

Week Beginning: 14th July 2019

Worship Series: #4 in series



living sharing growing

Theme Verse

Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the Lord, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the Lord Almighty. This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.'

Haggai 2:4b-5

Remember This Week

When your spirit is low, remember his Spirit is with you. You may not understand how all the parts of your life—the highs and lows, the frustrations and unwanted pauses—fit into God's plan for your life and work, but he does. So look up, look ahead and keep moving forward in obedience, for his glory will be revealed in ever increasing ways.



Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.

Psalm 1:1-3

Heavenly Father, we come tonight to hear from you. We pray that you would enable us to lay aside the frustrations and distractions of our lives as we set our minds on you. By the Holy Spirit, bring your word alive to us and give us ears to hear. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

1. Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.
2. Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?
3. When have you felt discouraged?
4. Has discouragement or disappointment ever tempted you to just give up?
5. How have you moved past disappointment? What has helped?

"What's the point?" "Why keep going when it seems that no change is evident, no growth is occurring, no progress is being made?" If you ever been ready to give up, to throw in the towel, to walk away defeated, then you have experienced discouragement. If you have ever thrown up your hands in frustration and said, "God, what do you want from me" then you know the despair that discouragement can bring to your life, your work, your relationships or your ministry. Today as we continue with major questions from the minor prophets, God speaks through his prophet Haggai to give us courage in times of discouragement and to answer plainly the question, "What does God ask of me?"

Read Haggai Chapter 2:1-9

6. What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?
7. God addresses three different groups with this proclamation? Why?
8. God is clear that he wants the people to keep working on the temple but where does he indicate that the wealth, glory and splendour of the temple will come from?

Comparisson is a dangerous game which we have been encouraged to play from an early age. Parents do it unwittingly as they compare their child's development with the progress of other similarly aged children. Teachers are forced to do it as they grade and compare students academic progress and provide reports. The workforce does it as they assess the merits of one job applicant over another. It's no wonder that in this kind of environment we begin to compare ourselves against others. We might all focus on different traits, our wealth, our looks, our health and fitness, our influence or status, our parenting, regardless of what aspect of life you choose to assess, chances are you have compared yourself to others at more than one point in your life.





Look again at Haggai 2:3

9. *How do the efforts of the remnant of Israel to rebuild the temple stack up against the grandeur of Solomon's temple?*
10. *What effect might this comparison have had on their motivation?*

In Haggai chapter 1, God stirred the hearts of the people and they began work on the temple quite happily. However, when they began to see that their efforts were not reaching the same standards of the old temple, they lost heart. They were tempted to just give up. Comparison has the potential to steal our joy. For example, give a child a bowl of icecream and they will be happy; that is until a child with a larger bowl of icecream sits next to them. Suddenly they are not happy any more. God wants us to join him in the work he has set out for us to do but it should be a joyful experience.

11. *Have you ever compared your Christian experience with the experience of others? Was it helpful?*
12. *Have you ever been discouraged by how ineffective your witness seems to be compared to others?*
13. *Are there people whose faith and ministries you would like to emulate? Who are they?*

Now look at Haggai Chapter 2:10-19

God takes the opportunity here to remind the people that all the work they do amounts to nothing in the eyes of God. They cannot build a holy temple because they themselves are not holy. Yet, God promises to make them holy, to bless them and make them prosper in the land that he promised to their ancestors. In Haggai 2:4, the Hebrew word 'chazaq' which the NIV translates as, 'be strong' has a much deeper meaning than simply to be strong. Other translations use, 'take courage'. It has the sense of standing firm during difficult times, of finding new strength or encouragement in the face of discouragement and disappointment.

14. *How does knowing that God is with us change our perspective and give us encouragement?*
15. *What are some of the promises that God makes to the remnant of Israel for their faithful work?*



How does this look different for us today? God is not calling us to get our hands dirty building a physical building with bricks and mortar. Now instead of God's Spirit being among the his people, and needing a house to live in, he lives in his people. For did you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? (1Cor 6:19). We help to build his temple, his church when we do two things. Firstly, we allow God to do his work in us, to make us holy. As he does this we are equipped, empowered and enabled to go and share the good news of his saving love through Jesus Christ. When we faithfully do this work God goes with us and promises to bless us.

17. *What areas of your life might God be wanting to do some work on in order to make you a more effective worker?*
18. *How do you plan to intentionally go out and work for God this week?*



Please continue to pray for the Cambodia mission team who are busy working for God among the people of Cambodia. However, this week there is an abridged prayer below from A.W. Tozer which you might like to pray.

Dear Lord, as of today, I refuse to compete with any of your servants. They have congregations larger than mine. So be it. I rejoice in their success. They have greater gifts. Very well. That is not in their power nor in mine. I am humbly grateful for their greater gifts and my smaller ones. I only pray that I may use to your glory such gifts as I possess. I will not compare myself with any, nor try to build up my self-esteem by noting where I may excel above one or another in your holy work. I gladly go to the foot of the cross and own myself the least of your people. If I err in my self judgment and actually underestimate myself I do not want to know it. I purpose to pray for others and to rejoice in their prosperity as if it were my own. And indeed it is my own if it is your own, for what is yours is mine, and while one plants and another waters it is You alone that giveth the increase. Amen

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

Name, God's Spirit remains with you. Amen.

