

“Encouragement to Keep on Rebuilding”

Haggai 2:1-9

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(Lord's Day Service, November 4, 2019)

Haggai 2:1-9

The Coming Glory of the Temple

¹*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: ²“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, 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? ⁴Yet 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, ⁵according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not. ⁶For 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. ⁷And 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. ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. ⁹The 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.’”*

Introduction

Have you ever been with a friend, and they tell you how amazing a movie is? And as you're watching it, you're wondering, "What are they talking about?" Because that movie is not as great as they hyped it up to be. Maybe it has happened to you, if it hasn't happened to you...it will sometime.

Sometimes our expectations do not match up to reality. If you don't know what I'm talking about, I'll show you a couple pictures that will illustrate this. This is a picture of some pancakes at the International House of Pancakes. Someone saw this, and they thought, "Wow, I really want this." So they decided to IHOP. When they went there, they got something horrible. Or sometimes when parents become parents, when they have a child, they get so excited and they think, "You know what? When I have a baby, I'm going to take a nap with my child, and it's going to be incredible. So peaceful,". But in you can't even take a nap because the child is crawling on top of you. Expectations vs. reality.

When things begin, it can be very exciting. A new job, marriage, new school, new school year, new small group. This is what people typically call the "honeymoon phase". Expectations are high, but then life can be disappointing once that honeymoon phase passes because the difficulties of reality settle in. What can make it especially difficult is seeing the great thing that other people have compared to what you have right now. That's why the phrase, "the grass is greener is on the other side," is so popular, because it feels like everyone's grass is greener than yours. Or sometimes you remember the great things that you had in the past, compared to what you have in the present.

That's what the Israelites were facing in this passage. As they remembered back then, and compared to what they have now, it didn't seem very good. To give you a little background on this passage, we're

going through the book of Haggai, which is about how the Israelites are called to rebuild the temple of God. The Jews were in exile; they were not faithful, so they were kicked out of Israel, but now they have been back in Jerusalem for sixteen years. But the temple of the Lord, the house of God, is still in ruins. But they didn't care. They spent their time and money on building their own houses but did not rebuild the house of the Lord. That's what we were talking about in the first passage. If you want to go through the outline of Haggai, Haggai 1:1-11 is about rebuilding the people of God. They were so busy living for themselves; they were not living as people of God. God is invested in building them up and rebuilding them as His people. Then as they are rebuilt—Haggai 1:12-15, Haggai is saying to rebuild the temple, and he tells them rebuild God's house. The passage we're in right now, Haggai 2:1-9, takes place four weeks after Haggai 1:12-15. The people started rebuilding the house and a month has passed by, and the house that they see right now looks nothing like the house they saw in the past, and they're discouraged. It's hard for them. God knows that we can get discouraged, too. He knows that life can be hard. If you're discouraged this is a message for you, or if you ever will be discouraged in your life, this is the Word for us today.

Three points we'll look at today:

- 1) The Need for Encouragement
- 2) The Words of Encouragement
- 3) The Source of Encouragement.

Haggai 1:1-11 Rebuilding the people of God

Haggai 1:12-15 Rebuilding the temple

Haggai 2:1-9 Encouragement for rebuilding

Haggai 2:10-23 Blessings from rebuilding

I. The Need for Encouragement [1-3]

¹In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet: ²“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, 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?

As I said, the people had been rebuilding the temple for about a month, and they were discouraged. They needed encouragement for multiple reasons: number one, the work was difficult. To rebuild, they had to take away the broken walls and pieces. They had to clear out all the mess and debris. Once they cleared it out, then they could start rebuilding the temple once again. Starting something brand new can be hopeful because you have a clean slate. A new semester of classes means you're starting with a clean slate. When I talk to new students, I say, “when you're starting class, you got an A+ right now. But if you do poorly on an exam, that means you have to work your way up.” But truthfully, in life, everybody does not come in with a clean slate. In marriage, couples need to work through how their families operated as they grew up. With sports, you have to learn the correct mechanics, but in order to learn the correct mechanics, you have to unlearn the wrong mechanics you've learned all of your life. In our relationship with God, it's seeing the unbiblical thinking and loving we are doing within us, then putting in the correct thinking and biblical loving in our lives.

It's hard living for the Lord. Doing the work of God is hard, and that's how these Israelites were feeling. It says in Verse 1, *"In the seventh month on the twenty-first day of the month."* That was the last ordinary day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles was instituted by God as a statute for all generations. During this feast, the whole population of the Israel were supposed to move out of their homes to go to Jerusalem and live in booths for seven days. They lived in a tent for seven days to remember God's sustenance and protection of the Israelites during the Exodus wanderings. It was supposed to be a joyful time, remembering God's faithfulness, but on that seventh month of the twenty-first day, it was far from a joyful time because what they saw all around them was ruin and destruction.

The seventh month was also the month that Solomon dedicated the first temple to the Lord with sacred objects. They were looking at what they see right now comparing it to what it was like in the past. And Haggai tells them to do that. He says in 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?"* This is in reference to those who were alive while the first temple was fully constructed. In 587 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar came and destroyed the temple of God, but there were possibly still some people that saw the first temple, and Haggai is saying, "what does it look like now?" That first temple was beautiful; it was filled with silver and gold; it was made with the best materials. It was so incredible that all the walls were laced and covered in gold. But the temple at that point did not look like anything like it had originally. It had lost a lot of its splendor and glory because over the years kings would come and ransack Jerusalem, and when that happened, they would go to the temple and steal the sacred objects out of it. Sometimes the Jewish kings, in order to make sure that the foreign kings would not take over the Jews, would say to the foreign kings, "Here, I'm going to offer you some of the splendor from the temple." The temple was not the same, and the Jews felt like the new temple would never be like it was in the past. They had no resources to pay skilled craftsmen from abroad like Solomon did, and they could not begin covering the interior with gold. There was a lack of suitable material and an absence of sacred objects.

For us today, comparisons can be hard to handle. Comparisons can be discouraging. Have people ever compared you to other people, and they say to you, "Why aren't you better, like them?" Or sometimes we don't need anybody to compare us to other people because we compare ourselves to what we think we should be, and even though people say, "No, it's fine," you're thinking, "No, it's not." And then you struggle with the fact that you compare all the time. You judge other people, and you judge yourself, and it feels like this vicious cycle that will never end. Comparisons can be hard to deal with. These are two reasons why the Israelites were discouraged, and these reasons, truthfully, may not be the reasons why we get discouraged, but we still get discouraged by other things. To be discouraged is to be human.

Human beings get discouraged. Essentially, we get discouraged when we don't get what we want or when we get what we don't want. You are going to get discouraged because we have a desire for ourselves, it's hard when a person faces discouragement over and over again. Sometimes discouragement leads to disillusionment and sometimes disillusionment leads to depression. God does not tell us that we can only come to Him if we're encouraged. God knows we have a tendency to be discouraged, and He knows that the Israelites in this passage are discouraged. He speaks to them; He welcomes us in a state of discouragement. Tim Keller said this: *"The church is not a museum for pristine saints but a hospital ward for broken sinners."* If you're discouraged right now - if you're tired, if you're restless, if you feel hopeless, God welcomes us into His presence and says, "I have a word for you."

II. Words of Encouragement [4-5]

⁴Yet 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, ⁵according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

God gives the Israelites three phrases for them to think through. He tells them what to do and the reason why. And these three sentences are to help them to fight their discouragement in that time.

A. Be strong now because the Lord commands it [4]

⁴Yet 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,

He says in Verse 4, “Be strong, O Zerubbabel... Be strong, O Joshua... Be strong, all you people of the land.” That phrase “be strong” notes a frame of mind; a frame of mind that enables one to pursue or initiate something with fervor or diligence. “Be strong,” is saying, “Be mentally tough. Be strong in your head.” Athletes have a mental toughness, a mental strength about them, that when they face adversity, when the game is on the line, they perform better. They’re just different because they’re mentally strong. We may not be mentally strong, but the Lord is still saying, “be strong,” because it’s a command. Whether you feel like it or not, be strong in your mind. Pursue this even though you don’t feel like pursuing it. Put your mind to it.

It’s an individual command, but also a corporate command. He says to the leaders, Zerubbabel the governor and to Joshua the high priest, “Be strong and lead the people. Be strong and fulfill what I have commanded you.” It’s not just about the leadership in the church but all the people, “Be strong all you people of the land.” It’s not just about our individual efforts. Sometimes we get consumed with only what “I” do, but we have to remember that we’re a part of a people. What you do and don’t do affects the people. The situation is difficult, but the Lord tells the leaders and the people, “Be strong. Be mentally strong,” and he tells them to work.

B. Work because the Lord of the covenant is with you [4-5]

⁴Yet 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, ⁵according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

“Be strong in your mind and be strong with your hands to work.” That word, “work,” means “to do” or “to make.” God was telling the Israelites, whether they felt like it or not, to work. I could imagine some of the Israelites going to the temple, taking broken bricks and putting them away, or taking the bricks that were good to use, and putting it on. And if it fell off, they would still do that work to build that house. For us today, this doesn’t necessarily mean to build a church or a temple, but it’s saying, do your work for the Lord. As you work at your job or at home, as you’re faithful in all these things, work for the Lord. We don’t work to earn God’s grace because our

work will never be good enough to earn it. The reason why we work is because the Lord of the covenant is with us. That's what God is saying here, "Work, for I am with you, according to the covenant I made with you when you came out of Egypt." Work because the God of grace is with you and He's the One that is always faithful to us. He's the God of the covenant. A covenant is an agreement made between two parties. The Lord made a covenant with the Israelites, "I will be your God if you will be my people." These days, when people make an agreement, they shake on it. When I was a kid, it was a pinky promise. Now if you're a little bit more sophisticated, you'll get a document and you'll sign it. You sign off on it to say, "We're going to take part and follow through on this agreement." But the covenant back then was established a little bit differently.

Genesis chapter 15 talks about how the covenant was made. Back then, when two parties agreed on something, animals were cut in half. The two parties would walk in between the two animals, and they would be thinking, "If I don't keep my end of this agreement, this covenant, then what happened to these animals, may it happen to me. I'm going to keep my end of this covenant." In Genesis 15, the Lord makes a covenant with Abraham, the father of Israel. Abraham falls asleep, and as he falls asleep, the Lord makes a covenant with Abraham, and it says this:

Genesis 15:17-18 – ¹⁷*When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch - representing the Lord - passed between these pieces. - These cut animals -*
¹⁸*On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,*

Noticed who passed through, it was the Lord. Only He passed through the cut animals, not Abraham. The Lord knew that Abraham and God's people could never fully, faithfully follow through on the covenant. So, God is saying this: "Work, not because it's based on your faithfulness, but work because I will always be faithful to you. Even when you're not faithful to me, I will always be faithful to you." The reason why we're able to work and be faithful is because of God. As we say here at CFC, "the basis of our faithfulness is God's faithfulness." He's always working, and He wants to work through His people. Work because the Lord of the covenant is with you.

C. Don't be afraid because the Holy Spirit remains in your midst [5]

⁵*according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.*

Work is tiring. We get physically tired, physically spent. But sometimes, when you worry, when you have fears, they are more tiring than your work. Sometimes we fear that what we work on will never bear any good results, and it becomes discouraging when something you work on so hard doesn't come into fruition, and sometimes people feel paralyzed because of it. But the Lord says to the Israelites here, "Fear not because my spirit remains in your midst."

We're afraid because we're afraid of losing what we love. But God is telling the Israelites, "Don't be afraid, because the Holy Spirit remains in your midst. It is with you." When the Holy Spirit is in our midst, there is great power available to us. So, you don't have to fear the things out there

because you have power within you. To give you an example, in the Old Testament, sometimes the Spirit came upon people to display the power of God for special moments.

Judges chapter 14. Samson, a Judge, faced a lion. He saw a lion roaring towards him, and *“then the spirit of the Lord rushed upon him”*. And what happened? *“He tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat.”*

Judges 14:5-6 – *⁵Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring. ⁶Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.*

I don't know what it feels like to tear a young goat, and I don't think I would be able to tear a young goat, but I think this passage is saying young goats are easy to tear. But it is saying, lions are nothing; they're just like young goats when you have the power of God, the Holy Spirit with you. You don't have to be afraid of goats, you don't have to be afraid of lions, bears, sheep, whatever it may be, because God is with you. The power God gave Samson is the power that allowed Christ to overcome the sin and the grave. Let's not forget that in Acts chapter 2, the Holy Spirit came down to the church so that they can live in power and not be afraid of people or lack of results, but that we as a church could live for the glory of God. There is resurrection power in our midst so don't be afraid because you have great power in your midst at all times.

It took four years for the Israelites to rebuild the temple of the Lord. Four years is a long time. Think about what you were doing or what you looked like four years ago. It's a long time. What kept the Israelites going, to keep on rebuilding this temple over and over again? It's those words of encouragement from God. To remind you, for four weeks they were working, and then after four weeks they got discouraged. But they received these words of encouragement, that God is telling us to *“Be strong...work because I'm with you...don't be afraid.”* That empowered them to keep on going through any circumstance, to build up the temple. For us, that's why we gather every single week; that's why we do bible study on the messages, because we want all of us to be empowered with the Word of God.

When we get discouraged, God gives us His living, powerful Word. Words have power, but God's Word has great power. Do you believe it? The strongest people are those who know the strength of God's work. God is telling us, “Be strong in your mind and work. Be strong with your hands and do not be afraid. Be strong in your heart.” Take heart, because as you take in the Word of God, He strengthens us to live for Him. So, sit on God's Word. If God's Word encourages you, if there's power in it, sit on it. Get charged up - receive more of it. Joni Eareckson Tada said: *“The longer the tea bag sits in the cup, the stronger the tea. The more God's Word saturates our minds, the clearer our grasp of what's important to Him, and the stronger our prayers.”* Maybe the reason why God's Word is not encouraging us, is not as powerful, is because we're not allowing God's Word to saturate in our lives. I remember when I became a Christian in 5th grade, I don't know why but I started carrying a Bible with me in my pencil case wherever I went. From that point on, from 5th grade and all throughout my high school career, I always had a Bible with

me. I distinctly remember one day walking to my high school, I distinctly remember going through the beatitudes. “*Blessed are..., blessed are..., blessed are those who hunger in righteousness for they will be filled.*” It didn’t mean much to me then, but it means a lot to me now.

Corrie Ten Boom says: “*Let God’s promises shine on your problems.*” We cannot avoid our problems. We can avoid God’s Word. But (instead) allow God’s promises to shine in your problems. Our circumstances may not change, but we can change through the unchanging Word of God. God gives us His Word so that we can change and now become agents of change in this world.

III. The Source of Encouragement [6-9]

⁶For 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. ⁷And 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. ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. ⁹The 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.’”

We receive God’s Word, and we keep on going to the source of encouragement. For the Jews that Haggai is speaking to, these verses are looking forward to what is to come. “This is what you are going to receive. There’s going to be a source.” It says here, the Lord “*will fill this house,*” it’s looking towards what’s to come. All these points: the Lord will fill, all nations will contribute, and the house will have greater glory, they are all looking to the future. Your present may not look good right now, but what’s to come is incredible. The source will keep on giving.

A. The Lord will fill this house [6-8] – The Lord is the ultimate source

⁶For 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. ⁷And 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. ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts.

What we see here is that the Lord will fill this house. The Lord is the ultimate source of encouragement. He is the provider of all things that are good, and God is saying that He is the source of goodness. It’s a little strange here in Verse 6, God says, “*I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land... I will shake all nations.*” God is saying He is going to cause hardships, difficulties, and troubles to happen all around this world. Divine shaking will take place so that we can see what is unshakeable. Sometimes we become too comfortable with the way that we’re living; we need to be shaken to see what we’re living for. Through all of this, the Lord is saying that he will fill his house with glory. Just go directly to the source. The Lord will fill His house with glory. The Lord will get it done. Let me ask you this: do you have a mindset that says the Lord will or do you have a mindset that says, “I can’t.”? Do you constantly say, “I can’t, I can’t, I can’t,” or do you say, “the Lord will. The Lord will. The Lord will.”? Haggai is thinking that the “Lord will.” The Lord’s will will be done, so be encouraged. How will the Lord get it done? All nations will contribute.

B. All nations will contribute [7] – The Lord will use the nations as a source of encouragement

⁷And 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.

God gives us encouragement, but He will use the nations as a source of encouragement. It says in verse 7, “*And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in.*” The Israelites, were discouraged because they were afraid: “How are we going to get supplies to fill this house? To build this house?” And God is saying, “I gotcha.” “*The treasures of all nations shall come in.*” All nations shall contribute to this house. Sometimes nations will contribute unwillingly and sometimes nations will contribute willingly. But the thing is, all nations will contribute to building that temple at that time. A few implications here: all people are welcome into the house of the Lord. God doesn’t just want the treasures of all nations; God wants the people in all nations. For God, people are more important than treasures. He wants every single race, every single tongue, every single people group. So, no matter our race or socioeconomic status, we are all welcome into the house of the Lord. That’s why in Mark chapter 11, when Jesus cleanses the temple; He’s so mad at those selling sacrifices and distracting people in the temple. He says this,

Mark 11:17 – *And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it a den of robbers.’”*

God is saying that all people are welcome into the house of the Lord. But another implication: willingly contribute to the house of the Lord. Willingly do God’s work. The nations will contribute to the Lord’s work. It says in Isaiah chapter 60, verse 13:

Isaiah 60:13 – *The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious.*

That’s a prophecy. The Israelites were afraid. How is this all going to happen? But God is telling Isaiah, “You know how? I am going to use those people in Lebanon to provide cypress, plane, and pine to beautify this sanctuary.” God’s saying, “Don’t worry, I’m going to make it happen.” God is saying that the Lord will work, but He will work in conjunction with the nations’ work. The Lord will work, but He will work in conjunction of our work. God is sovereign, but he uses our work. It’s incredible.

That’s why our prayer is important. God has ordained it so that when we pray for people, when we love other people, He uses that to help other people to come to know him. When we think of nations, we can easily think of other people, but we have to remember the context of this passage. God was talking to the Israelites; so, when he was referring to “the nations,” he was talking to anybody that wasn’t a Jew. So, if you’re not of Jewish descent, He’s talking about you. He’s saying that all the treasures of all nations will come to you. The Lord is a source of

encouragement, but as we work, the Lord can use us as a source of encouragement to other people.

I don't know if that gets you excited, but that gets me excited. The fact that God uses us to contribute to anything good. If you contribute to anything, contribute to things that will matter hundreds of billions of years from now. My kids sometimes get these gift cards for PlayStation, and they will use them for this video game, which is the bane of my existence, Fortnite. They will use them to buy skins, and those skins do absolutely nothing for your player. You're just spending money on something that doesn't even help you advance in that game, and I'm thinking, "Please don't do that. You're not contributing to anything right now or in eternity." What's my point? I don't know. But my point is this: don't be like my kids. Learn to contribute to what matters a hundred billion years from now. People may not see what we do. People may not think much of what we do. But that doesn't matter because the Lord can use us to build His house. God can use us, big or small, to build up His kingdom.

C. This house will have a greater glory [7-9] – There will be a greater glory

⁷And 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. ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. ⁹The 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.'"

There is going to be a source that endlessly gives. As Haggai is speaking here, he's saying, "*this house*" referring to the second temple, and he says in Verse 9, "*The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former*" than the first temple. The temple they were building is worth rebuilding because it will be great. Its glory will be incredible, and the Lord will give his peace in that house. The temple of the Lord was a place where man came to meet with the Lord. Before that there was a tabernacle, which represented the presence of God; it's where men came to meet with the Lord. But that second temple that the Israelites were building at this time, it was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans. But God says, "Don't worry." Because these passages point to a greater temple, to one that is the presence of God. It points forwards to Jesus, and Jesus knew that he was the greater temple of the Lord. John chapter 2 Verse 19, when Jesus cleanses the temple, he says this,

John 2:19-22 – ¹⁹*Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* ²⁰*The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"* ²¹*But he was speaking about the temple of his body.* ²²*When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.*

Jesus knows that that temple that the Israelites built in Haggai's time that was going to be destroyed, but he's saying, "It's okay because my body is the temple. You come to me to meet with the Lord. You don't have to sacrifice anymore because I am the greater sacrifice." There is no longer a need for a prophet like Haggai, a priest like Joshua, a governor or king of the nation like Zerubbabel because Jesus is the greater prophet, priest, and king. There is no longer a need

for a temple because Jesus is the greater temple. We find peace within Jesus Christ. So you won't have to go to a place, you go to a person, and you go to the glorious one, because He is filled with the glory of God. Jesus is saying, "Come to me. Come to my house," and as Jesus, the greater temple, went up to heaven, what does he tell the church? He says, "I will build my church." Now, the meeting place between God and man is the church. It says in 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 5,

1 Peter 2:5 – you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Do we hear that? If you call yourself a Christian, God has given us a mission to share who Jesus Christ is with this world. That's why we exist right here on this day. What is today? November 3rd, 2019. Right here, right now, we have the message of God and some people do not know the message of God - we can share it with other people. We share it with non-Christians, and we share it with each other, because His church is now the place of God. But, truthfully, sometimes it's hard to come to the church and feel like the church is the place of God. Sometimes church may feel like it's getting worse, with gossip and sin going around, and hurting each other. Sometimes it feels like it's helpless and hopeless. But the Lord is saying it will get better. We have not seen anything yet because the Lord is the Lord of The Church and the Lord of this church. If you feel discouraged, God is giving His words of encouragement, and He's telling us to keep on going to the source of encouragement, but He's also telling us, "Church, be a source of encouragement to this world. Be a source of encouragement to one another and be a source of encouragement to those outside of these four walls," because He is the one full of glory.

Have you ever heard this phrase before? "Things may get worse at first before it gets better, but it will get better." When you work out, I hear that at first it hurts. Because when you're working out, your muscles are breaking down, and it feels like it's getting worse. But in order to get stronger, you have to go through that pain and allow your muscles to rebuild and then you will get better.

When facing your fears and discouragements, sometimes they feel like they're getting worse because you're facing your inadequacies, shortcomings, and failures. But it can get better as you learn to grow through them. But if you're in Christ, it is guaranteed things will get better. But Scripture tells us before things get better, things will get worse. Scripture tells us that before Christ comes again, the world will get worse; it will become more evil. There will be more deception, and there will be more persecution than what we saw on the video, International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. That persecution is a real thing that's been going on everywhere, and for some Christians, that evil is intensifying. For some Christians, on this side of eternity, things will not get better. They will face death. But there is a greater glory. Sometimes for us, on this side of eternity, things will get better, but what is guaranteed is that it will get better in eternity. We have not seen anything yet.

Revelation 21:22 – And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

This is John, as he's seeing this revelation, given by God, and he sees the New Jerusalem, where there's no more sin, no more suffering, no more hardship, no more pain, it says, "*And I saw no temple in the city.*" You don't need a temple to go to; you don't need that means or mode to go to meet the presence of God. Why? Because "*for its temple is the Lord God*" You have direct access to God and in the future, in heaven, we no longer have any more sin to struggle with. We have no more hardship, no more pain, no more discouragement, no more disillusionment, no more depression, but all we have is the Lord, the glorious One. Things may get worse, but it will get better. Are you the type of person that will say, "The Lord will?" Let the truth of God's Word saturate and fill your heart. Even if you give up in the moment and you give in to your discouragement, know that the covenant-keeping God does not and will not give up on you. I can say that confidently, because I know that God hasn't given up on me even though I have quit on Him various times.

Conclusion

My freshman year in 1995, I came in as a fresh, proud, and arrogant freshman, and as I came to this church, I was thinking, "I don't need this church." The only sermon that I remember from the pulpit of CFC at the time was on 1 John chapter 4, when Pastor Min said "Test every spirit by the Word of God," and he said, the only thing that I remember from that whole year in 1995 to 96, he said, "Do not believe everything that I say but test everything to make sure that it's coming from God's Word." In my arrogant, selfish, immature mind, I said, "Yeah, that's right." Boy, that's horrible.

But then slowly, my sophomore year, I started growing, but that arrogance and pride was still a part of me. My junior year, I got asked to be a part of the CFC worship team, and I started doing the mixing in the back. But my CFC worship career was very short-lived, only two weeks, because I messed up pretty badly. I didn't get kicked out - I quit. I remember the worship team pastor called me up and he said, "David, I heard that you quit," I replied, "Yeah I did," and he said, "You know what, I think it would be really beneficial for you if you still stayed part of the CFC worship team because you can grow. You can learn how to mix, but you can learn so many lessons through that time." I prayed about it for five seconds, and I said, "I prayed. No, I'm gonna quit." Fast-forward, I stayed on campus a little bit longer, and I was actually back on the CFC worship team. Back in the day I led worship for the second Sunday service, and the setup here wasn't anything like this. Back in the day, it was just a piano and the guitarist.

From my perspective, I can confidently say I led the worst worship service in all of CFC history. I'm being very vulnerable here. When I played the guitar for that opening set, my strings broke. Not that big of a deal, it happens all the time. So during the closing set, I had a different guitar. Let me give you a little understanding - for worship team, you know that you're doing a good job if nobody notices you. If everyone else can focus on the screen and worship the Lord. If you get noticed, it's not good. So, for the closing set, I'm using a different guitar, and as I'm playing, things were going okay, but then all of a sudden, the strap on the guitar starts slipping off, and as it's slipping off, I'm thinking, "I've got to fix this because the music must go on, worshipping the Lord must go on." So, as I'm playing, I started to do this rock move and I started doing this [gets into a semi-lunge position] to correct the strap to stay on my shoulder. And as I'm doing this, people are no longer looking at the screen, they're looking at me because the worship leader would stand right at the front, like we still do. In my mind, I'm thinking, "Oh, this is not good, but the song must go on." So, I'm playing, and it's falling off. I'm really close to the people in

the front pew, and I'm praying, "God, help me. Please send someone to just take this shoulder strap and put it back on my shoulder." I didn't think to just stop playing and just put it back on, but the Lord did not answer that prayer. I kept on playing, and then the strap fell. But I was thinking the music must go on, so as the strap fell, just to give you a visual representation, I started playing like this now [starts to lift left knee up]. It was really bad because the pastor at that time, Pastor Min, he had direct line of sight, right here, and usually when the worship is going on, the pastor of the congregation is worshipping the Lord. But I was a distraction to everybody. It was so bad that after service, people would come up to me, and they'd be like, "Dude, I couldn't sing the song at all because all that I could thinking about was you." It was a discouraging time. All fun and all, but it was hard. But that's just one silly example of probably the plethora of failures that I have in my life. But I say this confidently - that God loves failures.

I don't know if back in the day, when Haggai was preaching this message, if God used the broken bricks people saw - maybe they threw it away. But God will never throw away broken people. We can come to Him. The church - we're messy, we're failures. But if God is able to use failures like us, that shows the glory of God. God is a great and glorious God. If there is anything good that comes from of me, or if I could say it on the behalf of any of us, if there is anything good that comes from us, all glory be to God. Jesus is the greater temple. He is the Lord of this church, and he is telling us to keep on persevering, to keep on going, because there is a greater glory to come.