

Looking Back

Reflect on what you heard in the sermon on last week's Scripture text (Haggai 1).

- What key truths did you learn?
- How will you apply these truths to your life?

Looking Forward

Scripture Text: Haggai 2:1-9

Context

Judah's persistent rebellion against God resulted in the entire nation going into exile. But, because of God's grace and faithfulness, He brought the Jews back to Jerusalem after 70 years in captivity. The work to rebuild the temple began but the people struggled with discouragement and disappointment. In this passage, which is the second of Haggai's four oracles, the prophet encourages the people to be strong and build God's house.

Observation and Meaning

1. What problem does Haggai confront in v. 3 (cf. Ezr. 3:12)? What are the roots of this problem?
2. What does God exhort the people to do?
3. What is the basis of God's encouragement (vv.4b-9)?
4. What do vv. 6-9 refer to (cf. Heb. 12:26)?

Big Idea

God, through Haggai the prophet, encourages the people to be strong and build His house.

Connecting To The Whole Bible Storyline

The temple in the Old Testament was a symbol of God's presence with his people. By rebuilding the temple, the people were expressing their faith in God and his purposes. The temple pointed forward to Jesus Christ, who perfectly and supremely reveals the glory of God. When we believe in Christ, we become a spiritual house in Him. Therefore the church—the gathered community of followers of Jesus Christ—is now God's house. We build by building one another up in the faith, and by evangelizing the nations.

Sermon Outline

- I. Disappointment and Discouragement (vv. 1-3)
- II. Exhortation and Encouragement (vv. 4-9)
 1. God's Presence
 2. God's Promise
 3. God's Plan

Applications

1. Whose house are we devoted to building? Why?
2. What might cause us to become discouraged or disappointed as we serve God?
3. How does this passage encourage us when we encounter challenges as we serve God?
4. How can we encourage one another to serve God?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?
 What is the situation of the author and of the readers?
 Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?
 Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.