

# In This Place I Will Give Peace

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 30 July 2023

Preacher: Colin Horne

[ 0 : 00 ] And before we hear God's word preached, please take your Bibles again and turn to the book of Haggai. If you're new to us or you haven't been here the last two or three weeks, it's the middle of your Bible between the Old and New Testament.

Work back through Malachi, through Zechariah, and you'll find Haggai. Haggai chapter 2, and we'll read this morning from verses 1 through to verse 9.

Let's hear God's word. On the 21st day of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai.

Speak to Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory?

How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? Be now strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest.

[ 1 : 06 ] 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. This is what the Lord Almighty says. In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come.

And I will fill this house with glory, said the Lord Almighty. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the Lord Almighty. The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house, says the Lord Almighty.

And in this place I will grant peace, declares the Lord Almighty. We are continuing in our sermon series through the book of Haggai this morning.

And this morning, God is going to give us four promises. Four promises that we need to unpack and consider carefully together.

[ 2 : 15 ] And we're going to see these promises, they are grand. They are glorious. They are lavish promises that the Lord gives to us. And here they are.

Promise number one. The spirit, my spirit, remains in your midst. Promise number two. I will shake all creation. Promise number three.

I will fill this house with glory. And promise number four. I will give peace in this place. So these are, they are wonderfully grand promises.

They are also unexpected promises. Why call them unexpected? It's because of the circumstances that they're given to us in.

The circumstances that Israel faced was anything but lavish and grand and extravagant. But the circumstances are in some ways kind of bleak.

[ 3 : 13 ] So we need to unpack each promise together. And we need to see the conditions these promises were given in. So let's read the first three verses once more together to see those conditions.

Verse one. In the seventh month, on the 21st day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet. Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory?

How do you see it now? But is it not as nothing in your eyes? So the people of Israel were back in the land. We've seen that as we've walked through the book of Haggai.

We see that they are back in the land, and that is reason to rejoice. It is a wonderful reality. They are thankful to the Lord. But they haven't accomplished their primary purpose. Their primary objective in returning to the land still had not been accomplished. The main reason, the rebuilding of the temple.

[ 4 : 27 ] That had stalled out on a massive scale. The foundation had been laid in 536 B.C., and that's about it. It's now 520 B.C.

16 years have passed by with nothing happening. The work has stalled in the face of opposition, and so the people, they've stopped building.

There's a house in my hometown that my family and I would pass by every Sunday on the way to church. I looked it up just this last week out of curiosity. I saw that it was worth half a million dollars. This half a million dollar house, I have never seen with my eyes in a completed state. For years, DuPont has had some really nice free advertising for their house wrap.

The owner just never got around to putting up the siding. There's all kinds of renovation work that was started and never finished. And so this week, not only did I look it up on Zillow, I looked it up on Google Maps.

[ 5 : 32 ] Because you can see houses on Google Maps, and you can go back in time. I'm kind of dating myself that I didn't know you could do that until today or until this week. You can look back in time on Google Maps.

And so I was curious. What does it look like today? It is still halfway renovated, just like I remembered. And so going back through time in Google, interestingly enough, I could only go back to 2007.

What providence from the Lord. 16 years. And very little has changed or improved in those 16 years. The house still sits halfway finished.

That was the state of the temple in Jerusalem. 16 years. And it was still partially done. And the temple is worth far more than even half a million dollars.

The foundation had been laid, but opposition from God's enemies has caused that work to stall out. And so the people probably passed by it frequently. They probably grew accustomed to seeing the temple in that state.

[ 6 : 39 ] Kind of like I just grew accustomed to seeing that house on Orangeburg Avenue halfway finished with its DuPont house wrap. Nothing grand.

Nothing impressive in what they saw. Just a construction project that had been put on hold for years. But now in Haggai, the people have gotten back to work. That's how the passage ended last week.

In verse 14 of chapter 1. So the people, they have gotten back to work on the temple.

But God reminds the people as they get back to work. The temple isn't nearly as impressive or as grand as you might have hoped that it would be.

God says in verse 3. In other words, who is still alive that remembers the first temple?

[ 7 : 38 ] Solomon's temple. Because this is the second. Solomon's temple was a sight to behold. It was 90 feet long. It was 30 feet wide.

And it was 45 feet tall. Imagine a basketball court-sized building four stories high. That was the temple. And everything in this building, it was overlaid with gold.

There were two large wooden grand doors that stood at the entrance to the temple. And beyond those doors was the holy place. The largest room in the temple.

Where the priests would perform their duties. They would offer incense. They would place the bread of the presence before the Lord to remember. And to give thanks for how he provided in the wilderness.

They would light the lampstands each evening to give light in the temple. And then beyond the holy place was the most holy place. Or the holy of holies. And there, only the high priest would enter once a year on the day of atonement to offer sacrifices before God for all the sins of all the people.

[ 8 : 44 ] And it was in that room that God's presence dwelt in a very special way on the ark of the covenant. This box in that room.

And that box sat between these massive cherubim angels. 15 foot wingspans between the two of them. So everything in the temple was massive in size.

And it was beautiful in appearance. It was indeed glorious. And was intended to be awe-inspiring. Because it represented the dwelling place of Israel's God who was awe-inspiring.

But that temple. Solomon's temple was destroyed when the southern kingdom of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians. The city of Jerusalem was ransacked. The temple was burned to the ground.

And all of that had happened in 586 B.C. So the returning exiles in Ezra 3, they laid the foundation of the temple in 536 B.C.

[ 9 : 44 ] 50 years after the first temple was destroyed. So young men and young women who were now old men and old women, they remembered the first temple.

They remembered it. That temple was better. It was better in every way than this temple. And they knew it. It actually grieved them to compare the two temples.

So keep your place in Haggai. And turn over to Ezra chapter 3. As we're in the word this morning, we're going to kind of be in a few different places.

We're going to be in the present with Haggai. We're going to go back in the past 16 years with Ezra. We jump back in Solomon's time about 500 years prior to that.

So right now, we're only going the 16 years in the past. 16 years ago. This is what we read of in Ezra chapter 3. Beginning in verse 8.

[ 10 : 48 ] 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 Jehozadak, made a beginning, together with the rest of their kinsmen, the priests and the Levites, and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity.

They appointed the Levites from 20 years old and upward to supervise the work of the house of the Lord. And Jeshua, with his sons and his brothers, and Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together supervised the workmen in the house of God, along with the sons of Hennadad and the Levites, their sons and brothers.

So just to have some context here, these are the same people who are working on the temple 16 years later. We're introduced to them here in Ezra chapter 3. Verse 10.

And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests and their vestments came forward with trumpets and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with symbols to praise the Lord, according to the directions of David, king of Israel.

And they sang responsibly, 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.

[ 12 : 09 ] 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. So how did the people respond 16 years prior when the foundation of the temple was laid?

What was the overall response? Shouts for joy, singing songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. But the elderly among the people, those who had seen the first house with their eyes, they wept with a loud voice when they saw this foundation.

That is so small. That is not like the grandeur of Solomon's temple. They wept. Hop back to Haggai 2.

So we fast forward now, 16 years to the present situation in Haggai 2. And now the temple foundation is before the eyes of the people again.

[ 13 : 28 ] God brings it to mind. God says, look at it. Not much to see is there. And the people, they don't object.

No one says, I don't know. It looks okay. It'll do. This will be a good temple. This is all right, just having a slab here. We can worship on this slab.

No, by their silence, they agree. It says nothing to our eyes. They're discouraged as they set to work.

And so it's in these circumstances that the Lord makes these four unexpected promises that we need to unpack together. Four promises that absolutely don't square with reality in the present for the people of Israel.

And we need to see how these promises were unexpected for them. And then we need to see how these promises hold significance for us. How they fill us with hope and expectation for a future day.

[ 14 : 29 ] So let's unpack each promise together. The first promise, my spirit remains in your midst. Beginning in verse four. Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord.

Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts.

According to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit remains in your midst. Fear not. Have you ever heard a sermon and thought, I've heard that sermon before. It's really familiar sounding to me. Have you ever heard a sermon and thought, I heard that sermon just last week. The preacher literally just preached that same sermon.

That thought might have crossed the Israelites' minds. Haggai isn't a very big book. We think of it as two chapters. It might be more helpful to think of it as four short sermons.

[ 15 : 35 ] So we heard one sermon over the last two weeks and now we hear the second sermon this morning. We're already halfway through the book and even with how short the book is, we're already running into a little bit of review.

We might be thinking, along with the Israelites, I feel like I just heard that sermon. Didn't I just hear this last week? Yeah, you did. God told Israel at the end of chapter 1, verse 13, I am with you. And now he says it again in verse 4. I am with you. Sometimes we need to hear things more than once. Sometimes we need the same truth preached to us because it takes time to sink into our hearts.

I'm always thankful when Sunday school aligns well with the sermon that it solidifies what God is teaching us. And the people of Israel needed a sermon a second time.

Haggai brings God's word to them yet again and it is basically the same promise. I am with you. And that promise here in chapter 2, it serves to motivate the people to three things.

[ 16 : 46 ] Be strong. Get to work. Don't be afraid. Be strong. Get to work. Don't be afraid. Now it's possible that those words would have rung familiar to the people.

They might have thought if they knew their Old Testaments well. I think I've heard those words said once before. Be strong. Get to work. Don't be afraid because God is with you.

And they did. About 450 years earlier, King David had said the same basic words to his son Solomon before Solomon had started building the first temple.

So we're here in the second temple and we're hearing, I am with you. Be strong. Get to work. Don't be afraid. But at the first temple, David had said to Solomon, God is with you. Be strong.

Get to work. Don't be afraid. 1 Chronicles 28 20. Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed.

[ 17 : 48 ] For the Lord God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished.

And so just like Solomon, the people of Israel, they set to work on this second temple. But God, through the mouth of his preacher here in Haggai, says more.

It's not just the exact same sermon. He gives them the same message, the same promise, but he repeats it in a slightly different way like any good preacher would do.

He builds on the promise that he gave in chapter 1 here in chapter 2. He expands on it. And he does this by pointing to God's covenant faithfulness.

I am with you according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. So God calls the people of Israel to remember that he is a covenant-keeping God, that he is a faithful God.

[ 18 : 51 ] What they saw in front of their eyes was underwhelming. They were probably thinking, but is God really with us?

Is he really with us? Is he going to see us through in this rebuild? Because if I'm trusting the evidence of my eyes, it doesn't look like God is with us.

It is a slab. And so God gives them this unexpected promise. And God is saying, yes, I'm with you. Here's the proof. Look back.

Look back and remember my covenant faithfulness. Remember that I entered into this special relationship with you when I brought you out from Egypt.

I brought you to Mount Sinai. And I said, you are my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

[ 19 : 51 ] So God says, out of all the peoples of the earth, Israel, I chose you. Elsewhere he says, not because of your righteousness, but because of my covenant-keeping love.

I chose you. And I'm going to remain faithful to my covenant. Even when you've been unfaithful to me, even when you've been busy with your houses, I will remain faithful.

Now, I've disciplined you. I've reproofed you. There have been consequences for your sin, but I haven't abandoned you. My presence is still with you.

My promise still holds true. So be strong. Get to work. And don't be afraid. Now, it's easy in life to get tunnel vision, to look at the immediate circumstances, immediate challenges that we face, and to despair.

We're tempted to do this. So could the Israelites. They could have easily looked at that temple foundation, the work that was abandoned for years. God said it himself.

[ 21 : 01 ] It is as nothing in our eyes. They could have looked at their present circumstances and been discouraged. So God was broadening their view. He was helping them to take a step back, to not just look at their present situation, but to look at their present situation in light of the past.

Remember my unfailing faithfulness to you. Remember how I brought your forefathers out from Egypt. And remember how I brought you out from Persia. I'm with you.

My spirit remains in your midst. My presence is with you. Be strong. Get to work. Don't be afraid.

Let's look at the second unexpected promise to Israel in this passage.

Promise number two. I will shake all creation. Verse six. For thus says the Lord of hosts, yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land.

And I will make all nations. I will shake all nations so that the treasures of all nations shall come in. Do you ever have trouble getting the last little bit of cereal out of the cereal box?

[ 22 : 18 ] You go to have a bowl of Cheerios and you go to dump it in and you just can't quite get the last little bit out. And you pull the bag out and there's even some that's in the bottom of the box. It's a small inconvenience.

It's a minor frustration. We chuckle at the thought of it. Yeah, I've done that before. Next time it happens to you, consider it a gift from God. Consider it a gift from God because God is reminding you we are not like him.

We can hardly shake the Cheerios out of the cereal box and God can shake all of creation. I can't get the cereal out and he can shake all that he has made.

Now sometimes the Bible talks about God shaking something and it's a sign of judgment. It's a bad thing. The wicked think that they are immovable.

They think that they can continue to live in their sin and God in judgment shakes them from their place of smug confidence. Other times though God shakes to bring blessing to his people.

[ 23 : 28 ] Other times God shakes and it's a good thing like in our passage this morning. Verse 7 has said I will shake all nations so that the treasures of all nations shall come in shall come into this temple.

Now in Israel's history when God has delivered his people from their physical enemies he's also provided for them in very tangible ways.

In fact the people plunder their enemies and they do it with their enemies express permission. Please take all that we have.

They did it during the Exodus. Exodus chapter 12 verse 35 says the people of Israel had also done as Moses told them for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing and the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians so that they let them have what they asked.

Thus they plundered the Egyptians. The same event happened in Ezra chapter 1 when Cyrus gave the decree for the exiles to return to the land.

[ 24 : 40 ] Listen to verse 4. And let each survivor in whatever place he sojourns be assisted by the men of this place with silver and gold with goods and with beasts besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

So this is crazy. Israel's captors don't just release Israel. They don't just say I guess we'll let you go. They give them money and goods and beasts.

They release Israel and they say take whatever you'd like. It's all up for grabs. God saves his people and then he immediately provides for them. And here God says I'm going to do it again but in an even more magnificent way.

I'm not just going to shake the Egyptians or the Persians. I am going to shake all creation. I'm not just going to shake one nation. I'm going to shake all the nations.

And I'm going to fill my temple with their treasures. It all belongs to God anyhow. He says that in verse 8 the silver is mine and the gold is mine.

[ 25 : 48 ] So let's bring it to where it belongs. And let's fill the temple with the riches of the nations. Now again this is quite the unexpected promise. Israel is looking at the temple slab.

There are no walls up. Let alone walls to contain all of the treasures of the nations. But God was giving Israel a picture of a glorious future.

They would have all that they needed to rebuild the temple and then to fill it with riches. Again, this is motivation to them. Be strong. Get to work.

Don't be afraid. Let's consider the third unexpected promise. Promise number three. I will fill this house with glory.

We'll read verse 7 again. And I will shake all nations so that the treasures of all nations shall come in and I will fill this house with glory says the Lord of hosts.

[ 26 : 45 ] The silver is mine and the gold is mine declares the Lord of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former says the Lord. So again that would have been hard for the people of Israel to fathom.

The glory of this new temple before our eyes. God, you're saying that the glory of this temple will be greater than Solomon's temple? And they probably weren't just thinking in material ways.

They were probably also thinking of the glory of God that resided in the temple. The visible light of his invisible presence. The created brilliance that surrounds God.

God's glory is linked to his presence all through the Old Testament. God who is unseen makes his presence known by what can be seen his glory.

Back in the book of Exodus when Moses came down from Mount Sinai after receiving the law of God Exodus 34 says the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.

[ 27 : 54 ] God's glory literally rubbed off onto Moses' face. And when the Israelites then finished building the tabernacle while they were in the wilderness following the Exodus.

Remember the tabernacle this mobile temple for God. The place where God's presence dwelt in a special way while with Israel. Exodus 40 says that God's glory filled the temple and Moses couldn't go into it because of God's glory.

That same glory came to fill Solomon's temple after it was completed in 1 Kings chapter 8. There we read that the priests also could not go into the temple when God's glory came to fill it.

Just like Moses they couldn't go in. God's glory is in that place. It is too extravagant. It is too marvelous sinful man. You cannot go in.

Now just before the southern kingdom of Judah went into exile hundreds of years later just before they went into exile Ezekiel chapter 10 tells us God's glory left.

[ 29 : 03 ] God's glory departed from the temple and it never returned. And so the Israelites were still waiting for it to come back to the earthly temple.

And here God is saying my promised glory is going to be back. Material wealth riches but there's also a hint here God's glorious presence will return to the temple.

The outward expression of God's excellence and beauty and majesty it's going to be back. He will fill this temple just as he filled the last.

So he had already promised my spirit is in your midst and now he promises my glory will fill this house once again. So people be strong get to work don't be afraid.

Let's look at the fourth and the final unexpected promise. I will give peace in this place. I will give peace in this place. Just verse 9 The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former says the Lord of hosts and in this place I will give peace declares the Lord of hosts.

[ 30 : 21 ] The people of Israel they longed for peace. Yes they were back in the land but they were in the land by permission of Persia.

Israel was not in the land because they just chose to go back. They went back because they were allowed. They had been living under foreign rule for about 70 years and they would continue to live in foreign rule for almost 200 more.

No, more than that. 400 AD. Should have done my math better there. They were going to be under foreign rule for centuries.

The Persians would be conquered by the Greeks. The Greeks conquered by the Romans. And the Romans were ruling at the time of Christ. And so besides a very small sliver of time when the Maccabean rebellion won Israel its independence, centuries and centuries went by with Israel

under oppression.

And so even as the people of Israel in Haggai's day were rejoicing and giving thanks to God that they had finished the temple foundation, they couldn't enjoy complete peace in the land.

[ 31 : 37 ] They still answered to their Persian conquerors. Words of the prophets from decades before still had not come to pass.

God had said in Ezekiel 37, 26 I will make a covenant of peace with Israel. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them.

And I will set them in their land and multiply them and will set my sanctuary in their midst forever.

And God had said through Isaiah even before Ezekiel in Isaiah 60 verses 17 to 18 I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness.

Violence shall no more be heard in your land. Devastation or destruction within your borders. You shall call your walls salvation and your gates praise.

peace. But in Haggai's day Israel didn't have overseers named peace. They didn't have a taskmaster named righteousness. They had a taskmaster named Darius.

[ 32 : 48 ] They were in Israel rebuilding the walls, rebuilding the temple because he had allowed them to. And so here God rekindles their hopes.

He promises them lasting peace, true peace in the land, free from their enemies, free from violence and devastation and destruction. God is saying I haven't forgotten my promises through the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel.

I haven't forgotten my promises to you. And he's reiterating peace is coming. We can look forward to that peace too.

But we need to be clear on something. we only have the peace that God is promising one day. Security and safety, harmony, a life of fruitfulness and abundance, no more violence, no more devastation, no more destruction.

We can only look forward to that peace one day if we have peace with God today. Lots of people will say that they want peace. we want a world free from the devastation of war.

[ 34 : 01 ] But lots of people fail to see and to understand that they themselves are at war with God. And it's a war of their own making. They refuse to put their weapons down.

Are you at war with God today? Are you living in hostility toward God? If you've been living for yourself, if you've been living with no care for God and His ways, if you have lived as though I don't need a Savior, then you are at war with God.

You are telling God, God, you are not on the throne of my life. I am. I'm on the throne. And that puts you at odds with God. You do not have peace with God.

And so you cannot have the experience of peace one day without being at peace with God today.

And the wonderful reality is you can be at peace with Him today.

You can be reconciled to Him. So if you are not in Christ, turn from your life of living for yourself. Turn from your sin.

[ 35 : 12 ] Cry out to God for mercy through His Son. This is the good news that we must believe. Jesus Christ died on the cross for sinners such as us and He rose again that we might be forgiven.

No longer enemies of God but at peace with Him. God delights in saving sinners. You can have peace with God today.

Put your faith in Jesus Christ. So we've seen God gave Israel four unexpected promises. Promises that would have blown their minds.

Magnificent promises. But here's the thing. Israel rebuilt this second temple. And then in 70 AD it was destroyed all over again.

Jerusalem was ransacked. The Russians burned that temple to the ground. we are distracted. The Romans burned that temple to the ground just like the Babylonians had burned the first temple to the ground.

[ 36 : 28 ] How could God say? How could God say that His spirit remained in their midst? How could God say that He would shake all creation and bring the treasures of the nations into the temple?

How could He say that He would fill that house with His glory? How could He say that He would give peace in that place? We are left wondering with the people of Israel, God, can we trust You? Because none of that came to pass. So is God a liar? Did His words delivered through the mouth of Haggai prove false? Were they just empty words?

A promise isn't really worth much if it isn't followed through on. So what do we make of these unexpected promises that didn't appear to prove true for Israel?

Can we trust God and His promises to us? Well, have you ever been to a 3D movie? You need special glasses to watch a 3D movie. If you're going to get the full viewing experience of that movie, you've got to have those special clunky weird glasses on.

[ 37 : 39 ] And if you don't, not only will you not get the 3D effect of the movie, but even the 2D experience of it is going to be pretty lousy. It's kind of grainy, unclear, it's a bad viewing experience.

You need those special glasses to get the full effect of a 3D movie. If you don't have those glasses, you're going to be thoroughly dissatisfied. Well, we need the right glasses when we read our Bibles. We don't need 3D glasses, we need Christological lenses. We need lenses that are shaped by our understanding of the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

Because all of God's promises, 2 Corinthians 1.20 says, they find their yes in Him. All of God's promises point to Jesus.

From Genesis to Revelation, all of the promises in Haggai, they point to Him. They find their fulfillment in Him. Not in a physical building, but in a person.

[ 38 : 45 ] Jesus, He teaches us this in His earthly ministry. Jesus spent time in Jerusalem. He was familiar with that rebuilt temple in Haggai. Now, that temple at Jesus' day, it had undergone some improvements, some renovations under Herod the Great, but that was the temple that had been built in Haggai's day.

Jesus walked in that temple. Jesus sat under teaching as a child in that temple, and Jesus taught in that temple. One day, as He came out of the temple, one of His disciples said this in Mark 13, 1, Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings.

And Jesus said to him, Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down. Jesus was already predicting the destruction of the temple. He was helping His disciples to see. He's helping us to see. That's not the focus. Don't look to the temple. Look to me.

And that's what He teaches us in John chapter 2. Jesus caused quite a stir in John chapter 2. He had driven out of the temple all of those who were doing business transactions and the Jews were not happy about it.

[ 40 : 08 ] They wanted an explanation for what Jesus had done. They're saying, You can't just waltz into the temple and act like you're in charge. This is what Jesus says in John chapter 2 beginning in verse 19.

Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews then said, It has taken 46 years to build this temple and will you raise it up in three days?

John says, But He was speaking about the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

So the temple, the dwelling place of God, wasn't a physical structure. it was a person. God had come to dwell among His people by taking on human flesh.

Jesus is saying, I am God and I am in your midst. Destroy this temple, put me to death, and in three days I will be raised to life again.

[ 41 : 16 ] And He was. Jesus rose from the dead and then He ascended into heaven. He left. He departed.

And it wouldn't have been surprising if as His disciples watched Him ascend into heaven, they had this troubling thought. God's glory has left us again.

We had Him with us and now He's gone. Just like the temple in Solomon's day, God's glory departed from there. Has God's glory departed from us too?

You might be sitting here this morning and you might be fighting the same thought. Where are you, God? I look at my life.

I look at the world around me. I look at the state of this world and like the Israelites that are looking at the unfinished temple foundation, I cannot help but think it is as nothing in my eyes.

[ 42 : 18 ] God, I don't see how you're at work in my life. I don't see how you're at work in the world. I don't see how your kingdom is advancing. It seems like it's stalled out.

And so like the Israelites in Haggai, I'm discouraged. I'm frustrated. I am struggling to see beyond what is before my eyes. God, are you there?

And then those unexpected promises in Haggai ring familiar in our ears again. my spirit remains in your midst. I will shake all creation.

I will fill this place with glory. And in this place I will give peace. And so what are we to do? Be strong.

Get to work. And don't be afraid. Or to say it another way, take heart. Live in obedience to God's revealed will and his word. And don't be afraid.

[ 43 : 18 ] Come what may. But we don't need to worry about the work of building a temple. And here's why. Because a day is coming.

A day in this place that we live when God's presence will come to dwell with us again. This place will be made new. The new heavens and new earth.

And here those unexpected promises to the temple building Israelites in Haggai's day will find their unexpected fulfillment. in the most unexpected sort of ways, God says here in the new creation, he says this, there will be no temple.

No temple. Not the temple built by Solomon. Not the temple built by the exiles. No temple built by human hands.

In the garden city, the new Jerusalem, where God will live with us, there will be no temple structure. No building where God's spirit will reside.

[ 44 : 28 ] No building where he will bring the treasures of the nations in. No building where his glory will fill it. No building where there will be found peace. Because just like when Jesus walked the earth, the temple in the new creation is not a building, it is God himself.

Revelation 21 22 says, 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.

sound like the treasures of the nations coming in, and its gates will never be shut by day, and there will be no night, so the gates will always be open. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

These four unexpected promises given to us in Haggai, they are fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ, and we look forward to the day when we will be with God forever, when we will enjoy Him, a treasure that far exceeds all gold and silver brought into an earthly temple, and we will live in peace with Him forever.

[ 45 : 55 ] How do we know? How do we know God will do it? How do we know He's going to be faithful to His promises? Well, how could the Israelites be sure in Haggai chapter 2?

Because they were reminded by God my promises are founded on my covenant to you. I will do what I said according to the covenant I made with you when you came out of Egypt.

God is with us, and He will do as He promised according to the covenant that He has made with us, and that covenant is better. It is a better covenant that God has made to us than even the covenant He made to Israel.

Why? Because it's founded on the blood of His Son. Jesus' blood was spilt as the guarantee. He is the guarantor of a new covenant, and Jesus says, my blood is sufficient.

You can bank on God's promises because His blood, His Son's blood was spilt for us. God's promises will come to pass.

[ 47 : 10 ] Heaven's joys await us. A crown of glory we look forward to, and that crown of glory, it is the Lord God Almighty, the Lord of hosts Himself.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are indeed a covenant-keeping God, that You have proven Yourself faithful time and time again.

We can look back on Israel's history, and we can see all of the ways in which You have proved Yourself true. You do not lie. You do just as You say You will do.

So Father, we cry out, we plead with You, help us to believe Your promises today. Help us as we navigate this week, as we endure hardship, as we face times of discouragement, help us to remember that You keep to Your promises, and You have made these grand, lavish, extravagant promises to us, and they find their fulfillment in Christ.

He is our hope. He is our security. Help us to look to Him and to rejoice as we eagerly await a coming day when we will be with You for all of eternity.

[ 48 : 34 ] You are the greatest treasure that we could have. We pray, Lord, that we would look forward to the day when we're with You. We pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's stand together and sing one final song.

Psalm 29, verses 10-11. The Lord sits enthroned over the flood. The Lord sits enthroned as King forever. May the Lord give strength to His people.  
May the Lord bless His people with peace. Amen.