

Hope for the Unimpressive

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[0 : 0 0] All right, well, you'll notice in your sermon notes, I believe that, unless Stephanie did another reprint of it, I initially titled the sermon Hope for the Discouraged, but I changed the title a little bit late in the week, and it's easy to do on a PowerPoint, a little bit hard to do on your manuscripts, and I changed it to Hope for the Unimpressive.

From Hope to the Discouraged to Hope for the Unimpressive, and that's because we're talking about, God is talking this morning about a specific kind of discouragement, a specific kind of discouragement that you and I suffer from, and this discouragement comes when you and I realize that we ourselves as individuals, and we as a church family, we're really not all that impressive.

Okay, maybe I should, okay, I'll check first to see who this applies to. Show of hands, who here is unimpressive? If you're not raising your hand right now, you're kind of a jerk, all right?

Put your hand up. Okay, get over yourself, all right? All right, now, you know, we joke about it, but let's just face it, okay?

It hurts. It actually hurts in those moments or in that lifetime where you feel unimpressive. That doesn't feel good. You feel disappointed in yourself.

[1 : 2 6] You feel restless, uneasy, like you don't fit in, like you don't belong. You feel ashamed of yourself or of your church. If you and I, if we were using, if we are using the vocabulary that the Bible, that God's word gives us, what we would say is, we would say that we long for glory.

We are all longing for glory. Every last person on earth, man, woman, and child, you're all longing for glory. We want to, we want this glory.

A lot of times we want it in the wrong way. We want to feel impressive. We want to feel significant. We want to feel like we make a difference. We want to be honored for who we are and what we do.

That desire for glory, it can be warped, but fundamentally there's a desire for glory that God has built into us. God's word doesn't say, you know, don't seek for glory.

Don't try to find glory. God's word says, here's how you find glory. You're doing it in all the wrong ways. You're looking at all the wrong places. We're going to see that in the scripture we're about to examine today.

[2 : 4 3] God doesn't want you, God doesn't want me to abandon our desire for glory. God wants us to pursue glory in the right way. And the story we're looking at today, it's a message that was delivered in a specific historical situation.

It was delivered in the city of Jerusalem in the land of Israel, and it was delivered 2,500 years ago by a Jewish prophet named Haggai. 520 BC is when this took place.

And last week we learned sort of the historical context of Haggai's prophecies because 65 years earlier, the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, this impressive, beautiful building where God's people would gather to worship him, where the Lord was present in a unique way to bless his people.

That building was destroyed, lost to history, destroyed by an invading army from the empire of Babylon. And the city of Jerusalem was ruined.

Its people were sent into exile. And now, decades later, the Lord has returned his people from exile. They've begun to rebuild the temple.

[3 : 55] But then they abandon their building project after just a couple of years. For 16 years, the site of this temple sits in ruins. And the people get used to it.

And so last week, we read Haggai's prophecy that came on August 29th, 520 BC. A call to no longer neglect the worship of God.

A call to rebuild his temple in Jerusalem. And the leaders and people of the land, they listen to, they obey God's command to rebuild his house. And since that time, since that first prophecy came on August 29th, a month and a half has passed.

It's October 17th now. There's a festival taking place in Jerusalem. A lot of people have gathered in Jerusalem at this time. And this is when Haggai the prophet delivers a second message from the Lord.

We find it in Haggai chapter 2, verses 1 through 9. If you're using one of the blue Bibles that are ushers handout, that's on page 791. Haggai chapter 2, verses 1 through 9.

[5 : 04] So let me read the word of the Lord to us this morning. In the seventh month, on the 21st day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet.

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 land, 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, and I will shake all nations so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.

[6 : 33] 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. This is the word of the Lord. Now, we're only a month and a half, remember, into this renewed building project, where the people are rebuilding the temple of God, the place where God is present, where God is worshipped, where people have a relationship with God.

And we're a month and a half into that renewed building project, and already the people are discouraged. And so in verse 3, the Lord asks a few questions that help draw out what they're discouraged about.

Verse 3. 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? Now, you may read this, and if you don't have a lot of background in what's going on in Israelite history and what he's talking about, this former glory, you might think, well, how could this building have a former glory?

[7 : 56] It's just being built. It's just under construction. Well, this particular building is under construction. What he's talking about is a previous version. We've seen how the place where God's presence has sort of developed over the years in Israel's history.

Last year, we talked about the tabernacle. That was like the temple 1.0. Solomon built an even bigger, more grander temple, the temple 2.0. And this is 3.0, and this version is not very good.

It's full of bugs, right? What the Lord is referring to is a previous version of the temple, that 2.0, the one built by King Solomon. And it was built 400 years earlier. So imagine that you grew up and you knew a temple that had been there for hundreds of years.

This was so much a part of your national identity. Your whole nation revolved around this. All of the costly materials, the craftsmanship that went to this temple. 1 Kings 5-7, three whole chapters of the Bible go into talking about the material, the costliness, the artisans, the craftsmen that worked on this, the beauty of it, the glory.

It was a wonder of the ancient world. Massive stones from the finest quarries, the best cedar trees of Lebanon, cypress and olive wood, gold overlay, fine artwork, giant pillars of bronze, furnishings, equipment of gold, silver, and bronze.

[9 : 17] It was a marvel. Some of the Israelites listening to Haggai, they would have seen that first temple in its final years before it was destroyed, before it was lost forever.

And so when the foundation of the second temple is laid 16 years before this, we read about their reaction and we read about that in Ezra chapter 3. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid.

Maybe that's part of why they were discouraged and suspended, the project for 16 years, in addition to all the obstacles we talked about last week, all the neglect last week.

How do you rebuild when you realize what I'm about to rebuild is not going to compare to what I knew? And now as the building has resumed, things aren't looking any better.

It's just becoming more and more obvious. This new temple is, it's just a much simpler structure. It's, you know, it gets the job done, but it's plain, it's ordinary, doesn't have all the gold, it doesn't have all that beautiful architecture and artwork.

[10 : 39] It just, you walk up to it and you're like, okay, well, I guess it's all right. It doesn't make you gasp in admiration anymore. It's just plain unimpressive. Is this really the place where the God of heavens and earth is going to meet with his people?

Really? This thing? Is this really what the worship of the Lord is going to look like? Man, these older leaders, they're discouraged. The glory has departed.

Now we live in a different era. We live in a new era after the arrival of Jesus Christ. We talked about last week how Jesus Christ, he's the final and ultimate version of the temple.

He is the true, the truest temple. All those buildings were just a shadow. He is the true presence of God among his people. And everyone who believes in Christ, everyone who believes in him, who knows that he died on the cross for their sins, who places their full confidence and trust in Jesus, turns away from their sin, from their resistance to God, believes in Jesus Christ, trusts themselves to him, believes that he rose again from the dead and is coming again for us.

Everybody who believes in Jesus Christ has been welcomed into this relationship with God, a relationship in which we're united with him. Because he is the temple, so we too, as a people, are the temple of God.

[12 : 17] And that means that specifically here at Squamish Baptist Church, we're the temple of God. At other church gatherings built on the foundation of Jesus Christ in our town across the world, we're the temple of God together.

This also means that each of us as individuals, we saw last week, is also a temple of God, the Holy Spirit, that God is present with us as individuals at all times. And so what that means is that what we're reading about here has significance for you and me today.

This sense of discouragement that we read, the sense that the glory we long for, it's gone. That's something you and I, we struggle with from time to time. If you haven't yet struggled with that, it's just a matter of time.

Like God's people in Haggai's day, sometimes all we can see is how we fall short. That's all you can see. All we see is how we fall short of the mark.

We're not what we're supposed to be as a church, as individuals. God's people are often discouraged by our unimpressive worship. God's people are often discouraged by our unimpressive worship.

[13 : 31] By worship, we're talking about our lives as a whole, dedicated to the service of the Lord, dedicated to enjoying the Lord and living the life he's called us to live, the good life.

And God's people are often discouraged because our lives look unimpressive. I mentioned at the beginning of the sermon that nobody likes being unimpressive. Nobody likes that.

It feels awful. It feels discouraging. It leaves us hungry for glory. It leaves us disappointed, let down. It leaves us restless and uneasy.

You know, much, our economy, so much of our economy is built around our desire for glory. An advertisement for that powerful car, that's going to, man, that's going to finally bring glory into my life.

That blazing fast new phone with all the features. You know, this beautiful new dress. It's glory. A new ski resort that I can go and just, man, amazing snow.

[14 : 30] I could just revel in this glory. That one product or that one experience that will grant you that inglorious and impressive life that you're craving. Or maybe you just want the glory of being a good father or mother.

The glory of being a straight A student at school. The glory of being an excellent athlete. The glory of being an outstanding business owner. The glory of being a theological expert.

And so you, you know, you read and you research and you work, work, work and busy yourselves to gain this glory for yourself. To do everything perfectly.

To be an exemplar of what that good life is. Of what that good person ought to be. Of what that glorious thing is. In your own relationship with God, you sense you aren't what you should be. You realize how much you still sin.

How much there's an entrenched opposition to God still remaining inside of you. And you realize how inadequate you are. As a parent, as a leader, as an expert. And if you're honest with yourself, you know that your life is not standing out.

[15 : 40] Your life is not standing out as honoring to God. And so your worship, that service to God as an individual in all areas of your life, your worship is just plain unimpressive.

And you know it. You know it. You feel it. You can never escape that feeling. You can distract yourself from it. But it's there at all times. You're discouraged by it.

You know, why even try? Why even bother anymore? The glory is departing. God's people, we can also be discouraged not just by our inadequacies as individuals, but by our inadequacies as a church.

And I know when some of you think about our church, all that you can see is the problems. All that you can see is the problems.

All you can see is the ways in which we're failing to provide. You know, that quality of preaching that you're looking for. A dynamic leadership you're looking for.

[16 : 43] The warmth of community. The excellence of music. The powerful Sunday worship experience. The variety of programs.

The academic rigor. All these things that are provided by such and such a church. That you've heard about. Or that you've attended.

Or that you grew up in. And you want that glorious life. That such a church will bring for you and your family. And you look at SBC. And you're disappointed.

And you're just always irritated. There's always something under your skin about being here. You're restless. You're uneasy. Because, you know. And the reality is we don't have the financial resources.

We don't have that vast volunteer labor force. We don't have the community influence. We don't have the theology professors. We don't have the well-staffed discipleship programs.

[17 : 41] That a lot of large and wealthy churches can offer. Don't go to poorer places in the world.

It just gets even worse. The grass. The reality is the grass always looks greener. On the other side of the fence. Doesn't it? Always looks better elsewhere. If only we could drop yet another church into Squamish.

That's going to do and be all the things. That's going to grant us that life of glory. That we're looking for. The reality is. Here's the truth. Squamish Baptist Church is an unimpressive church. We have unimpressive resources.

And we're attended and led by unimpressive people. Oh, that's the one you laugh at. And we worship in an unimpressive manner.

And trust me, I get it. You know, all those things I've said, I feel that. I feel it too. I could list off to you a hundred problems. A hundred problems I see.

[18 : 46] A hundred inadequacies. A hundred shortcomings. A hundred ways in which we've failed. I could list off dozens of ways in which I myself have failed as one of your elders. And I confess, this is a sermon this week I've had to preach to myself first.

I've needed to hear this first of all. Before preaching to the rest of you this morning. God's people are often discouraged by our unimpressive worship. The older people of Jerusalem, they looked back on those old days of Solomon's temple and they just, they sighed.

Because they were longing for the glory days. Back, you know, back when things were better. Back when the worship of God was what it was supposed to be.

Right? You know, never mind. This is the funny thing about our memories, right? Never mind that the worship of that first temple, it was so deeply corrupted by idolatry. Oh man. But, you know, somehow our rosy memories, we forget all that stuff, right?

We forget all the bad stuff about the way things used to be. All we remember is, oh, the good old days. Now, here's the thing. The Lord doesn't respond to this by denying the reality of the situation.

[19 : 59] He doesn't say, oh, no, no, no, don't worry about it. Your temple's beautiful. It's really nice. It's really lovely. Oh, you're just being hard on yourselves. The reality was undeniable, wasn't it?

This, just look at it. This new temple, it does not appear as impressive as the first temple. Doesn't even deserve to be mentioned in the same sentence as that building. No architect is going to look at this temple and go, wow, I really want to pattern all my works after that one.

There is no whitewashing these facts. There is no whitewashing on impressiveness. Here's what the Lord does.

He doesn't deny the reality. The Lord speaks to his people with words of encouragement, and you find them beginning in verses four and five. Here's what the Lord tells them. 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 land, declares the Lord. Work. Work. Work. Work. Work. Work. Work. Work. Work.

[21 : 12] 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. There are three commands here that the Lord gives to his people. The first one is be strong. And he says it three times.

Be strong. Be strong. Be strong. He tells them work. He tells them fear not. He tells them fear not.

He tells them fear not. And what the Lord is telling them to do is he's telling them not to give up on rebuilding. He's telling them it doesn't matter what their neighbors around them are saying.

He's telling them it doesn't matter what your own feelings of inadequacy are. That's not relevant. Sometimes we let our feelings control our behavior.

[22 : 15] If I feel inadequate, therefore I'm going to give up. And the Lord says, sometimes having faith means going against your feelings. And the Lord is reminding them of the command he once gave to Joshua.

That's that fighter verse we recited this morning. Let's do it again. Let's do it again. Let's recite it from memory, from your bulletin. Let's get it out. Joshua chapter 1 verse 9. This is so important.

This is, it's a blessing that we begin our new year with this. Let's say it together. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.

Do not be frightened. And do not be dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Have I not commanded you?

Be strong and courageous. Fear not. Do not be frightened. Work for I am with you. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

[23 : 20] God's people are often discouraged by our unimpressive worship. But we rebuild our worship with strength and courage. God's people are often discouraged by our unimpressive worship.

But we rebuild our worship with strength and courage. We stand strong. We take courage.

We're not frightened. We're not dismayed. And when we are, we call to one another. We say, help me. I'm discouraged.

I'm feeling weak. I'm afraid. Encourage me, brother. Encourage me, sister. And when we see one another who's discouraged and weak, we say to them, be strong and courageous.

For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. We will take on the tasks that God has called us to do. We will not be afraid of what might happen if we fail.

[24 : 19] We will not be afraid that our efforts are small and inadequate. We will not be ashamed of our worship as individuals and as a church.

Because we hear the voice of our God that says three times, be strong, be strong, be strong. God's people are often discouraged by our unimpressive worship.

But we rebuild our worship with strength and courage. And the thing is, we don't do that for no reason. This isn't just a, you know, this thing where we're projecting false courage. Where we're just, you know, doing a pep rally to get ourselves all fired up.

So much of what pastors for our worship experience in many churches is that. Let's go and have this amazing experience that just gives us this big buzz. It gives us this confidence and courage. And now I can just charge into my week with that.

That's not what we're talking about. We're not talking about just getting all riled up and fired up for no reason. And we're certainly not talking about fake it till you make it. You know, projecting outwardly that, yeah, you know, I've got this all together.

[25 : 26] I'm strong. And inwardly, you're wilting and dying. This isn't faking it. We rebuild our worship with strength and courage because of the Lord's presence and his promise of glory.

We rebuild our worship with strength and courage because of the Lord's presence and his promise of glory. And we see this first, first of all, in verses four and five.

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. So why do we work? Why do we keep working? Why do we go on? Why do we continue serving him in our unimpressive church?

Why do we continue serving him as unimpressive people and as unimpressive families? We do it because of his promise. I am with you.

[26 : 26] I am with you. That's what the Lord told Joshua. Do not be frightened. Do not be dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Now, what does it mean for the Lord to be with us?

Well, he explains what he means in verse five. He expands on it in two ways. He says, first of all, it means he's faithful to his covenant. The covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt.

I read that. I'm like, great. We spent all last year talking about that. Hearing about that covenant. Do you remember it? Do you remember the way that it began when the Lord spoke to his people in Exodus chapter 19?

If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples.

For all the earth is mine and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. So that means that you and I who are the people of God. You know, we may look at that and think, you know, oh, that's a condition.

[27 : 34] Wow, if you will indeed obey my voice, keep my covenant. I don't know if I've done that. Maybe I'm not that treasured possession. We've got a man who stood on our behalf to obey the voice of the Lord, keep the terms of his covenant.

He stood strong. He worked. He was not afraid. And he secured our relationship with God because he kept the covenant.

We have the true temple in this one man, Jesus Christ. And our relationship with Jesus, that means that we are included in this covenant relationship with God.

You and I don't belong there. But because we're united with Jesus Christ, we're brought into this covenant relationship with God, adopted into his family. The Lord calls you and me, my treasured possession among all peoples.

He says, you know, all the earth is mine. All the earth belongs to him, but he says, you're my favorites. Oh, I love you. My treasured possession.

[28 : 36] Yesterday, I was moving my grandparents to their new home, and it was a massive downsize from a large bed and breakfast down to a small assisted living apartment.

It's interesting when you look and see what people are going to save as their treasured possessions. What's your treasured possession? What do you pick that you really love? And the Lord says, you know what?

It's you. You know, yeah, all the earth is mine, but yeah, you're my treasured possession. And we've been set apart as his to work for him, to worship him as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

A kingdom of priests, a holy nation. Our status has not changed since then. Our status will never change.

And so we read in Romans chapter 8, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword, all those things that rob us of glory?

[29 : 50] As it is written, for your sake we are being killed. All the day long we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. It doesn't get more unimpressive than a sheep about to be slaughtered.

No. In all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. That's glory. More than conquerors.

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Those are bands that cannot be broken. Work. 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. And so we've got that covenant. And then he says in Haggai 2 verse 5, My spirit remains in your midst.

[31 : 03] That's the second way it means that the Lord is with us. God has sent his spirit to be among us. And we saw this last year when we learned the reason that God commanded that first temple, the first movable temple, the tabernacle.

We saw this take place. He said in Exodus chapter 25, Let them make me a sanctuary. Why? That I may dwell in their midst. God not only treasures his people, treasures you and me, he wants to be with them, right there with them.

He doesn't want to stay at a distance on the mountain. He wants to be right there in their camp among them. Now that first tabernacle, we went through all of that, how carefully crafted it was, how it was filled with gold and silver and bronze and precious stones and fabrics and beautiful artwork.

The first temple that succeeded the tabernacle, it was even more glorious. It didn't just have one lampstand. It had a whole whack load of lampstands inside of there.

It didn't just have a little wash basin. It had this gigantic sea, this huge wash basin. Everything about it was on a grander scale. It was marvelous. And now the former exiles of Israel, they're building a second temple.

[32 : 15] It just seems unworthy of the Lord. It's just not worthy of him. It seems unimpressive. It seems inadequate. It's a step backward. But the Lord is saying, you know what?

My spirit still remains in your midst. I'm still with you. God is not imposing a litmus test on his people saying, you need to meet some sort of standard of glory in order for me to be with you.

You need to be impressive in this way. The Lord is not imposing a litmus test on you and me today, on us today.

Sure, you know, we want to pursue excellence in our lives, in our individual lives of worship. We want to pursue excellence in worship as a church, the way we minister together and the way we operate.

I mean, the Lord did take pleasure in the beauty and the glory of the tabernacle of that first temple. He made a big deal about that. But at the end of the day, what matters, really matters, isn't that elaborate glory of human effort and craftsmanship.

[33 : 22] What matters is this, whether the Spirit of God remains among us. If you have all that glory, that first temple, all the human effort, all the craftsmanship, all the programs, all the activity, and you don't have the Spirit of God with you, you've got nothing.

If you have that underwhelming second temple, doesn't have all that stuff, but you do have the Spirit of God with you, you have everything. And God, the Holy Spirit, has promised to remain among us here at Squamish Baptist Church.

In 1 Peter 2, here's what we read. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, a temple, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.

Jesus was not glorious enough for men, but God says, you're chosen and precious. You and I, our sacrifices aren't acceptable to other people, aren't good enough for them, but to God they are, because they come through Jesus Christ.

And then Peter continues, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of yourself, and your church, and your own life.

[35 : 04] No, no. You may proclaim the excellencies of him, him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people.

Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. And we know that the God who set us apart is his spiritual house.

He remains among us, just as he promised. 1 Corinthians chapter 3, do you not know that you, all of you together, are God's temple, and that God's spirit dwells in you?

God's spirit is with us. Right now. So yes, we rebuild our worship with strength and courage because of the Lord's presence.

God is with us. And we rebuild our worship with strength and courage because of his promise of glory. Because of his promise of glory. You see, the Lord, he doesn't want you to, he doesn't want to deny you the glory you're looking for.

[36 : 13] The Lord doesn't want to just beat you down, make you small, and have no taste of glory whatsoever, ever. That's not the case. God does want us to have lives of glory.

And our life as an individual, and our life as a church family. In fact, the Lord is rebuking, just he's rebuking, you know, gently rebuking the people, but he's also rebuking you and me gently for having a small imagination, for settling for smaller glories, just like the people of our town do, for fixating on human glory, human achievement, self-confidence, when he's offering you the confidence that comes from trusting in his promise of greater glory.

Here's what he promises to the temple builders in Haggai chapter 2, verses 6 through 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, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.

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. So the Lord is saying to these discouraged builders, you think that what you're building is going to remain pathetic, it's just going to be unimpressive, but it won't stay that way because I am going to fill it with glory.

- [38 : 01] You can't do it, but I can. And how is he going to do that? How is he going to make this temple glorious? The people of Judah, we've already seen, they're just scraping by.
- They don't have the resources to make it beautiful. Well, the Lord promises 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 nations. So the treasures of all nations, not just from the land of Judah, all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.
- How's that going to play out? Well, it plays out in three different layers. The first layer is this, the immediate future. This means that the ornate features, the valuable materials that they don't have, they're going to be brought in.
- It's going to be brought to them from nations outside of Israel. After all, the earth, all its resources, they do belong to the Lord. They are all at his disposal. Everything in this world belongs to the Lord.
- [39 : 03] It's his. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine. He doesn't just mean, you know, the stuff that you guys have collected. He means all of it. Every last piece of silver and gold on earth, everything buried in the ground on earth.
- It's mine, declares the Lord of hosts. And what happens next is, after this prophecy is recorded in Ezra chapter six, because the governor of their province, he sees this building campaign proceeding, and so he writes to the emperor of Persia.
- He writes to Darius, and he asks him, you know, how should we respond to this temple building campaign? He's wanting instructions. Some people seem opposed to this. Some people are doing it. I need to do something about this. And here's the letter that Darius writes back to him.
- Darius writes back, In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king issued a decree. Concerning the house of God in Jerusalem, let the house be rebuilt, the place where sacrifices were offered, and let its foundations be retained.
- Its height shall be 60 cubits, and its breadth 60 cubits, with three layers of great stones and one layer of timber. Let the cost be paid from the royal treasury. That's the treasury of Persia.
- [40 : 17] And also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and brought back to the temple that is in Jerusalem, each to its place.
- You shall put them in the house of God. So that was the decree, and then Darius continues, Moreover, I make a decree regarding what you shall do for these elders of the Jews for the rebuilding of this house of God.
- The cost is to be paid to these men in full and without delay from the royal revenue, the tribute of the province from beyond the river. And whatever is needed, bulls, rams, or sheep for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, or oil, as the priests at Jerusalem require, let that be given to them day by day without fail, that they may offer pleasing sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons.
- The treasury of the Persian Empire has been opened to fund the construction of the temple and the worship of God. That's what happened when they obeyed, when they worked.
- This is a remarkable turn of events. That, I mean, you can't even imagine the encouragement that must have been to the people of Israel. The Lord's promise of glory, that was just the first layer.
- [41 : 47] It still hasn't been exhausted because the Lord promised, remember, in Haggai chapter 2, verse 9, the latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. That doesn't happen while Zerubbabel is governor.

That doesn't happen while Darius is emperor. In fact, that doesn't happen for the next 500 years. until a new house of God is placed on earth. Until the next and final version of the temple is there, the true temple, the true house of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, the church that he founded.

The latter glory is greater. This true house of God is where believers from all the nations, the glories of all the nations, the treasures of all the nations shall come in and now believers of all the nations gather together to worship.

What a beautiful thing it is to see before us this morning. I see in your faces fellow Christians and you came from all over the world and we're all worshiping alongside one another.

Knowing that the Spirit of God is among us, knowing he is faithful to his covenant to us, knowing that God has brought us a greater glory than that second temple ever had.

[43 : 13] It was brought to mind this morning. I don't have a slide for it. Colossians chapter 1 verse 27. If you're using one of the blue Bibles, it's on page 983. Colossians chapter 1 verse 27.

The apostle Paul writes about the nations, the Gentiles. That's almost all of us today. And he says, to them, God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery which is Christ in you.

the hope of glory. It's Colossians chapter 1 verse 27. The riches of the glory of this mystery, the greater glory which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

A glory that you have, a glory that means there is even greater glory yet to come. This morning in the journey classes we were talking about the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount.

Randy made a comment. I don't know if he was just quoting someone else who came up with it but he said, it's not who I am. That's not who we need to go and figure out who am I.

[44 : 33] It's not who I am but who is Christ and who is Christ in me. Who is Christ?

This man of glory. And what do I look like when Christ is in me? What a remarkable thing it is to read the New Testament book of Hebrews and you read that we now have this greater glory, Christ in us and that there is still a hope of glory yet to come, that third layer that is still in the future for us.

The prophecy of Haggai 2, chapter 2, it's still not exhausted. In Hebrews chapter 12, here's what we read. At that time, and so the author was talking about when God spoke to Israel on Mount Sinai, he says, 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.

And he's quoting from Haggai. 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 things that cannot be shaken may remain. So the Lord has promised, just as the Lord promised, so he is going to return.

[45 : 55] Jesus Christ is going to return. He's with us. His spirit is with us but Jesus Christ is going to return, he himself, the God-man, to shake the heavens and the earth yet once more.

by that we mean just one final time, one final act in which he is going to bring to an end what he calls the things that have been made, all the man-made stuff, all the glory of the earth, every human nation and institution, every program and promise made by man.

Jesus is going to come and to undo all the impressive things that the world praises. everything the people of this world turn to for a sense of hope and significance, it's all going away.

It's going down like the Titanic. It's going to be undone when our king returns. And they're removed in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

Something better is here. something that's going to last. What will remain but all the things that the Lord has done, all the glory that the Lord has accomplished.

[47 : 16] What will remain except the inadequate and unimpressive people of God that God has made glorious? What will remain but the worship and service to the Lord, our worship and service are just not that impressive, easily forgotten, but that God makes into glorious things.

I like how the New Living Translation puts this reminder from 1 John 2. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see and pride in our achievements and possessions.

All this is glory seeking, by the way. These are not from the Father but are from this world. And this world is fading away along with everything that people crave.

But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. He will remain forever. That's what cannot be shaken. Everything that the world craves, everything the world longs for and fights for will be done away with.

So the words of Haggai chapter 2 verse 9 are going to come true. All that craving, all that strife, all that conflict, all that desiring and aching and longing and fighting for.

[48 : 37] And then in Haggai chapter 2 verse 9 the Lord says, In this place I will give peace. Shalom. Everything is going to be well. You will find rest.

No longer that uneasiness. No longer that sense that things aren't what they should be. Peace. Declares the Lord of hosts. He will give peace.

He will give rest to us as we cease that constant churning and striving and craving for man-made temporary glory. And we accept that it is the Lord who gives us a glory that surpasses anything that has come before.

So let's not make the mistake of thinking that what appears impressive is going to endure forever. Let's remember that it's what appears unimpressive.

That what appears inadequate to us that may be the very thing that is cherished by God and filled with his glory. Both now and forever and ever and ever.

[49 : 45] we as God's people we're often discouraged by our unimpressive worship but we rebuild our worship with strength and courage because of the Lord's presence and his promise of glory.

and you and