

Introduction: I want you to imagine a scene with me: It's the next time you roll into work. In my mind's eye, I can see you. You are naturally ready to put your best foot forward. After all, if you're a Christian, you understand your work each day provides you an opportunity to serve others and glorify God. If you are not yet a Christian, common grace teaches all of us that it is right to work hard, put others before yourself and seek to do your absolute best no matter what opportunity or challenge comes your way.

Now as you are rolling into work with this amazing attitude, you are surprised by a rude awakening. Your supervisor calls a meeting. He has one message to deliver that is not up for debate. "Team, welcome to work! We have a new mission as an organization: Our primary objective is to pursue mediocrity in all we do!"

At this point, you have a few options: 1) You can rejoice that your boss won't be breathing down your neck for a change and prepare to kick your feet up. 2) You can decide to stick it out and work hard in spite of this contradictory environment, or 3) You can give em' your two weeks and look for another job!

Now, I suppose that no one here this morning is going to here that at your job, ever! But even if we were, that kind of mission should ever resonate in our hearts, because we understand God has placed innate desires in us to pursue greatness.

We, all, at our core, want to be a part of something glorious, because God has designed us all with an insatiable appetite for glory. He has hardwired instincts and desires in us that cause our hearts to beat for glory. We are glory chasers. We pursue that which we perceive has the greatest value and lasting worth! Today, I want us to think about . . .

"Seeking Glory" Haggai 2:1-9

Context: Chapter 1 - I gotta mine's before you get yours. . . Seeking glory, but the wrong kind - self-glory...

The Point: God designed us to long for and seek after his glory.

As we work our way through this text, I'm going to provide three encouragements related to seeking after the lasting and all-satisfying glory of God.

I. Be aware of your inner ache for glory (2:1-3).

Read vv. 1-3.

It was the 21st day of the seventh month, when the word of God again comes through Haggai. The specific date, according to our dating system is October 17, 520 B.C., less than a month after they began the work of rebuilding the temple.

Here's his message:

- "Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory?" Raise your hand. Do you remember Solomon's temple?

- How do you see it now? You say, well it was not totally rebuilt. True. But even when the foundations were laid, not to mention they knew the resources they had to work with (not quite the same as Solomon), they knew the temple they were building would pale in comparison.
- That's why Haggai continues: "Is it not as nothing in your eyes?"
 - Feel the weight of that statement.
 - "Is it not *as nothing* in your eyes?"
- How could this be? Because the former glory of Solomon's temple was so spectacular, holding great honor and distinction among the people. It represented God's presence among them and was their central place of worship.
- So what happened when they began to rebuild it? Let's look at Ezra 3:8-13, which provides the immediate background to Haggai chapter 2.
- **"Now in the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak made a beginning . . . And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the directions of David king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, 'For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.' And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid." (Ezra 3:8-11)**

What an amazing scene!

- There was shouting and rejoicing. There was trumpets and cymbals and singing. It was a great celebration!
- Now verse 12: **"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, though many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away." (Ezra 3:12-13)**
- Wow! In the midst all of the celebration, old men had tears streaming down their face sobbing because they knew of a better day; they knew of a better time. It says, they wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of the temple being laid.
- What an intense moment! Can you imagine a child walking the streets of Jerusalem on that day?
- My parents are shouting for joy. They are singing songs with their friends. It seems like the greatest of days.
- But . . . Wait a minute: my grandparents . . . they are not shouting. They are weeping. To them, this does not seem like the greatest of days at all.
- And Ezra says, If you were to have been their in the moment, you would have not been able to distinguish rejoicing from weeping, the sound of tears of joy from the sound of tears of sorrow.

Clearly, they longed for something better, because it did not match their past experience, but there is something else going on. They were also expecting something more . . .

- God had promised through the prophet Ezekiel (chs. 40-48), during their days of exile, that a future temple would be constructed that would surpass the glory of Solomon's temple. . . .

- But Clearly . . . what they were about to rebuild would never be as glorious.
- And this left them feeling glory bankrupt.

- Like all of us, they possessed a great desire, a longing, an ache for something more glorious.
 - We long for great progress and perfection in our work.
 - We long to be remembered, to leave a legacy.
 - When we or someone around us has a physical ailment, we are not okay with that! Why? Because we long for glory.
- God's original design was perfectly glorious. Our world is broken. It falls short of his design, and so do we.

T: Their discouragement led them to either slow or completely stop the work. So Haggai, like a good representative of God, identifies with them in their pain and brokenness: "Those of you who saw the former glory of the temple. I know you're discouraged. I know this seems so insignificant, but don't lose heart and don't lose perspective." That's what he says in vv.4-5 as he tells them to . . .

II. Be encouraged by the present glory of God in your midst (2:4-5).

Look at *verses 4-5*

- "Yet now" - Clear transition.
- I have a message for you.
- What's the message? Zerubbabel, Joshua, all People: "Be strong."
- The task before them was enormous. Rebuild a temple. Kind of a big job, but a huge job for a people suffering drought and lacking in material resources.
- Sometimes, this is the message we need to hear.
 - Not, "Hey, little baby, it will be okay. Mama will take care of you."
 - We live in such a sanitized culture. Don't ever raise your voice. No one should ever get their feelings hurt or be disappointed.
 - Ours is an "everyone gets a trophy" kind of culture.
 - Dude, hold up. Every sane person knows: resistance is coming. Life will push back at us and push back *hard*. Trials and trouble come.
- What are we going to do in those moments? Haggai says, "Be Strong."
- Pic: After the Marathon bombings, the words "Boston Strong" resonated with us so deeply, because we understand the need to push through life's greatest difficulties and trials with great resolve.

T: But this is not just a moral command, pull yourself up by your bootstraps ... Why? The reason is found in verse 4: "Be strong, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of Hosts."

- We saw this last week. God gave them a four word message to begin their rebuild project: "I am with you."
- And specifically, who is this God? Answer: the Lord of Hosts
 - 14 times in the 38 verses found in the Book of Haggai, we see God described as "the Lord of Hosts."
 - You don't have to be a Bible scholar to know it must be significant description.
 - "The Lord of Hosts" refers to God as the leader of all heavenly and earthly armies. It is a picture of triumph, greatness, and strength.
 - God alone has "supreme power and authority."

The presence of our great God should encourage us!

- What do we need when you suffer? The presence of God.
 - What will you need when you are faced with a great challenge? The presence of God [Exodus 33]
 - Look back at the end of verse 5: “My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.”
 - God spoke through another post-exilic prophet with these words in Zech 4:6: **“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, declares the Lord.” (Zechariah 4:6)**
 - Now we live in a fundamentally different age...
 - In **John 14:16-17**, Jesus explains: **“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”**
 - Jesus has sent “another Helper,” who will dwell in us as his empowering presence - for evah!
- Now, do you see why I am saying we can be encouraged in our discouragement by the present glory of the Lord?

- You say, “Well, what does this have to do with glory?” Glory is a manifestation of who God is...
- If you are discouraged today, what you need is a clearer vision of God. The world says, “go out and shop. That will make you feel better. Eat some chocolate. Talk it out.” - Those routes are nothing more than functional saviors....
- No. A clear vision of God will bring you out of your discouragement!

Now, before we move on, I want to draw your attention to one other phrase in v.5 - “according to the covenant I made with you when you came out of Egypt.”

- God calls them to remember his past faithfulness in bringing them out of Egypt. That is what is going on in Jerusalem when Haggai spoke these words. How do I know that?
- Look back at v. 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.”
 - What happened on the 21st day of the 7th month? It was the last full day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which celebrated the God bringing Israel out of Egyptian slavery when he had them stay in tents, or booths.
 - This should have caused them to do things.
 - 1) Look around. You’re no longer living in tents! In fact, you have built for yourselves paneled houses. God has brought you into the land according to his promise and he has brought you back according to his promise.
 - 2) Most importantly, failed.
 - I AM WITH YOU. And to that truth, we say, “what more do we need?”
- If you are here considering if following God is worth, let me ask you, “What more do you want than this?”
 - If God is willing to give you himself, through the work of Christ on the cross, what more could you ever want and what more could you ever need? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.
- Let me drive this home. Please listen carefully to the words of Jesus in John 7:37-39: **“On the last day of the feast** (what feast? That’s right. The Feast of Booths (7:2)), **the great day** (why? The celebration culminated, prayer and praise rose to God, and it is also likely that it is the day when most people were gathered), . . .

- **“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.””**
 - Listen, I know you’re thirsty. We’re all thirsty. We’re all longing for glory and fulfillment and satisfaction.
- **“Whoever *believes in me*, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7:37-39)**
 - For everyone who believes in Jesus, trusts in all of who he is and what he has done, and gives ourselves over to him in complete surrender, we will not only be completely satisfied from our thirst, BUT we will also be a conduit of his grace. How? Because as we saw, in contrast to the old covenant where the Spirit was simply in their midst, his Spirit now dwells in us.
 - HUGE!!
- Are you not yet a Christian today? What are you waiting for? Wait no longer. Come to Christ. Be satisfied!
- Are you a discouraged Christian today? God is here. He is in you. He walks with you. He never leaves you. He has given you everything you need for the work he has placed before you.

T: We should “be encouraged by the present glory of God in our midst and in us.” But that’s not all. . . Verses 6-9 tell us we should . . .

III. Be intensely zealous to seek future glory and the shalom God will bring (2:6-9).

Read 6-9

- In these verses, God promises to provide for their material needs to build the temple and he did provide for their needs.
- But their something far greater happening in these verses. God is speaking of a future temple still to come.
- Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake . . .
 - Here we have a picture of cosmic proportions! God will shake all of creation and all nations. In other words, because God is so powerful, whatever he desires to move and whatever he desires to happen will happen.
 - This shaking pictures forth the coming judgment, when all will give an account before God, and it all points us to a shaking of all creation to the degree that it is all renewed and made new!
- This is what the next two actions of God point to when he says, “I will fill.” “I will give peace.”
 - This language points to a new heavens and new earth.
 - A greater day coming when the greater glory of God will be established.
 - Revelation 21 says, **“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. . . . And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the**

Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, (Revelation 21:1-2, 22-24)

Jesus is the True & Greater Temple (Jn. 1:14; 2:20-21)

- Haggai reported this more than 500 years before the first coming of Christ and in doing so, points us forward to the second coming of Christ, which will be the day when “The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former.”
- This is God’s Doing... And it will be a place of perfect peace. The word peace in the Hebrew is *shalom*. It is more than simply the absence of conflict. It refers complete flourishing according to God’s design, which will produce, what? That’s right: glory. The shalom God will give ...
- ... will be a place where the lion lies down with the lamb.
- It will be a place where justice wins in every case.
- It will be a place where there is no more sin.
- It will be a place where God is perfectly glorified.
- And it will be a place where our joy is maximized forever.

Conclusion:

Now ...

- At this point your heart should be screaming, “I want to be a part of that place!”
- You can have that both now and forever through Jesus! **“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1)**
- We are recipients of God’s peace through Christ.

If you have received peace with God through Jesus, then how should you respond each day to this picture of the coming glory? Be intensely zealous for that glory.

The writer of Hebrews explains what our response should look like by comparing the experience of the God’s people under the old covenant at Mt. Sinai with the experience of God’s people under the new covenant who are receiving a better kingdom through a better King, whose name is Jesus.

Listen to **Hebrews 12:26-29** and don’t miss the only reference we have to the Book of Haggai in the NT: **“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 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.”**

Our response should be that of gratitude and worship that is characterized by reverence and awe because God is an awesome God.

In view of the coming glory of God’s kingdom, **Thomas Watson** penned these five words that rocked my world one night as a student in seminary. Write them down, memorize them, live by them: **“Glory renders us intensely zealous.”** In other words, A vision of glory moves us to passionately live for God!

- How hot does the intensity of your zeal for God burn? Are you living your life completely for God?

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The vision God sets before us through Haggai should ignite our hearts to worship him, to work for him, to rebuild what is broken around us with an intense passion and zeal, because a vision of his “Glory [should truly] render us intensely zealous.”

Let’s pray. “God we ask that you would give us a greater vision of your glory in the face of Christ, in the work of Christ. We pray we would see glory in his sinless life, glory in his bloody cross, and glory in his empty tomb. Father, we pray that a vision of his glory and that glory that we are to enjoy forever because of him would move us to a life of intense zeal aimed at enjoying your glory and making your glory known that all peoples might be brought to the reverent and awe-filled worship of your people both now and for all eternity. We pray this in the glorious name of Jesus. Amen.”