

## His Best Is Still In Front of You, If He Is Still With You

Sermon preached Feb 2020

### Haggai 2:1-9

#### **Background:**

God's people have returned and started work on rebuilding the temple. The previous temple built by Solomon was a glorious and magnificent place. But it was now in ruins. The greatness of that temple, that church was gone. A remnant of the people were stirred up in the Spirit in Chapter 1 and they began to work in the house of the Lord. But after about a month in the 7<sup>th</sup> month, the Lord sends a word of encouragement to the people through the prophet Haggai because it seems they were a bit discouraged.

**In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, <sup>2</sup> Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, <sup>3</sup> Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?**

The word comes to them at a specific time. It is during the Feast of Tabernacles. The 7th Feast in God's great plan. It represented the presence of God dwelling or tabernacle with His people. It is a celebration of great joy and peace. Historically, it is around this same time that Solomon dedicated the first temple, that great house.

It is interesting that God would pick this particular time to deliver an encouraging message. During this special time of religious services he speaks first to the older folks who might remember the former glory. Those who in the past may have celebrated this time of year and this Feast in the greatness and glory of the previous temple. His questions:

- Who here still remembers the old days when this house was first built and when this place was full of glory?
- How do you see this same place now....in the natural?
- In your current viewpoint and perspective, when you compare yesterday with today; when you remember all that you had before and compare it with the tiny bit that you have now....what we have now, what we are looking at now, just doesn't compare with what we used to have and who we used to be. When you compare in the natural, what we have now, it is nothing compared to what we used to have.



I wasn't there in the city when Haggai delivered this word. I'm old, but not ancient. But when I place myself in the story and look in the natural at my own situation, I can certainly relate to these three questions.

Solomon wrote about it in Ecclesiastes 12, when old age hits you.

I remember the good old days when my house was in its prime. I could do great feats of strength and endurance. I was a pretty good athlete and basketball was my favorite sport. I could jump. I could dunk a basketball. I was a track star and ran in our State Olympics. I was a bad man, yep...I still remember.

Looking at myself now, in my current perspective, when I compare my yesterday to my today, when I remember what I had and what I've lost compared to what I can do now and have left...there is no comparison. I can't run like I used to, I can't dunk like I used to, I doubt I can even touch the net unless I have a ladder. When I compare what I have and can do now, it is nothing compared to what I used to have.

**<sup>4</sup> Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts:**

The message for them on that day was to be strong. Yet now...means God never denies their natural conditions. Never tells the people that what they are seeing is incorrect or a lie. He meets them where they are. Yet....that means He understands why you may feel weak and discouraged. He understands your 'right now' condition.

The word is you can be strong any way. God is saying your present condition and limitations, what you have lost and what you have now become doesn't hinder or prevent what you can do and achieve right now and in the future.

The word doesn't focus now on the condition or the past, it now focuses on your future. Because He calls us to be strong, and promises that He will be with us (no matter how bad it looks), He calls them to put in the work.

How is it that I can be strong in this situation? He says that God is with them. That is the key. If God is really with me, then my loss is His gain. My loss doesn't disqualify me from still being great.

I don't know exactly what your current condition is. I don't know what physical or financial or resource limitations you may have, if God says HE will be with you and you believe that word....you can be strong now!

Don't stop working for Him because you are discouraged or don't see what you used to see around you. Be strong because He is still with you and He says you still have some work to do on the temple.

**<sup>5</sup> According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. <sup>6</sup> For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a**



**little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;  
7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this  
house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith  
the LORD of hosts.**

God reminds them that they are in a legal and binding agreement with Him. A covenant relationship with Him and because He remembers His promises, He tells them He is still with them no matter how bad it may look.

While it looks like an impossible goal to meet the expectations of the magnificence they once had, God reminds them that He has all the resources they will need. Our attitude should be one of great joy. That is what Tabernacles is all about, the joy of knowing God is with us.

Sometimes our situation can cause us to forget that He is with us.

**9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts:  
and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.**

He tells them that their future, despite what it looks like in the natural, looks brighter and better than their past.

Can I tell you this with confidence.....? Your Best Is Still In Front of You, If He Is Still With You. That is what this Word given to them so many thousands of years ago, means to me today.

One thing about serving God....the truth, the word, the songs, they never go out of style.

So I looked at this verse and look at my situation and still didn't quite see it applicable to me. I can no longer dunk a basketball. There probably are no more trophies or MVP votes coming my way as a player. That season appears to be over. However, a few years ago, I started coaching. The kids I coached started to become better players and better Christians because of what I was sowing into them. I remember this one young player, Hanna Grace. She worked hard in practice and on her own to be a better player. In one particular game, she was raining shots down in a mixed league. Every time she dropped another shot I was so happy and proud and I started to realize something.

- All of the praise and accolades I achieved as a player, all of the points I scored, league championships and trophies that are collecting dust down here.....none of that compares to watching Hanna Grace make a shot.
- I would trade all of my previous sports glory, to see my kids score instead.

I learned the glory and success I hoped for looks different. Still can't do what I could do in my former glory, but the latter glory will be greater. It might look different than what I expected, but I believe God's best is in front of me.

This may never look like the church you dreamed it could be. It may never look like the former glory. But if you believe the word of God applies to you and your situation, you can say with confidence that God's best is still in front of you.



**All ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts**

This just changed my attitude. I'm ready to work.