

Hope for the Impure

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[0 : 00] Now, some of you may remember a rather bit of a difficult experience that I had a couple years ago shortly. Within a month of my arrival here at the church, I got really sick.

I got really sick within the first month of when I got here because that was the time that was, was it September of 2015? Am I getting my years right? It's all a blur now. There was a time when a really bad stomach bug was going around town.

Some of you are already nodding like, oh yeah, I remember that. You know, the dreaded Norwalk virus that convinced half the children in Squamish just, you know, that the best course of action was spend a few days throwing up at home. So I hadn't had a stomach bug in forever, but I also hadn't been working in the same building as a daycare in forever.

And it's not like I was hanging out in the Camp Sunshine area, but just walking through it was enough to contaminate me with this virus, with this horrible disease. And it was so contagious, I remember that our daycare actually had to be shut down for a bit because all the workers were sick. No one could work. And we understand how that happens. We understand how a contagion works. We understand that to avoid catching a disease, you have to keep yourself clean.

[1 : 23] You have to keep your hands washed. You have to avoid contamination. Because any sick person, someone who's got a cold or a flu, they can contaminate you if you're healthy, if they have a communicable disease.

So we intuitively understand and have understood for many years what science has shown us, that basically gross stuff gets everywhere, doesn't it? Just, oh man, it just gets everywhere.

And now we're going to see this principle, this larger principle laid out for us today in God's Word in the Bible. And we're going to find it in the Old Testament in the book of Haggai, chapter 2.

Now if you've missed the last couple of weeks, here's what's going on in the book of Haggai. The year is 520 BC, and the Lord God of Israel, he has a series of messages to be delivered in the city of Jerusalem by a Jewish prophet named Haggai.

Now 65 years before these messages, the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem had been destroyed. It had been destroyed by an invading army from the empire of Babylon.

[2 : 27] This was an act of judgment that the Lord brought on the people of Israel. So the city was ruined, the temple was destroyed, the people were sent into exile. But now decades later, the Lord has returned his people, restoring them from exile, brought them back to Jerusalem.

They've begun to rebuild the temple. But now they've abandoned their building project. After only just a couple of years of building, they've laid the foundations, but then they've just stopped.

For 16 years, the temple site has sat in ruins. And so over the last two weeks, we read Haggai's first two prophecies that came in 520 BC, the first one on August 29th, the second one on October 17th. So that first prophecy, the August prophecy, it was a call to no longer neglect the worship of God. It was a call to rebuild his temple in Jerusalem.

And so the leaders, the people of the land, they listened, they obeyed God's command to rebuild his house. And so the second prophecy that came in October, it was given to encourage the people.

[3 : 35] Because they realized as they were rebuilding, they were reminded that this new temple, it was going to be nowhere near as impressive as the first temple that was built by King Solomon.

And so now we reach a third and a fourth prophecy from the Lord. These third and fourth prophecies, they arrive on the same day. Two prophecies in one day, what a deal.

And they arrive on December 18th, so another two months later. So these are a prophecy, these are prophecies about contamination and impurity, and a prophecy about hope for an impure people. Here's what God the Holy Spirit has to say to you and me today in Haggai chapter 2, verses 10 through 23. So if you're using one of the blue Bibles our usher's handed out, it's on page 791, page

791, Haggai chapter 2, verses 10 through 23.

On the 24th day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet. Thus says the Lord of hosts, ask the priests about the law.

[4 : 49] If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?

The priest answered and said, no. Then Haggai said, if someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?

The priest answered and said, it does become unclean. Then Haggai answered and said, so it is with this people and with this nation before me, declares the Lord.

And so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean. Now then, consider from this day onward, before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the Lord, how did you fare?

When one came to a heap of 20 measures, there were but 10. When one came to the wine vat to draw 50 measures, there were but 20. I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail.

[5 : 57] Yet you did not turn to me, declares the Lord. Consider from this day onward, from the 24th day of the ninth month, since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider.

Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on, I will bless you.

The word of the Lord came a second time to Haggai on the 24th day of the month. Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms.

I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms and of the nations and overthrow the chariots and their riders. And the horses and their riders shall go down, everyone by the sword of his brother.

On that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares the Lord, and make you like a signet ring.

[7 : 06] For I have chosen you, declares the Lord of hosts. This is the word of the Lord. Now let's take a look at that first prophecy, the one in verses 10 through 19.

This prophecy starts out in the form of a Q&A.; Haggai goes and he does this Q&A; with the priests of Israel. He speaks to the men who handled sacrifices, who served in the temple.

These would have been men who, their role was to be mediators, go-betweens between God and his people. And one of the roles of these priests in the Old Testament, one of the roles was to judge things between things that were ritually clean or unclean.

Now that's sort of a, it's a little bit of a foreign category for us today, but maybe not quite as foreign as we think, right? So the idea was, an example that you see this in here, like a dead body or a dead animal at the side of the road.

That was unclean, and I guess we kind of feel the same way today, you know? It's like, you go up and touch that, everyone's like, oh boy, you better wash up. You know, that's, you know, that's gross. Like, they carry this idea that there were certain things that could defile you or contaminate you, and you had to wash up.

[8 : 24] You had to clean yourself up. Anything that was holy, now this is something that he mentions, holy meat.

So this is something that was marked off as holy, and holy means that it was devoted and set apart for the Lord. So anything that was devoted and set apart for the Lord God, anything that was holy, it had to be clean.

It couldn't be impure. It couldn't be defiled. It couldn't be contaminated, because then it would be no longer fit for the Lord. So for example, if you were to take, under that old covenant relationship with God, if you were to take a bull or a goat, and you were to sacrifice it to the Lord, and then you took that meat, and you just sort of rubbed it on a dead body, that sacrifice, not only is that now gross, but that sacrifice is now not clean and not holy.

It is unclean. And that uncleanness can be transferred. So something that is unclean, that uncleanness could be transferred to something that used to be clean.

It could contaminate what is clean. You know, just like a sick kid's vomit can contaminate your healthy associate pastor.

[9 : 47] So we read in the Old Testament law, this is laid out in Numbers chapter 19, probably this is the scripture the priests had in mind when they answered Haggai, whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean, and anyone who touches it shall be unclean until evening.

So if you touch a dead body, and then anything else you touch also becomes unclean, you can transfer that uncleanness unless you wash up. On the other hand, there's nothing in the Old Testament law that says the reverse is true, that says that, wow, you know, something that's holy and clean, that holiness and that cleanness can then be transferred.

It can make something unclean and make it clean. You know, and that makes sense to you and me too, right? If I'm the spitting image of health, I can't, you know, walk up to some sort of, you know, snotty sick kid and, you know, touch him and, oh, you are healed.

You know, my good health has transferred over to you. It works the other way around, doesn't it? You don't transfer your health to other people. Boy, wouldn't that be convenient? Solve a lot of problems in our medical system.

That's why Haggai's Q&A; with the priests, it goes like this in verse 12. If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?

[11 : 06] The priest answered and said, no. Then Haggai said, if someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean? The priest answered and said, yeah, it does become unclean.

So, in a nutshell, what is holy cannot decontaminate what is unclean. What is holy can't decontaminate what is unclean.

Whatever is unclean can contaminate what is holy. That's the message here. That's the message that's carried out by the Old Testament law. My clean bill of health doesn't make a sick person well, but their sickness can make me sick.

So here's the conclusion that the Lord draws in verse 14. So is it with this people and with this nation before me, declares the Lord, and so with every work of their hands, and what they offer there is unclean.

So what this means is that their holy worship, their worship devoted to God, it does not decontaminate their impurity. It's the other way around.

[12 : 13] Their impurity, their sinful and resistant attitude towards God, it contaminates their worship. And this was a big part of the purpose of these laws about what was clean and unclean.

It was to teach them this principle. And here's how this is significant for you and me today. The book of Haggai is all about how God's people rebuild their worship.

So in other words, this is about how we, as God's people, we recenter, re-devote, dedicate our lives to the Lord. Not just in our singing, not just in our financial giving on Sunday mornings, but how we center our lives on the Lord, dedicate our lives to the Lord in all of our actions of obedience to Him throughout the week.

As spouses, children, parents, employees, citizens, and all of these roles we play, we center ourselves on the Lord and live a lifestyle of worship.

And this lifestyle of worship that God has called us to, it can be contaminated. And what we're learning from God, the Holy Spirit, is that our worship does not decontaminate the impurities of sin in our lives.

[13 : 30] Rather, the impurity of sin contaminates our worship. So in a nutshell, the worship of God's people may be contaminated by sin. The worship of God's people may be contaminated by sin.

So our worship may not be accepted by God if sin works its way through us. The way that yeast works its way through an entire lump of bread dough.

What's gross gets everywhere. Now, that being said, this principle, you know, that's the big idea, but this principle isn't going to be very helpful for us unless we get specifics.

You know, what kind of sins can contaminate our lifestyle of worship of the Lord? What kind of wrong behaviors, what kind of words, thoughts, attitudes make it impure? What kind of impurities cause the Lord to no longer accept or enjoy our singing, our prayer, our giving, our obedience? Well, to be honest, the book of Haggai doesn't give any specific examples. principles. And this is the sort of situation then that where, okay, well, I have to give specifics. How do I come up with those?

[14:37] Now, this is the sort of situation that makes me uncomfortable as a preacher. And here's why. Because I could, it's not because I can't think of anything, it's because I can think of way too many things. And what ends up happening when you're a preacher is, it's easy to just default to your favorite hobby horses.

It's easy for me to sort of pick on my pet peeves and, boy, I've got stuff in mind. And that's a dangerous thing. And so, thankfully, I am rescued from that danger because last week we saw that the New Testament book of Hebrews quotes the book of Haggai, quotes a couple of lines from the book of Haggai, and that appears in Hebrews chapter 12.

So the author of the book of Hebrews quotes a phrase that appeared not only in last week's text, but that same phrase is going to appear later in this week's text. So we're going to come to that quotation a little bit later.

And when you turn to this quotation at the end of the book of Hebrews, in Hebrews chapter 12, you'll see that the author quotes the book of Haggai, and then he follows this quotation immediately with a list of a few examples of acceptable worship that we can offer God with reverence and awe. And I thought, wow, perfect. Okay, so here's our example. Here's the kind of stuff that can contaminate our worship of the Lord. The list begins immediately in Hebrews chapter 13 with a list of things that are acceptable worship.

[16:02] Here's what a lifestyle of worship looks like. Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy, and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. And then this lifestyle of worship is summarized as follows.

Through him, that's through Christ, through Jesus Christ, then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

[17:03] Do not neglect to do good, and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. So in other words, all of this taken together, and you could go into many more examples of this, but this is just what we read in Hebrews chapter 13, all of that taken together is a lifestyle of love and praise for God, and as the result of love and goodness towards one another.

That's the good life. That's the life of holy and acceptable worship. But Hebrews chapter 13 also includes several examples of how that worship of God's people may be contaminated by sin. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, uncontaminated. For God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.

So those are just a few of the examples of sin, of shame-bringing things that can contaminate our worship, that can make our worship, our lifestyle of worship unacceptable to God, that can disrupt our communion with God.

[18:34] By that I mean our sense of relationship with God, our experience of relationship with God. Sexual sin, love and fascination and obsession with money, disruptive teachings that place an emphasis on doctrines and practices that are secondary, that aren't really critical.

The worship of God's people may be contaminated by all these things, by all this sin. Now that being said, Hebrews chapter 13 also helps provide a corrective.

It encourages us that there's a sort of shame that sometimes we might think contaminates our worship, but it actually doesn't. Our worship is not contaminated by the shame that we feel when someone sins against us.

And you see that in Hebrews chapter 13 verses 12 and 13 where it says, Jesus also suffered outside the gate, dying on the cross outside the gate of Jerusalem.

Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

Therefore, let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.

[19:47] Because shame, when you sin, feels very much like shame when other people sin against you. We feel dirty and contaminated both ways. But yes, other people may see you and me

as impure or as unclean, as contaminated because we're following Jesus and because we are following God's word even when it runs against what's popular in our culture.

people may reproach us for holding fast to the teaching of God's word. That teaching that is increasingly viewed as a harmful contagion. But it is not that shame.

It's not the shame that other people may heap on us that contaminates our worship. It's our own sin that God looks at. The worship of God's people may be contaminated by sin and it's not other people's sin against us, the shame other people try to heap on us.

But it's our own sin, our own shame that we have earned ourselves. And this is something that should lead us to sober reflection. Sober reflection about the state of our lives, about the state of our relationship with God.

In Haggai chapter 2 verse 15, the Lord says, Now then, consider from this day onward. And twice in verse 18, consider from this day onward.

[21 : 07] Consider. So, well, you know, we get the message. Stop. Sit still. Stop for a moment. Reflect. Think carefully. Take stock of your life.

If you stop and think, you learn something that you don't expect. Here's what we should reflect on. The worship of God's people may be contaminated by sin, which demands unexpected discipline from the Lord.

The worship of God's people may be contaminated by sin, which demands unexpected discipline from the Lord. Now, there are three principles of unexpected discipline in the following verses.

So, the first of these three principles is that unexpected discipline may go unheeded. Unexpected discipline may go unheeded.

We find that in verses 15 through 17. Now then, consider from this day onward. Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the Lord, how did you fare?

[22 : 15] When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten. When one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail.

Yet you did not turn to me, declares the Lord. You did not turn to me. Now, to clarify, first of all, not all suffering in my life, not all suffering in your life is a consequence of our sins specifically.

It is a consequence of mankind's sin, of a creation that's brought under God's curse because people have rebelled against God. So all suffering is ultimately a consequence of sin, but it might not be a consequence of your sin.

The entire book of Job and many other passages in the Bible warn us against automatically assuming that if I suffer, it's because I sinned. That's not always true. But having said that, sometimes what you and I go through, it may be, at least in part, a consequence of our sinful behavior, words, attitudes, and thoughts.

In Hebrews chapter 12, it talks about this discipline that the Lord brings on his people. And maybe you can think of examples from your past where that was true. Maybe you can think of suffering you've experienced in your past where you look back and you're like, you know, I think that was the Lord disciplining me.

[23 : 47] That was the Lord calling my attention to how I'd strayed from him. Sometimes the suffering we experience is God's way of waking up stubborn people who aren't listening.

I mean, let's, you know, quick show of hands. How many of you are parents of toddlers? Okay, maybe. How many of you have been parents of toddlers? How many of you have been a toddler? Okay. Here's the thing about toddlers. Sometimes they don't pay attention. Sometimes they don't pay attention to their parents. And if you're the parent of a toddler and your toddlers are defying you, what do you do?

Oh, yeah, that's fine. That's cute. No, you discipline them. You discipline them or they won't learn. And they won't become the men and the women they ought to be.

This discipline is an act of love. The Lord disciplines those he loves as the father a son he delights in. So consider carefully, has the Lord's discipline gone unheeded in your life?

[25 : 01] Is it time to start waking up? Is it time to start paying attention to unexpected discipline from the Lord? So that first principle is that unexpected discipline may go unheeded.

A second principle is that unexpected discipline may not end promptly. Unexpected discipline may not end promptly. In verses 18 and 19 we read, consider from this day onward, from the 24th day of the ninth month.

Since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider, is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. So even though the Jewish people, four months ago, they finally started obeying the Lord. They finally started resuming that building project. They're now rebuilding their worship of the Lord. And things still haven't turned around for them. They're still struggling with hardship. The effects of impurity, the effects of contamination, don't always just get cleaned up right away.

[26 : 20] And sometimes I've seen this happen in the life of a fellow brother and sister in the family of God. Someone who's been sinning, who has suffered under the Lord's discipline, and finally they repent.

They finally turn. That means they willingly turn away from their sin and their choices, and they turn towards obedience. They follow the Lord faithfully at last. And sometimes this brother or sister expects that, you know, once this happens, once I've repented, that suffering is just going to go away.

Everything is going to be perfect again. My life is going to be exactly how it was before. Everything is going to be fixed. And then it doesn't. The suffering doesn't go away all at once.

Often they have to live with the consequences of their sin for years. If you've been imprisoned for a crime, repenting and believing in Christ doesn't bring an end to your prison sentence.

That's not a get-out-of-jail-free card. If you've given your life over to addiction, to alcohol, or pornography, repenting doesn't bring an end to temptation always.

[27 : 35] It doesn't immediately produce trust and reconciliation with those closest to you. It doesn't fix everything all at once. If you use your money foolishly, repenting doesn't clear away instantly the debt you've accumulated.

We shouldn't have false expectations of God's discipline and of what repentance is going to produce. Unexpected discipline may not end promptly. The worship of God's people may be contaminated by sin, which demands unexpected discipline from the Lord.

And so the first two principles of that unexpected discipline are, unexpected discipline may go unheeded and it may not end promptly. But there's a third principle of unexpected discipline.

And that third principle is that unexpected discipline gives way to blessing. Unexpected discipline gives way to blessing. Because when we do repent, when we do turn away from our sins, when we do entrust ourselves to the mercy and the kindness of God, God's kindness and favor toward us, it may not be immediately evident, but it will come.

It will come. Verse 19, the Lord says, Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing.

[29 : 02] But from this day on, I will bless you. From this day on, I will bless you. So it's been four months of continued difficulty, continued suffering, and on top of that, the added burden of building the temple.

It's a slog. It's hard. But the blessing is coming. God is going to show his people he has not forgotten them.

He is going to bring them relief from their suffering. He's going to give them yet another reason to worship, yet another reason to praise him. And there is more blessing yet to come than simply improved crop yields.

On that same day, on December 18th, Haggai receives a second message from the Lord.

Apparently urgent enough that he had to deliver it again on the same day. Verses 21 through 23. Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms.

[30 : 13] I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations and overthrow the chariots and their riders. And the horses and their riders shall go down, everyone, by the sword of his brother.

On that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares the Lord, and make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the Lord of hosts.

So up till now, these prophecies, they've been directed to all the people of Judah with a special emphasis on Zerubbabel, the governor, Joshua, the high priest, because they're the leaders.

But this is a prophecy that's directed only at Zerubbabel, only at the governor. Why is this promise directed just to Zerubbabel?

Well, it's because he is a descendant from the royal lineage of David. He's a descendant of, he's the grandson of Jeconiah, who's one of the final kings in Jerusalem.

[31 : 23] And the Lord has already spoken through many of his prophets that there is a king who is coming, a final king from the line of David, a king who is anointed, chosen by God, his Messiah.

From our vantage point in history, we know what's going to come. We know the future of Zerubbabel's own royal lineage. And we find it in Matthew chapter one, there's a genealogy. After the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel. And Zerubbabel the father of Abiyad, and Abiyad the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliad, and Eliad the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ, Messiah, the anointed king.

And so this is a promise that is going to find its fullness in the son of Zerubbabel, the son of David, Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord and Messiah.

He is God's king. And so this promise brings us hope. Because the worship of God's people, it may be contaminated by sin, which demands unexpected discipline from the Lord.

[32 : 58] So God has upheld his chosen king to restore our holiness and honor. God has upheld his chosen king to restore our holiness and honor.

The Lord is promising in Haggai chapter 2 that there is a day coming on that day, a time when God will intervene in world history in a mighty act of judgment, a mighty act of salvation, judgment for those who stand against him, salvation for those who are his people.

This is what Scripture calls again and again the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord, it's the kind of event that has happened many times in the past and is going to happen again.

And one final ultimate day of the Lord. In verse 23, the Lord says that on that day, he will establish his Messiah, his king.

What will this day be like? Well, the day of the Lord will have two effects. The first effect of the day of the Lord is in verses 21 and 22 where we read, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms.

[34 : 14] I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations and overthrow the chariots and their riders. And the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his brother. So these are the military powers of the ancient world.

These are the kingdoms and the empires who reign supreme over that powerless little Judean province. But their end is going to come.

Where's Babylon today? Where's Persia today? Where's the empire of Alexander the Great?

Where's the Roman empire? Where are all these kingdoms and nations?

Hundreds of years from now, people will say, where is the United States of America? Where is Canada? Unless the Lord has returned first. Their end is going to come.

The first effect of that day is this. The Lord will upend the honor of the oppressor. The Lord will upend the honor of the oppressor. Those who are in power, those who have been subjugating God's people, they are going to be brought low.

[35 : 20] We read in Hebrews chapter 13 how even today, God's people throughout the world have been subjected to reproach and suffering. All throughout the world today, there are regimes and governments where God's people are suffering.

I read a story even this morning of a pastor who suffered in North Korea for two and a half years before he was finally freed and returned to Canada. He suffered nearly to the point of death

because he dared to say that it is Jesus Christ who should be worshipped and not Kim Jong-un.

God's people throughout the world have been subjected to reproach and suffering because they

confess Jesus Christ as their Lord. This world is filled with people who for that suffering or for

suffering that is unrelated to that, filled with people who feel powerless, who feel unclean, who feel

covered in shame, who feel contaminated and dirty, who feel naked and exposed and they feel this

way.

Not just because of the sin they've committed but because someone has sinned against them,

someone has harmed them, someone has done something to them. And we instinctively recognize

that we have to do something about that shame.

We can't just wish it away. We can't just go on as if life is normal. Those who have been shamed need to be restored to a place of honor and they need to be decontaminated.

[36 : 43] And those who have oppressed them need to be removed from their place of honor and brought to shame. And we see that playing out today all the time in the news. I mean, right now, we have this epidemic of women who have been sexually exploited by men who are in power over them and now they're speaking out.

And these oppressors are rightfully being removed from power. They're being dishonored. They're being shamed. That's the biblical pattern. That those who are oppressors should suffer dishonor and shame. And that's what the Lord is going to do one day when he returns to this world.

Now remember how we looked at Hebrews chapter 13 a little while ago to see what the worship of God should and shouldn't look like. Well, just a few verses prior to that in Hebrews chapter 12 here's what's written.

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. Sorry, that you do not refuse the Lord who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

At that time his voice shook the earth but now he has promised here's the quotation from these verses in Haggai. Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.

[38 : 01] And so the Lord promises that he will do this. Shake the earth and the heavens and bring justice to this world. Upend the honor of the oppressor.

He will do it on the final day when his chosen king returns to reign over the earth. The Lord will upend the honor of the oppressor. And no place is safe. Nowhere is safe.

So let us see to it that we do not refuse him who is speaking. That we listen to his warning. That we listen to his discipline.

That we are not ensnared by sin. So that we do not bring shame on one another through evil and corrupt behavior. And that God does not return in judgment. Oh woe to the person who continues to resist the living God.

God has upheld his chosen king to restore our holiness and honor. And the first effect of the day of the Lord is this. The Lord will upend the honor of the oppressor. The second effect is this.

[39 : 05] The Lord will uphold the honor of his chosen king. The Lord will uphold the honor of his chosen king. So here is the promise that the Lord makes to Zerubbabel in verse 23.

And these are the final words of prophecy in the book of Haggai. On that day declares the Lord of hosts I will take you O Zerubbabel my servant the son of Shealtiel declares the Lord and I will make you like a signet ring for I have chosen you declares the Lord of hosts.

Now the signet ring it is the ring that a king would wear. And what that ring did was if the king were to issue an edict and decree to show that it came with a power with the authority of the king to show it was his authentic word the edict would be sealed up with a blob of wax put over it and then the king would take a signet ring and stick it in the wax.

That was his sign of authenticity and authority. This comes from the king. The Lord is saying to Zerubbabel I will make you my royal seal.

I will give you my royal authority. Out of all the kings of the earth I have chosen you to be my appointed king my Messiah. That is the great honor that he is going to bestow on the line of Zerubbabel an honor that falls in the head of Jesus Christ our Lord who says all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[40 : 34] some of his final words on earth. This is the Jesus who receives a great kingdom from his father. Again in Hebrews chapter 12.

At that time his voice shook the earth but now he has promised yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens. This phrase yet once more indicates the removal of things that are shaken that is things that have been made in order that the kings in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire.

Let us be grateful. Let us offer to God acceptable worship. Why? because when Jesus Christ returns we will be receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

A place that is safe. A place that is secure. God has given everyone who believes in him God has given us a king who will not be overthrown.

[41 : 58] As we read in Hebrews chapter 13 Jesus Christ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. His kingdom will never end.

We have a sure and reliable king who does not change who is always just and right and good and will never stop being that way and he cannot be dethroned.

and that is good news. It's good news because this king is one who not only honors us and not only removes the shame that others have placed on us Jesus also removes the shame that we have brought on ourselves for our own sin.

Jesus is the only one who can decontaminate you. He is the only one who can transfer his holiness. Under the Old Testament law animals that were burnt as a sin offering they were burnt as a sin offering because a sacrificial substitute was needed to bear the penalty for their sins.

The penalty that God's people deserved. And so these animals were a picture of that need for a substitute. And their bodies the bodies of these animals after this offering were disposed of outside the camp outside the camp where the people were living.

[43 : 25] Out with the rest of the unclean garbage. Out in the trash heap. Out with the waste. And so the author of Hebrews writes in chapter 13 the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.

So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. In order to make people holy through his own blood. Not just decontaminating you making you holy. Jesus died on a cross and he died outside the gate.

He died in shame in a place that was set aside for a public spectacle visible to everyone who passed by subject to mocking and scorn and ridicule hanging naked on a cross his blood and body fluids oozing down him.

He was unclean and cursed. And so he carried our sin and he bore our shame so that anyone who believes in Jesus Christ no matter who you are no matter what you've done you will be liberated set free from the power of sin and from the penalty of sin liberated from the contamination of shame and sanctified set apart as holy devoted to the Lord able to live a life of worship that is acceptable and pleasing to God that he loves and delights in.

[45 : 21] And Jesus rose to life again after three days so that everyone who believes in him will find a new life of honor the good life eternal life and one day Jesus is going to return again.

God the Father will upend the honor of the oppressor he will uphold the honor of his chosen king. So let me ask you on that day will you be found in Christ believing in Christ and trusting yourself to Christ or will you belong to the kingdoms of this world which will fall before our God the consuming fire will you belong to the unshakable kingdom of Jesus Christ or to the kingdoms of this world that are going down like the Titanic.

Repent turn away from sin believe and be baptized into Jesus Christ so that you may discover there is hope for the impure.

remember the worship of God's people may be contaminated by sin and that sin demands an unexpected discipline from the Lord but our God is good he has upheld his chosen king to restore our holiness and honor.

Let's give thanks to God. Oh God you have been good to us and we are looking forward in a little bit to celebrate and communion together to eating the bread drinking the cup communicating through what we eat and drink that Jesus Christ our Lord his body was broken for us his blood was shed to make us holy to cleanse us from impurity to make a people who are contaminated now clean and spotless and holy.

[47 : 18] Oh God I pray for this transformation for the rebuilding of worship here at our church here in this town in our province our country our world we ask you God would you come soon to shake the heavens and the earth to restore and right all things and in the time between now and then may you save people from their sins for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord for the sake of his name amen