

Consider Your Ways

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[0 : 00] Before the preaching of God's word, please take your Bibles again and turn to the book of Haggai. If you don't know where the book of Haggai is, do not fear. Head to the end of the Old Testament before it becomes anew.

Go through Malachi, go through Zechariah, and you'll be at Haggai. We're going to read Haggai chapter 1, and we're going to read from verses 1 through 11.

Haggai chapter 1, verse 1, let's hear God's word. In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest.

This is what the Lord Almighty says. These people say the time has not yet come for the Lord's house to be built. Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai.

Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses while this house remains a ruin? Now this is what the Lord Almighty says. Give careful thought to your ways.

[1 : 17] You have planted much but have harvested little. You eat but never have enough. You drink but never have your fill. You put on clothes but are not warm.

You earn wages only to put them in a purse with holes in it. This is what the Lord Almighty says. Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored, says the Lord.

You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home I blew away. Why? Why? Declares the Lord Almighty. Because of my house which remains a ruin while each of you is busy with his own house.

Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle and on the labor of your hands.

Amen. Amen. Let's hear the word of God preached. Thank you, brother, for leading us in worship and for helping us get to the book of Haggai.

[2 : 31] It's a tough book to get to. Free back from your New Testament. I'm getting back there myself, sitting in Joel. Stop and think.

Are you sure that's what you want to do? Think about what you're saying. Think about what you're doing. Think about the consequences of your actions and your words. Think about what might happen.

You're a parent. You may find yourself saying those kinds of things frequently. I was just looking out the back window of my in-law's home, preparing this sermon, and I'm watching my kids in the backyard climbing a tree, and I'm thinking, they're going to break that branch.

They're going to break that branch. Stop. Think about what you're doing. Small children. Prone to be rash. Prone to make poor decisions.

Sometimes not thinking about the consequences of those decisions. And so I find myself often warning them. Sometimes it's to avoid something dangerous that they're unaware of.

[3 : 39] Sometimes it's to help them see that what they're saying or what they're doing is sinful. So I want to help them to think better. I want to help them to learn to evaluate their thoughts and attitudes and actions.

I want to help them to see that the path that they are choosing, where it might lead or where it's heading in their lives. I want to help them consider their ways.

This isn't just something that kids need, though, is it? If I'm honest with myself, if we are honest with ourselves, we must also consider our ways.

We need to give careful thought to our ways. We must take inventory of our lives, how we spend our time, what we invest ourselves in, what takes priority in our lives and what doesn't.

There are a million little moments that make up every day, and when you add up all of those moments over a lifetime, what kind of a life are you leading? Where is it heading?

[4 : 43] Who are you living to please? What's the ultimate aim of your life? And so this morning, from the book of Haggai, Lord willing, we will work our way through this book in the coming weeks together.

Our text here gives us four reasons that we must consider our ways. Four reasons that we must consider our ways.

So here is reason number one. We must consider our ways because the Lord of hosts commands us to. We must consider our ways because the Lord of hosts commands us to.

Read again with me, beginning in verse one. In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.

So this short book of the Bible begins by introducing us to a pagan king, Darius, the king of Persia.

[5 : 54] And so any time that we hear a mention of a king from Persia, think after exile. You read in your Bible, you come across a king who's made known, and that king is from Persia, think after exile.

Now earlier in the Old Testament, Israel had been divided into two kingdoms, the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. And because of Israel's persistent sin, God had sent both the northern first and then the southern to follow into exile, conquered by enemies, sent them away from the promised land.

And when they were conquered, the southern kingdom, the temple was destroyed in Jerusalem.

The northern kingdom was conquered by Assyria, southern kingdom conquered by Babylon.

And then Babylon conquered Assyria, so big fish eats little fish. And then Babylon was conquered by Persia, so big fish eats little fish again. And that means that now we find ourselves in the book of Haggai, Israel ruled by Persia.

And Darius, he is the king who is introduced to us here in Haggai. But we need to talk about one other Persian king first, before we address Darius and what's going on here in Haggai.

[7 : 11] We need to talk about Cyrus. Cyrus is very important. He is important because he gave the Israelites permission, by God stirring up his spirit, to return to the promised land and to rebuild the temple.

And we read about his edict that he delivered in Ezra chapter 1. So, keep your hand in Haggai. You don't want to have to get back there. Keep it there, but flip backwards in your Bibles to Ezra.

So, we're going to go back to Ezra. So, you get to Psalms. It's a great one because it's big. You're going to go back through Job. You're going to go back through Esther, back through Nehemiah.

We land in Ezra chapter 1. Ezra chapter 1. So, we just read the introduction, the opening words of Haggai.

Now, we're going to read the opening words of Ezra. Ezra chapter 1, beginning in verse 1, we're going to read the first three verses together.

[8 : 13] In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing.

Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel. He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus. God moved in the heart of Cyrus, acted upon his will in such a way that Cyrus allowed for Israel to return to the promised land, to go back and to rebuild the temple.

So the work of rebuilding began under Cyrus, and the work was headed up by a couple key figures that we're going to read about in just a moment from Ezra, who we've already seen in Haggai.

[9 : 21] Zerubbabel and Joshua, or Jeshua. They were in charge. Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah. He was in charge of overseeing the work of rebuilding the temple, of rebuilding the city, and Joshua was in charge of overseeing the spiritual condition of the people.

He was the priest at that time, the high priest, the religious life he was in charge of. They were the leaders when the exiles returned. Now, as we look at Ezra, we would read in the first three chapters that everything went very smoothly to begin with.

The temple was being rebuilt. The foundation was laid. But then, beginning in chapter 4, the people run into some opposition. So turn over to chapter 4.

Listen to what happens beginning in verse 1 of chapter 4. Now, when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the Lord, the God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' houses and said to them, Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who brought us here.

But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses in Israel said to them, You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God. We alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel, as king Cyrus, the king of Persia, has commanded us.

[10 : 55] Verse 4. Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purposes. All the days of Cyrus, king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius, king of Persia.

So Israel returned, began building, but then ran into this trouble, this opposition, these adversaries who were masquerading as friends, pretending to be their friends, saying, We worship the same God as you, but the truth of the matter is that they did it.

Their real heart attitudes came out pretty quickly when the Israelites declined their offer for help.

They set out to discourage the people, to make the people afraid, to frustrate their purposes.

And all of this happened all of the days of Cyrus until Darius. And that's where we pick up in the book of Haggai, the pagan king, ruling over Israel when the word of the Lord came to the people of Israel through the mouth of Haggai, the prophet.

So here's the word that the Lord brings. So jump back to Haggai now. You kept your finger in Haggai, hop back to Haggai. Here's the word that the Lord brings.

[12 : 17] Here's his command. Consider your ways. We see it in verse 5. Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways.

And again in verse 7. Thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. So reason number one, that we must consider our ways, because the Lord of hosts commands us to.

Now you might be thinking, wait a second. Israel was commanded to consider their ways. But is this a word for us too? Are we commanded to consider our ways just like they were?

Good question. I'm glad you asked. We need to be careful. Because some people have reached some pretty outlandish, some pretty odd conclusions about the Bible and what it teaches because they didn't interpret and apply it very carefully.

They didn't do it very well. And so here's a principle that we need to bring to the table when we read our Bibles, especially Old Testament prophecy like this. We've got to bring this to the table. We must distinguish between what is written or spoken to us and what is written or spoken for us.

[13 : 34] The difference? One preposition. Two. Four. Two. Four. But it's super important. These words in Haggai 1 were not spoken to us. They were spoken to these returning exiles around 520 B.C.

And God was addressing a very specific problem at a very specific point in redemptive history. But these words and every word that we have in the Bible is written for us.

For our growth in godliness. For our sanctification. For our salvation. That's what 2 Timothy 3.16 teaches us.

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. So all of scripture, including Haggai 1, is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. We need Haggai 1.

[14 : 38] God intended for us to have this word in our Bibles. So how is it profitable for us? The specific situation may not apply to us. We are not being called to rebuild God's temple today.

But while that specific situation doesn't apply, the general principle of Haggai 1 does. There is a principle here that transcends all of scripture, Old Testament, New Testament.

We are prone to have misplaced priorities. We are prone to put ourselves first and God second. Those under the Old Covenant, those under the New, we're prone to have misplaced priorities. And so we do well to heed Haggai's command this morning. Spoken to Israel, but spoken for us. Consider your ways.

Now we do it here because we've been told to. God said it. Simple enough. But it's really important to think about who God is.

[15:42] Who is it that commands us to do this? I don't have a lot of memories from high school football practice in the summer. I probably blocked most of them out.

But one memory that I do remember is doing the big three. It was a drill that our coach would have us do and I loathed it. You heard these words and just your heart sank. So the first thing you have to do is you would have to bear crawl to a certain distance far too far away.

You would have to bear crawl on like all fours to get there. Your knees could not touch the ground. And then once you got to that distance you had to backpedal back which felt like a relief at the time. But it was just your muscles getting ready to fall apart.

Because then you had to sprint back to the other point where you had just come from again. And at that point your legs just felt like jelly. I hated doing the big three. I hated it.

But when our coach told us it was time to do it nobody raised their hand. Said I have an alternate suggestion. Can we like have a snack and take a nap instead? Nobody did that.

[16:44] All of us were like okay I'm disheartened but I'm going to go do it. I'm going to give it my best because our coach was telling us to. And he was not just our coach. He was a younger man probably 6'4", 6'5".

He had played college football. He could outrun any of us. He could outlift any of us. He was better at football than all of us combined. So we listened to our coach. Now imagine with me that we looked off in the distance and a small group of preschoolers were coming our way with whistles around their necks and clipboards in hand and they said we're taking over this practice.

And those preschoolers looked at us and said go get on the line we're doing the big three. What do you think all of us high schoolers would have done? We weren't going to listen to them. They didn't have authority over us.

So who commands us here in Haggai chapter 1? Is it somebody who we can disregard? Is it somebody who carries no authority?

No, not at all. Israel answered to and we answer to the Lord of hosts. Perhaps your translation says the Lord Almighty.

[17:54] He has all authority. He has all dominion. He is the sovereign Lord over all creation. He is the sovereign Lord who possesses all power and might.

He does all that his hand and his plan have predestined to do. Acts chapter 4 says. Or as God himself says in Job 42 shall a fault finder contend with the Almighty?

He who argues with God let him answer it. So he has universal rule over all that he has made. He has heaven's armies at his disposal.

He is the Lord of hosts. This is our God who commands us. So Haggai 1 may intro with Darius the king but he is not the king that we answer to.

We're not listening to what Darius says here. We're listening to what the Lord of hosts says. And he's giving us this command. Consider your ways. Give careful thought to your ways.

[18:55] Stop and think. Stop and think about how you're living in your life. Because you answer to the Lord of hosts. So that's the first reason that we must consider our ways.

Here's the second reason. We must consider our ways because our ways are prone to be selfish. We must consider our ways because our ways are prone to be selfish.

Read again with me verses 2 through 4. Thus says the Lord of hosts, These people say, The time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord.

Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet. Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies in ruins? So the people had returned to the land. And this was an incredible privilege. This was such a blessing. They were overjoyed when the edict went forth that they could return to the land. But instead of finishing the rebuilding of the Lord's house, the people had stopped.

[20 : 06] The initial zeal and the enthusiasm of returning to the land to rebuild the temple, that initial excitement, it had died down in the face of the opposition that we read of.

And so for 10 to 15 years, the people had put the temple and its rebuilding on pause. And now their focus was on their own homes. And not just like the basic model homes.

They weren't just getting a roof over their heads to keep themselves warm and dry so they could focus on the temple. These were nice homes that they were busying themselves with. These were paneled homes.

Now is it wrong to have paneled homes? No. There's nothing wrong with that. It's the priorities that were the problem. The priorities of the people were off.

They were putting themselves first and God's second. They rebuilt, they built these beautiful homes for themselves and they were doing it at the expense of God's house. Rebuild the temple?

[21 : 07] We'll do that later, they said. It's not quite time. And so, we have ourselves to look after first. And you see those three words that the Lord begins his rebuke with?

These people say. That's how God begins. These people say. They thought that they knew better than God. Remember, the Israelites were facing that opposition to the rebuilding of the temple. We read about that in Ezra 4. And so, they were thinking the time isn't right to build just yet. It's inconvenient. This opposition is making it difficult and so, we're going to postpone until this opposition dies down a little bit.

And so, they thought, we knew better. We have a better timeline than God. We've got it figured out. How about us?

What do we say? Whose ways are we prioritizing? What are we busying ourselves with? Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

[22 : 12] Prone to leave the God I love. I am. I am prone to leave the God I love to love myself. I like to think life is all about me.

Remaining sin in our hearts it pulls us toward living for self instead of living for God. Busying ourselves with our own selfish ways. So, we need to regularly check in with our hearts.

We need to examine ourselves, our thoughts and desires, our motives, our intentions, our intentions. Because life is not all about us.

That's a lie. And we need to continually bring the truth of God's word to bear on. Why am I doing what I'm doing? Who am I prioritizing? Whatever I'm doing, however I'm thinking, is it coming from a place of love and devotion to my God?

Or is it coming from a place of love and devotion to myself? So we must consider our ways because our ways are prone to be selfish. Reason number three.

[23 : 23] We must consider our ways because our ways are prone to be futile. We must consider our ways because our ways are prone to be futile.

Read with me again verse six. This is the Lord speaking. You have sown much and harvested little. You eat but you never have enough.

You drink but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves but no one is warned and he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

God says you are working so hard at all the wrong things. You have misplaced selfish priorities and it is coming to nothing. You're toiling and yet all of your toil is getting you nowhere.

You're struggling to make ends meet. Where's all your effort gotten you? They worked hard. expecting to prosper and they hadn't.

[24 : 24] And what little they had it didn't satisfy. Never enough to eat. Never enough to drink. No one is warm. They work hard to earn money but they see no financial prosperity.

They're putting their bags their money into bags with holes. Kids do any of you have piggy banks? At least one of my kids has a piggy bank.

You work hard to earn money working at your chores and you put your coins maybe some dollar bills if your parents are really generous and you work hard to put that money into your piggy bank.

Now imagine for a second that you've put all of your money into your piggy bank only to realize that one of your siblings has come along and they unplugged the bottom of your piggy bank.

And that little plug that's supposed to be in there keeping everything secure it's not and everything has fallen out and you don't know where it is because probably one of your siblings who's younger than you came along and took it. How would you feel about that?

[25 : 27] You worked hard for that money. You'd be sad, discouraged, frustrated. This is how the people of Israel would have felt. Their best efforts were futile.

It just means that their best efforts weren't doing anything for them because their best efforts were done in selfishness. They were working to please themselves and it was getting them nowhere. Where are you expending your own effort? Where are you putting your time and your money and your energy into? You can spend a lifetime building your own little kingdom and in the end it will not satisfy.

As examples we could look to the richest, most powerful, most influential people in the world. They are never satisfied. Always wanting more.

There is an insatiable thirst for more. Just tossing money into bags thinking it'll be enough. All the while it's just falling out of the bottom.

[26 : 31] Familiar with John D. Rockefeller built an incredible fortune on oil. It's estimated that at the height of his empire, his net worth was 1% of the entire U.S.

economy. He had 1% of all of the wealth in America. If we estimate out how his money would have come to today's currency, he would have been worth \$400 billion in today's money.

That puts people like Jeff Bezos to shame. He's like an impoverished man compared to John D. Rockefeller. And John D. Rockefeller was once asked, how much is enough?

Pretty penetrating question. How much is enough? And you know what his answer was? Just a little more. If John D. Rockefeller doesn't have it all, who does? A chasing after the wind.

Never satisfied. And so we must consider our ways, because our ways are prone to be futile. And that futility, that is no accident. It is no coincidence.

[27 : 46] Because God tells us here in Haggai chapter 1 that this futility, there's a cause behind it. Which brings us to our fourth reason. We must consider our ways, because our ways will bring God's discipline.

Our ways will bring God's discipline. Look back with me at verse 9. We'll read through the end of our passage.

You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? Declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins.

while each of you busies himself with his own house. Therefore, the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I have called for a drought on the land, and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors.

The futility that Israel was experiencing, it was brought about by God's hand. He was making their ways futile. It was his discipline for their sinful ways.

[28 : 58] They were busying themselves with their own houses. Another way you could translate that, maybe a little more woodenly, is literally they were running after their own houses. They were in such a rush to work on their houses, to do it their way, to go their own way, and to neglect God's house.

Running after their own needs, working like crazy. So much so, they had no time for God's house. But God didn't sit idly by.

Their misplaced priorities brought his discipline. You looked for much, and it came to little, God says. I blew it away. The Lord of hosts blew it away.

Your efforts proved futile because I am disciplining you. The Lord will discipline his people today. God, he'll discipline us if our ways are like that of Israel.

Misplaced priorities, selfish desires, living for earthly pleasure and comfort, busying ourselves with our own interests, and neglecting the things of the Lord. He'll discipline us too.

[30 : 06] And he'll do it for our good. God could have kept silent as the Israelites busied themselves with their houses. He could have left them to their futile ways.

He could have left them, as Proverbs says, to their futile devices. But he didn't. He brought his word to them through Haggai, and he disciplined them because his ways are better.

His ways bring true joy, lasting joy, joy in him. So maybe God is disciplining you today. Maybe God is bringing conviction to your heart.

Maybe your priorities have been misplaced. Me first, God second. And God, through his word, is bringing the rod of discipline. The rod hurts, but it's so very good for us.

Hebrews 12 says that God disciplines those he loves. They're his children. And he does it so that we might not walk in our ways, but in his. And it's for our good.

[31 : 13] And it's for his glory. That's a phrase sometimes we kind of just say almost flippantly, like it just comes off the tongue so easily, for our good, for his glory. But we see it here in Haggai 1.

We see it. If you notice, we skipped over verse 8. God commands Israel to consider their ways, and then he says this in verse 8. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that's God's house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified.

God brought discipline and through his discipline, Israel would turn. Israel would change their ways, and it would be for their own good, and it would be for God's glory.

So consider your ways. That's God's call to us this morning. Consider your ways. But if that's all that was said, we went into Monday morning tomorrow, armed with a call to consider our ways, we could probably be pretty discouraged.

I'm working hard to examine my ways, and I am seeing as I examine my ways all of the ways in which I am selfish, and I am prone to futility. I need help.

[32 : 32] We need help. God gives us help. He gives us help in his word, because he doesn't just tell us, consider your ways, but he also shows us his ways.

He doesn't just say, you consider your ways and see how they're prone to be selfish, see how they're prone to be futile, and just tell us, look at your ways and see them. He says, look at my ways. We should evaluate our ways in the light of his.

We must be like the psalmist in Psalm 119, 59. When I think on my ways, I turn my feet to your testimony. In other words, when the psalmist dwelt on his own ways, what was the proper response?

It wasn't to be discouraged. It wasn't to be downtrodden. It was to turn his feet to God's ways. I think on my ways. What do I do?

I think on God's ways. We look to him. And God describes his ways like this, Isaiah 55, 8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

[33 : 42] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. God's perfect ways are not like our imperfect ways.

Our ways are prone to be sinful, to get us into trouble, his or not, his lead to life. And what are God's ways? How do I know what his ways look like?

They're found right here in his word. It's here in our Bibles that God has revealed to us who he is and what he is like. It's in our Bibles that the Lord gives us his commands, that we read of his instruction to us.

And so we have to keep coming back to his word, to learn of his ways. Because the nearer that I am to the Lord, the more that I know and walk in his ways.

And so, the opposite. The farther that I am from the Lord, then the more that I ignore his ways as I go my own. Listen to Psalm 25.

[34 : 51] David wrote this psalm and he begins it with this verse. Make me to know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me. For you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait all the day long. So David wants to know God's ways. He's ready to wait all day long to know God's ways.

He longs for God to teach him. He keeps coming back to God. And then listen to what he says in verse 8. Because here we see God's ways put on display for us.

Verse 8. Good and upright is the Lord. Therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble his way.

All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. So we turn our gaze from ourselves. We look to God.

[35 : 49] He teaches the humble. His paths are steadfast love and faithfulness. Walk in his paths. Make his ways priority number one.

And as we do that, as we walk in God's ways, here is what God promises to us in his word.

Blessing. Psalm 128. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord who walks in his ways.

So we are blessed when we walk in his ways. That is the good that comes to God's people. Verse 2 says, You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands.

You shall be blessed and it shall be well with you. So the people in Haggai's day, they sowed much, harvested little. They ate and never had their fill.

Why? Because they were walking in their own ways. But for God's people, as we walk in his ways, what does he say? We eat of the fruit of the labor of our hands.

[36 : 55] We have enough. Often in physical ways, but always in spiritual ways. Our souls are satisfied. Is your soul satisfied in God today?

Consider your ways, then consider his. And like David in Psalm 25, cry out to God, Make me to know your ways. Teach me your paths.

That's a tall task, for sure. To walk in God's ways. What about when I stumble? What about when I fail?

What about when I find myself continually walking in my ways, the ways that are selfish and futile ways that bring God's discipline and deserved God's wrath apart from Christ?

What then? We remember God's Son. We look to him. Jesus Christ, he walked in God's ways. He never stumbled.

[37 : 56] He never swerved. He never went his own way. He was perfectly obedient to the Father in every way. Look to him and remember.

He walked in God's ways. He lived an obedient life that you and I haven't. And then he took much more than the sting of God's discipline. He didn't deserve the rod of discipline.

And yet, he took more than the rod of discipline. He took the full wrath of God for all of our sinful ways. He bore it all for us. He died for us.

And now he ever lives for us. And he sent his spirit to us. He gave us his spirit to strengthen, to enable us, so that we can, by his grace, walk in his ways.

And so if you're in Christ this morning, look to him for your strength. And if you're not in Christ this morning, look to him for your salvation.

[38 : 59] If the spirit of God is convicting you and revealing to you that you have a desperate need for the Savior, you do. If you are carefully examining your ways right now and you are seeing, my ways are only leading to ruin.

It's true. Look to Christ and live. Repent and believe. Your ways are deserving of God's wrath, but in Christ you will find forgiveness in life.

Jesus said that he receives all who come to him. Drawn by the Spirit, he receives all who come to him. Look to Christ and live. And church, let's consider our ways.

And let's consider God's. And let's cry out, God, make me to know your ways. Teach me your paths. And let's remember Jesus, who went to the cross and took God's wrath in our place.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your word. Lord, we thank you for the whole counsel of your word.

[40 : 11] We thank you even for an often overlooked prophet like Haggai. And we thank you for how indeed you have given us your word, that we might learn from it, that we might be reproved, that we might be convicted, that we might be encouraged.

And so, Father, we pray that you would help us indeed to submit to your word. You are the Lord of hosts. Lord, we answer to you. You have commanded that we consider our ways.

So help us to that end this week. Help us to not just be hearers of the word, but doers of it. Help us to consider, give careful thought. And then help us to rejoice, to give thanks, to marvel that Jesus indeed walked in your ways perfectly.

He went to the cross and bore our sins. And he rose again. He ever lives. And he intercedes for us. And we thank you for him. So we pray that your spirit would give us strength, empower us, that we might live and walk in your ways.

We pray all of these things in Jesus' name. Amen. For our closing song, we are going to sing of the wonder and the great cost that Christ paid upon the cross.

[41 : 29] from the overhead, we can stand together to sing the power of the cross. Closing scripture from Psalm 119.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.

Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to selfish gain. Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things and give me life in your ways. Confirm to your servant your promise that you may be feared.

Turn away the reproach that I dread, for your rules are good. Behold, I long for your precepts and your righteousness. Give me life. Amen.