university, how graduation is coming, or perhaps how tomorrow or this week you return to your next semester, and you're worried about how that might go.

I could ask you about your kids. If you've got kids, and you could tell me that they're in high school or elementary school, and they're such little brats that you're really at the end of your rope, or perhaps you've got darling children, and things are going well with that, and you would tell me that you are one of those great parents who are blessed with children who make the home a place of harmony and happiness, and I could ask you about how your romantic life is going, and you could tell me about your marriage, or about your boyfriend or girlfriend, or how that is going on that front. But I want to talk to you this morning about what's real. How are you really doing? Not with regard to all those things, but with regard to your spiritual life.

[7 : 52] How are you doing? Did you know that God, when you became a Christian, God did not make himself available to be your servant? When you became a Christian, it was to enter a relationship with the King.

You exist to serve Him, not the other way around, and you know this. If you're a Christian here this morning, you exist to bring God glory.

That's the reason for your life. And this is what our Lord Himself preached, didn't He, in the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus said, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5.16. But what if, what if you know this is the purpose of your life, and what if you know that your reason for being is to bring God glory through your good works, but what if things aren't

going so well?

What if your little light isn't shining like it used to? What if your love for God is more rather growing cold?

[9 : 08] What if things aren't going well, and what if your good works are drying up? I want to talk to you this morning about what's real. Has God given you peace?

Is that what's the most real thing in your life? Has God given you peace? If you look with me just briefly at Haggai chapter 1, I'm jumping in in this sermon to the second chapter, but if you look with me just briefly at Haggai 1, look at verse 4, and this word of confrontation, of conviction, that the prophet brings to this people.

520 years before Christ was born. In Haggai 1 verse 4, the Lord asks through the prophet, is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies in ruins?

Speaking of the Lord's temple, this house that lies in ruins, God asks, what about your fancy houses? You're living in fancy houses. What about my house? The Lord asks. The most real thing that should be our first consideration as followers of the Lord.

How's that doing? Look with me at verses 7 through 9 as Haggai drives this point home. Thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Again, what's real in your life?

[10 : 31] 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. You looked for much and behold, it came to little.

Isn't that the way life often feels? What's real in life? Is God blessing you? Has God given you peace? And Haggai the prophet asks in verse 9, when you brought it home what you gathered away, God says, I blew it away.

Why declares the Lord of hosts, because of my house that lies in ruins while each of you busies himself with his own house.

What's real? Is what's real really what is driving and centering our lives? Are we serving the Lord or do we expect him to serve us? Are we living and existing for the glory of God or for our own pleasure while the Lord's house lies in ruins?

What's real? And has God given us peace? Well, look with me just towards the end of Haggai chapter 1 and you see in verse 12 as the people hear the preaching, the first sermon of this prophet Haggai, in verse 12 it says, Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, 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.

[11 : 58] And then in verse 14 we see something marvelous. Look at verse 14 with me of chapter 1. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, 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. When we enter chapter 2, we're entering the picture about a month later, 27 days later.

And in that time, the people began working zealously and eagerly for the Lord to come back and rebuild his house after the Babylonians had destroyed it. And there's a great deal of zeal and revival and enthusiasm among the people of Israel, but after 27 days, things are flagging a little.

We come back in Haggai chapter 2 and it's the second of four sermons that Haggai preaches in this little book. There's one sermon in chapter 1. We just read much of it. The second sermon is the one we're looking at this morning in chapter 2, verses 1 to 9.

And then the third sermon is in chapter 2, verses 10 to 19. And the fourth, the little one, at the end of the book, verses 20 to 23 of chapter 2. Four sermons delivered over a period of two months or so, I think it is, in the book of Haggai.

[13 : 19] And this morning, we're diving right into just the second sermon because I want to talk to you about what's real and about what your purpose is and what is God actually doing in your life and are you paying attention?

As we look at this text of Scripture, we come to this point and Haggai the prophet needs to preach to the people the word of the Lord. This is the only thing that will solve the problem of their discouragement.

And I would submit to you this morning that the only thing that will help you get back to where you are living knowing the pleasure of God, knowing the peace of God that He gives, knowing that your life matters because of the work that He is doing in you and through you, the only way that you will solve the problem of your present discouragement, if that's how you are here this morning, the only way is by hearing the word of the Lord.

And listening, receiving His word and letting Him do His work in you. And so this morning we look to the prophet Haggai and I pray as I've prayed for you this morning that I pray that God will use this for your benefit as He has for mine.

We see in this prophecy or this passage rather of Haggai preaching a few things I'd just like to point out to you. First, as we look at Haggai chapter 2 verses 1 to 9, notice that the idea of glory dominates this passage.

[14:50] Glory. The brilliant display of the worth of God. Glory. Notice how it dominates the first nine verses of chapter 2.

So in verse 3 there's a memory of the former glory the Lord recalls to the people's mind. A memory of former glory and then in verse 9 there's a promise of latter glory that will be greater than the former glory.

There's a promise of latter glory in verse 9. So really this sermon that Haggai preached in Haggai chapter 2 verses 1 to 9 takes place between the old glory that used to be and the future glory that isn't yet.

That's when the sermon drops. In a time where the people remember what it used to be and they long for it and they don't yet see what God promises in the future, the future glory. But the idea of God displaying the worth of His excellence is prominent in this passage.

That's why the word of the Lord comes to the prophet Haggai. That the people would come back to reality. Remember the glory of God that they can't yet see.

[15:57] The other thing I'd like you to notice before we really dive into this passage is how often as you heard me read it, read it, as you heard me read it, as you heard me read it, how often it says the Lord of hosts in these nine verses.

Did you notice that? It's kind of repetitive and that's on purpose. The Lord of hosts. Six times in these few verses. The Lord of hosts. The word Lord as you know because BK would have taught you is capitalized here to represent the name, the personal name of the covenant name of God, Yahweh.

Yahweh. And the word, the phrase the Lord of hosts means Yahweh and hosts means armies and so this is the title or name of God, Yahweh of armies.

A militant God. You can picture Yahweh describing himself like this as if, as if, it's sort of like God has drawn his sword. He's standing there ready for action, ready for battle to, to do something. Yahweh of armies. armies. He's about to act and he's about to act with strength and power. Six times in this passage and maybe you think of Yahweh of armies as a title for God when he's about to go and, you know, like rain plagues down upon Egypt like he did through Moses.

[17:21] Do you remember? Maybe you have this idea about Yahweh of armies as, as like when, when he parted the Red Sea and drowned the armies of the great Egyptian empire at that time.

when he does something like that. Maybe you think of Yahweh of hosts, Yahweh of armies as the appropriate title for God when God is doing something, when he's on the move and something exciting or dramatic or, or spectacular in the world is happening.

But the way that Haggai preaches about Yahweh of armies is to discouraged people. And it's surprising, God's people have grown weary in their work.

And maybe you've grown weary in your work. Whatever it is God has called you to do, maybe it's to be a pastor, maybe it's to be a faithful husband or faithful wife, to parent children, maybe you're involved in foster care or adoption and that's a wearying work.

Maybe you're a school teacher, whatever it is God has called you to do. Maybe you're discouraged in your work and the reality check you need to remember this morning is who is God?

[18:44] He is Yahweh of armies. His sword drawn in his hand and he's ready to act and to do miracles once again. And you need to remember what's real.

Yahweh of armies, God's people do grow weary in their work but God does not grow weary in his. You can't see it but you need to believe it and you need to live in that belief, in that faith.

And so the theme of my sermon this morning is that Haggai gives three reality checks that help you work by faith, work by faith and not by sight.

Christian, you will never experience the peace with God that you crave and that you're hungering for, living by what you can just see.

You need to live and work by faith. So what robs you of your peace? What is it that's stealing your peace with God? I'd suggest there are a few things.

[19 : 54] One is when you're serving yourself, living for your own self, not for his glory. The second might be when you're worried that you're not doing enough for God. You're like maybe Martha.

Remember the story of Mary and Martha. You're busy doing stuff for God and trying to earn his favor and there's no peace in that. Thirdly, maybe you don't have peace with God because you've stopped serving him.

You've become discouraged or depressed and you've taken your eyes off of him and why you were working in the first place. And fourth, maybe you're discouraged and have no peace with God because your life's work and your service to God seems like it isn't accomplishing anything.

It's not what you thought it was going to be. You had big dreams and big hopes and big plans when you began but those things aren't turning out the way you thought. So what's missing? Well, reality. God, you've taken your eyes off of God. He hasn't changed. Yahweh of hosts is still faithful and you need to once again remember God's faithfulness. So again, the title of my sermon is Peace When God is Faithful.

[21 : 01] The first point I'd like to bring to your attention in verses 1 to 3 of chapter 2 of Haggai is this. Be aware of how you see God's work. Be aware of how you see God's work.

So let me ask you this question. What is Yahweh of hosts, Yahweh of armies, the Lord of hosts, what is he doing today?

And how would you answer that question? Would you automatically point perhaps to events in the Middle East? To great geopolitical events that we're seeing unfold in our lifetimes?

What about the good works that God has given you? Would you point to the good works that God has given you as what God is doing today in the world?

The good works that you are supposed to do so that others can see and glorify your Father in heaven. Is that what you'd point to if somebody asks, what is God up to today in the world? And you'd say, look at my life.

[22 : 05] Sounds arrogant, doesn't it? Look at my life and see the good works I'm doing. That's what God is up to right now, as far as I know. Is that what you would say? Look with me at verses 1 and 2 of Haggai chapter 2.

In the seventh month on the 21st day of the month, 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 Jehoshaddak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, stop right there.

Right between chapter 1 verse 15, the end of the first section of Haggai, and chapter 2 verse 1, there's about 27 days have gone by, between September 21st and October 17th in the year 520 BC.

But the people there had only been working as they'd come back to work on the temple, to rebuild God's temple. They'd only been working on it, well, for maybe two and a half or three weeks at best. Why? Because there was a feast holiday. The holidays had come. There was a holiday called the Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Tents, really is what it is.

[23 : 17] When the people of Israel would live in tents, sounds fun, they'd live in tents for a week or so, and eat a lot of food, and they'd remember and tell stories about how God had done great and wonderful, miraculous things in ancient times.

Long time ago, kids, this is what we're talking about. And we're living, it's like camping out, going to a church camp out or something like that, Bible camp, something like that, to teach kids about the ancient work of the Lord so that they'd believe in Yahweh, and the Feast of Booths, or the Feast of Tabernacles, and they'd been living in their tents with their families for about a week.

So picture this with me then. You've been camping with your family in your tent for a week. Some of you who are a little bit imbalanced, they like that sort of thing. The rest of us, we don't like camping. Why would we go live in the dirt when we can live in perfectly good, nice houses? But we go camping every year with our kids, and I really, I love every minute of it. Well, here you are camping

in a tent with your kids for a week, commemorating how God had rescued your ancient ancestors long ago from Egypt and taking care of them for 40 years in the wilderness when they lived in tents, so that's why you're living in tents.

But those great miracles of the past that you're talking to your kids about, it seems like ancient history. It's old news. And as you're sitting there thinking about what God did in the past and trying to make your kids believe this, really your mind keeps going back to your list of chores at home.

[24 : 53] The repairs you need to do on your house, the animals that perhaps need tending, not to mention the disappointing harvest that chapter one makes reference to. You're worried about regular life, real life.

You don't really have much time for this stuff that you're supposed to be teaching your kids about God. And here comes the prophet Haggai with yet another sermon about how you need to put God first.

That was what he preached on in chapter one. You need to work on God's house first, make God your top priority. And as Haggai's preaching, you're looking at the work that you and your friends and the people of Judah have been doing, building the foundation of the Lord is not finished yet. Just the outline of the temple is now beginning to be visible, what the temple will be as you rebuild. And you're looking over at this rubble turning into the beginning of a building.

And it doesn't look like much. And the old people say it's nothing like the old temple was. It's nothing like the good old days, the temple they remember.

[25 : 58] And suddenly you kind of tune in to what the prophet Haggai is preaching. And it's like he was reading your mind. Look with me at verse three. He says this, Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory?

And how do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes? Haggai puts three questions before those people. The first one is, Who is left who remembers the former glory of this house?

And the answer has got to be very few. When the people were taken into exile, it was 70 years before this. So who is left? Well, not many.

The Babylonians destroyed the former temple 66 years earlier, I guess exactly. And anyone old enough to remember what the old temple had looked like must have been old enough then to understand what they were looking at when they saw the old temple.

So they're what? In their 70s and 80s? Who's left? Well, not many. Just asking the questions a little bit discouraging. Who's left? The second question Haggai asks them is, how does it look to you now?

[27 : 06] How does it look in your eyes? And the answer to that is, not good. Unimpressive. It's pathetic, really. The old people say so.

It's nothing like it used to be. And the third question he asks, and this is the word of the Lord through the prophet Haggai, doesn't it look like nothing? Isn't it like nothing in your eyes?

If you were to compare it to something, wouldn't that something be nothing? The work that God has given you to do that you've been doing hard, that's costing you so much, that's taking you from all your duties at home, your family obligations, your farm obligations, the repairs on your house, and the work that God wants you to do looks like nothing?

This is what the word of the Lord says through the prophet Haggai. How can such insignificant work be so important to God that he wants you to drop everything and do this?

There must be some mistake. Haggai chapter 1 verse 8, in Haggai's first sermon there, he had said that God wanted them to build this house so that he would take pleasure in it, so that he would be glorified in it.

[28 : 17] How can God be glorified in this? Look at this. We've barely got the foundation done in it. It just doesn't look like anything. How is this pathetic excuse for a new temple going to make other people see and glorify God by it?

But you see, as we come back to reality, not the questions and the doubts in our mind, but I mean reality. God did not tell them to build him a glorious house in chapter 1 verse 8.

God told them to gather materials and build the house and that he would be glorified by that work. That's what he said. God does not call you and God does not call me, he has not called me to be glorious.

He's not calling you to be glorious and impressive. God calls us to be obedient. And so your work in your life, your good work that God sets apart for you to do does not have to be as impressive as

anybody else's good works.

The path of comparison is a path to discouragement. This is not how God is glorified. Not by doing something impressive, as impressive as somebody else.

[29 : 40] How you serve God today doesn't even have to be as important as how people served God in the good old days in order for God to be glorified, for God to have pleasure in it.

What is the Lord of hosts, Yahweh of armies doing today in your life? Look with me again at chapter 1, verse 14. Let's see what he did then for those people.

It says in chapter 1, verse 14, And the Lord, that is Yahweh, stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people.

And they came and they worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God. Well, what work is God stirring in your spirit to do?

Ordinary stuff? Mundane stuff? Faithful stuff? Haggai's first reality check called the people to see their humble work as God's work.

[30 : 49] So that you must not judge by appearances. Learn to see God at work in the work he calls you to do.

Well, the second reality point in the reality check, and therefore my second point, is to be steadfast in how you do God's work. The first one is learn to see God at work.

And the second is be steadfast in how you do God's work. And that's in verses 4 and 5. So let me ask you another question. What is it, do you suppose, about the good works that ordinary Christians do, that is supposed to make others glorify our Father in heaven?

That's what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. Let your little light shine, right? The song? You remember this? Who remembers the song? How many of you are that old? Yeah. Oh, the hands went down some.

Oh, a couple hands went up. Let your little light shine. And the point of that, letting your light shine, was so that God would be glorified as others see your good works. What is it, do you suppose, about the good work of ordinary Christian people that makes others glorify our Father in heaven?

[31 : 59] Well, when Yahweh of hosts or Yahweh of armies draws his sword and acts with mighty power, in chapter 1 in verse 15, in verse 14, he stirred the hearts of Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the remnant of the people to get working on a building project that didn't impress anybody and never would.

Can I be blunt? When God stirs your spirit to serve him in some ordinary way, it is not the greatness of your work that glorifies God.

Do you know what it is? It's that God would use you to glorify himself. And the ordinary work and the ordinary way that God stirs the spirits of his people to serve him is by, this is the ordinary way, is by sending some, like, strange person to preach the word of God.

And he stirs up his people by some guy who ordinarily you wouldn't like to spend any time with to do it. But God uses the foolishness of preaching to build his church as a magnificent surprise to everybody in the universe.

Now, this is the way God does it. Do not be conformed to this world, Paul says in Romans chapter 12, verse 2, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God and what is good and acceptable and perfect.

[33 : 43] Your mind needs transforming and it happens by the word of God. Well, Haggai urges the people to obey with three encouragements. But he doesn't lie to them or trick them.

He doesn't try to inspire them with how great this temple is going to be when they're finished. He doesn't try to make their work, their ordinary work of building sound all adventurous and romantic. It's not. It's not. He doesn't try to make them think it's going to be some great adventure. What Haggai does do, he says, here we are in verse 4, yet now.

In spite of all that, in spite of how small the work is, how unimpressive the work is, how hard the work is, how discouraged you are, yet now in verse 4. Look at verse 4 with me. Yet now, be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord.

Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehoshadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work. For I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts.

[34 : 52] Three encouragements here. Yet now, yet, even still, in spite of all that, it's not much of a building. It's like Eeyore. It's not much of a tale.

It's not much of a building, but this is the work God has called you to do. It's nothing compared to the old building. Yet now, be strong, Zerubbabel. Be strong, Joshua. Be strong, all you people of the land.

Be strong. Have courage, it means. Man up. From Zerubbabel to the remnant. From the governor, Zerubbabel, all the way down to the smallest goat herder.

Be strong, he says, all you people of the land. Stand firm. Be steadfast. Be men and women who know their duty and do it.

See how God addresses the people in verse 4? Do you see it? What does he call them? All you people of the land. And that's not a romantic description like in one of those Hallmark movies where the farmer is so rugged, good-looking, and there's something wonderful and romantic about the way he tills the soil of the earth.

[36 : 03] That's not the idea going on here. You people of the land. This is a practical description. There's a lot of real life in those words, you people of the land.

Be strong, you people of the land. People of the land are people who build houses on that land and repair those houses when they break down and the roof leaks and they patch it. People of the land are people who get married in that land and raise children there.

People of the land are people who plant crops in that dirt and they harvest those crops that they planted. People of the land are people who prepare meals from the food and from the crops grown in that land and they eat those meals with their children, who disciple their children in that country, in that land, and they teach them to know the Lord, to know Yahweh.

People of the land are people who work and who rest and who worship in that place, in that land God gave them. There's a lot of ordinary, real life to live no matter who you are, great or small or old or young, exceptional or ordinary.

And in the real life God has set before you, in the land where he has placed you, your duty is to serve him, to obey him, to worship him.

[37 : 26] So what does the word of the Lord say? Be strong. Have courage. Be steadfast. Be women and men who know your duty.

And what? Do it. You know what really doesn't matter? It doesn't matter at all if your little boy ever grows up to be an NHL player.

Or if your little girl grows up to be the next, or a future prime minister of Canada. Who knows? It could be the next prime minister. No. It didn't say that. If your little girl grows up to be the future prime minister of Canada, that doesn't matter at all.

What your kids grow up to do doesn't matter. What matters is that they serve the Lord. That they know the Lord and they worship him. That they see their parents be strong.

Be ordinary. And bring God glory by being used by him. So this encouragement to be strong is the word of the Lord. Do you see that? What does he say?

[38 : 31] Three times. Be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord. He said it. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehoshadak, the high priest, declares the Lord. Be strong, all you people of the land.

This is the word of the Lord. But then Yahweh wants them to see what they can't see with their own eyes. And look with me in the middle of verse 4. They can't see it by the balls of flesh and the sockets and a bone in their heads.

They can't see it with their eyes. But in the middle of verse 4, the most important reality they need to be in tune with. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts.

This is the great reason why ordinary life lived in the land that God has brought you to is significant no matter who you are.

Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts, Yahweh of armies. The greatest display of the awesome power of God in the universe today is not when he destroys armies and parts seas and does things like that or topples empires.

[39 : 44] The greatest display of the Lord of hosts at work today in the universe is when the Lord stirs your spirit by his word and gives you courage and power to be strong and obedient and do your work.

That is God at work. The work of the Lord, Yahweh, and there is no such thing as unimportant work for the Christian.

Nothing could be further than the truth. Everything Christians do in obedience and faithfulness to God is universe-changing, awesome displays of the power of Almighty God.

Do you really believe that? It's never trivial for the Christian. It matters washing dishes and doing laundry, mowing the lawn and gassing up your truck and taking the kids to school or whatever. Because it's all God's work. Work, for I am with you, declares Yahweh of armies. Look with me at verse 5. According to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt, my spirit remains in your midst.

[40 : 58] Fear not. This was 900 years earlier than Haggai was when Moses led the people from Egypt into the promised land. And in Exodus, God said, They prayed for forgiveness.

You know what God did? He forgave them every time they asked. God forgave them. He stayed with them when the kingdom split in civil war. He stayed with them when he brought Babylon to destroy their country and he scattered them into exile.

He stayed with them when he brought them back under Zerubbabel and Joshua. He stayed with them. He sent Haggai to preach his word and he said, I'm with you. I'm still with you. My spirit remains with you.

Because of the promise, the covenant promise that he had made to never leave them, he stayed with them. His spirit remained among them still. And in reality, God is always faithful to his promise. Look at me again at verse 5. According to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt, my spirit remains in your midst.

[42 : 34] Fear not. So I need to say something here at this point that you need to hear. And I'm not allowed to sugarcoat this.

The number one reason why believers stop believing is sin. It's not because God stopped being trustworthy.

He didn't change. The reason people who for a while serve God and then quit and they give up on God and they stop doing good works and they stop going to church and they stop worshiping Jesus Christ is never because God stopped forgiving them, but because they stopped asking him to.

The whole point of rebuilding the temple was so people who know their sinners would have a place to go and receive assurance of forgiveness. Assurance of pardon.

Assurance that a sacrifice had been offered that would propitiate God and take away their sin and atone for their guilt. A place where believers could come in weakness and discouragement and fear and say, God, I'm sorry.

[43 : 49] Forgive my sin. And you know what God does every single time you ask? Forgives. That was the point of rebuilding the temple. A place to receive pardon and mercy and grace in your time of need and know that God forgives sinners.

So when you look at verse 5 then, and you remember that we're reading this centuries after Haggai, we're reading this from the perspective of the cross of Christ. And you remember this covenant that God made with the people that he would always remain with them.

Well, we remember that in Christ we have a better covenant. We have a better covenant in Christ. And this is an amazing thing. Don't you know that the Son of God shed his own blood to purchase infinite forgiveness for all sinners who ask him, who believe in him?

And anyone who asks for mercy, who asks for pardon, who relies on Jesus Christ to be made clean, is made clean. Anyone who asks, receives.

Well, then how can you think God would ever abandon you or that he ever changed and he ever stopped? No, it's you who abandoned him. My friend, God will not abandon you.

[45 : 13] It is you who must not abandon God. So be strong. Be firm. Do not be afraid, says the word of the Lord through the prophet Haggai to these discouraged people.

Well, the great work that God is doing right now among his people, just like back then, is that by giving us his spirit to stay with us.

What a thought that is. And not just with us, is it? But in us. Can you just think of what God has done?

By giving us his spirit to be in us, those who are in Jesus Christ by faith. It is therefore God who holds on to you.

It is God who makes you stand. It is God who makes you strong. It is God who does just what he did in chapter 1, verse 14, and stirs your heart, stirs your spirit to work for him.

[46 : 11] What is he stirring your spirit to do? And he does this all, the work of God in your humble, ordinary circumstances. It is God's work.

And so, Haggai's first reality check, it teaches you to see your humble work as God's work. And the second reality check is that God is with us and in us who believe in his son, and it makes you steadfast in the work that he gives you to do.

And Haggai's third reality check teaches you to be patient in how you wait for God to work. Be patient in how you wait for God to work. So, let me ask this question again in another way. What is Yahweh of armies doing today? He is building his church. Gathering his people. That's what a church is. People God has gathered. He is transforming them by his grace. He is strengthening them by his love.

[47 : 18] So, did you really think that the big news of what God is doing in the world today is about events in the Middle East? Well, my friend, my friend, never take your eyes off of what God is doing in the church.

As those people slept in tents that week to remember the great miracles that God performed in ancient times, yeah, they must have had a hard time really seeing how God could do those things again in them.

Just regular people. How could he possibly glorify himself in the humble work that they had been called to do? But we need to come back to reality and remember who God is.

Look what Haggai preaches to them in verse 6. Verse 4.

Verse 6 begins with the word for. For. F-O-R. It's a word that gives a reason. And the reason not to be afraid at the end of verse 5 is because it's for the reason of what God is about to do.

[48 : 39] Thus says Yahweh of armies. Thus says the Lord of hosts. That means Yahweh of armies has spoken and he will not change his mind. And he says yet once more in a little while.

Which means that the great works God did in ancient times are a foretaste of the greater works he's about to do. Yet once more in a little while.

In a little while means. In a little while. That's what it means. It means soon. And this isn't meant to give you an approximate time for what God is going to do in the end times.

This isn't meant to give you a schedule or a date on the calendar. It's meant to teach you to wait. And be patient. Yet once more in a little while. Just wait for it. Hang on and wait for what God is going to do.

Look with me at verses 6 to 9. 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. And I will shake all nations so that the treasures of all nations shall come in.

[49 : 43] And I will fill this house with glory says the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine. The gold is mine declares the Lord of hosts. 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. Yet once more points back to the ancient times when Moses.

And this has to be one of the most significant and important reality checks in the history of the world. When Moses stood and saw God on Mount Sinai. Right? Do you remember that?

What happened? Moses saw God descend on Mount Sinai in fire and lightning. So that his presence shook the earth. And you know what? Yahweh of hosts says he's coming again.

Yet once more and he will shake the earth with his presence. Moses and the people saw God shake Sinai. And you know what? God is about to shake not just Sinai.

[50 : 49] But the whole world with his presence. When Genesis 1 verse 1 says in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Scholars understand this is a Hebrew way of saying the universe.

So what God is saying here is yet once more in a little while I will shake the universe. There is nothing God did not make. And he is about to make his presence felt and known everywhere. Not just in Egypt. Not just on Sinai. Everywhere. And the people of Israel saw. They saw with their own eyes how God put the fear of him in the hearts of the Egyptians.

Who had captured them and enslaved them for all those centuries. So that as Israel was leaving and the Egyptians feared God. The Egyptians gave the people of Israel whatever they asked for. Do you remember that?

Exodus chapter 12 verse 36 says they plundered the Egyptians. Everything they asked for the Egyptians gave it up. The silver and the gold. They gave it all up to the people of Israel.
[51 : 49] And they plundered the Egyptians. You know what? Yahweh of hosts says he is about to plunder the nations again. Not just Egypt but all the nations says verse 7.

Yahweh of hosts is about to claim all the wealth of the world. As spoils of war. It belongs to him. And he will do with it what he pleases. What did Jesus say? The meek shall inherit the earth. The meek shall inherit the earth. The poor in spirit will be given the kingdom of God. It belongs to them. And God will give his kingdom to those who believe in his son. When that day comes. Yet once more in a little while and that day is coming. So the magnificent wealth of Solomon's kingdom. Of Solomon's great magnificent glorious temple. Is nothing compared. Compared.

[52 : 52] To what Yahweh of hosts is about to do. In the house he is building now. Now. What is that house? The Lord says heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me? Says the Lord of hosts. Or what is the place of my rest? In Acts 7 49. Doesn't the writer of Hebrews also say?

Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And. And. We are his house. If indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

Hebrews 3 6. Well my dear. Discouraged. Brothers and sisters in Christ. Your labor.

In the Lord is never in vain. This church was bigger last time I was here. Your labor in the Lord is never in vain.

[53 : 53] It doesn't matter how big or small the church is. Or humble. Or weak. Or poor. Your work as humble as it is. Is never nothing.

Do not ever let it be nothing in your eyes. Whatever good works. The spirit of God stirs in your heart. And your spirit to do for him. His important work.

Significant work. Even if it's very mundane. Even if it's just obeying one more day. It's for the glory of God. That he gives you endurance.

To stand and to be strong. And this is what Paul says in 1 Corinthians. Chapter 3. And in verse 16 he adds. Do you not know that you are God's temple.

And that God's spirit dwells in you? God is faithful today. That's reality. He is faithful today.

[54 : 49] That's what's real. And this is the work that Yahweh of hosts is doing even in us. Can you believe it? Even in us. In this place. He gives the grace of peace.

So let your light shine before others. Our Lord commanded. That they may see your good works.

And give glory to your father who's in heaven. And Haggai the prophet of the Lord said.

That the latter glory of the house of the Lord. Will be greater than the former glory ever was. So my prayer is this for you. May his presence. His steadfast love. And his powerful working.

And his grace. Be glorified. In your weakness. Your humility. Your ordinariness. In you. And in us.

And in this church. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Amen. Father we ask your blessing on your word. Oh Lord that you would cause it to change our hearts.

[55 : 47] Give us endurance and strength. And grace to stand and be strong as you commanded us to. Because you are with us. And that we would Lord not be afraid of anything else. If we fear you and you only. For you are our God and Savior.

And we worship you through Jesus Christ your son. Amen.