

The LORD of Hosts, Their God

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[0 : 00] Open your Bibles to Haggai chapter 1. Haggai is at the end of your Old Testament. Tiny little book stuck in between Zephaniah and Zechariah.

I'm going to be reading from chapter 1, verse 12, to the end of the chapter. This is God's Word.

Then Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him, and the people feared the Lord.

Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people. I am with you, declares the Lord.

So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people.

[1 : 28] They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God, on the 24th day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius.

A helpful way to remember where Haggai is, is the last three books of our Old Testaments are all the post-exilic prophets, the only three prophets who wrote after the people had come out of exile.

So if you're trying to remember this week, where is Haggai? Remember just those last three books all have the same themes at the same time. Well, have you ever been awakened in the night abruptly?

Perhaps a clap of thunder? That happened to me just a week ago or so. A clap of thunder wakes us up. Maybe something crashes to the floor in the room.

Maybe a door is slammed shut. Maybe, like me, when I was a small child, on Christmas morning, I ran into my parents' room, and at the top of my voice, I screamed, Merry Christmas.

[2 : 36] And my parents levitated out of their beds. Kids, that is not the way to wake up your parents. As a parent, don't do that.

Today we're going to see the Israelites wake up, not from physical sleep, but from their spiritual slumber. And then we're going to see that they live like the people of God.

That's something that they hadn't been doing in the first 11 verses of Haggai. We looked at this two weeks ago. They had not been living as the people of God. And so what was God's word to them?

Consider your ways. Consider how you are not living like my people. Their ways were sinful. They had misplaced priorities.

They were building their own houses while God's house lay in ruins. Now in our passage this morning in Haggai 1, we see a distinct, marked change.

[3 : 39] The Israelites wake up from their spiritual slumber. They turn from their sin, and they respond in obedience to the word of God. There is a clear about face in the people's actions.

There's also a clear about face in the way their relationship to God is described. In verses 1 to 11, we see God is called the Lord.

We see he's called the Lord of hosts, or the Lord Almighty. Quite a few times. But here in our verses this morning, there's this subtle but consistent shift in the titles that are given to God.

He's still called the Lord. He's still called the Lord of hosts, the Lord Almighty, but something else is added. Do you see it in the text there? Verse 12, twice. The Lord, their God.

Verse 14. The Lord of hosts, their God. This is not just a God. This is not just some God. This is not a distant, far-off, unknowable God.

[4 : 47] This is not a God who is against them. This is their God. The God who had saved Israel to be his special people. The God who had entered into this covenant relationship with Israel.

A special, unique, promise-filled relationship with Israel. Over and over in our Bibles, this covenant relationship between God and Israel, between God and his redeemed people, is described in a very particular way.

Theologians actually call it the covenant formula. And it is simply this. I will be their God. And they will be my people. I will be their God.

They will be my people. We see it all through Scripture. We see hints of it first, all the way back in Genesis. God is talking to Abraham. And God says to Abraham, from whom the nation of Israel would come, he says this, Later in history, When Israel now finds themselves in slavery in Egypt, God spoke to Moses.

And he said this in Exodus 6-7, Tell Israel this, I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God. And you shall know that I am the Lord, your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

[6 : 31] God delivers Israel from Egypt. God brings them into the wilderness, to Mount Sinai, and it's there that he gives Israel his laws. But listen to how he introduces his laws.

In Exodus 20, verse 1, And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

The Lord says, I'm your God. And so it naturally flows that the very first commandment he gives to Israel Israel is what? You shall have no other gods before me.

Why? Because I'm your God. You're my people. God is calling for faithfulness. He's calling for fidelity. He's saying, You'll have no other gods.

And I'll have no other people. Like a husband being faithful to his wife in marriage, and a wife being faithful to her husband. God and Israel were in this covenant relationship.

[7 : 36] But Israel was unfaithful. Israel did go after the gods of the nations. Israel broke that covenant relationship between God and his people. And so what did God do?

He sent Israel into exile. And while they were in exile, not too long before we come to Haggai, God promised to Israel through the mouth of Jeremiah that he wasn't abandoning them.

He was disciplining them. That is why they found themselves out of the promised land. But God was not abandoning them. And so he says in Jeremiah 32, beginning in verse 37, So here in Haggai 1, God is reminding Israel, You are mine, and I am yours.

And the people are now behaving as God's people in humble obedience. They are living out their identity as God's people.

Remember how God described them in their sin back in verse 2 a couple weeks ago? How did he say it? These people. These people say it's not time to rebuild.

[9 : 07] God didn't say my people. He said these people. They were not living as the people of God. They were, but they were not living as the people of God. Here in our passage this morning, though, they're living.

They're living out their covenant relationship with God. They will be my people, and I will be their God. And so from Genesis to Exodus to Jeremiah to Haggai, we see this covenant relationship played out over and over again.

But Haggai isn't the last place that it's found. Because God's relationship to his people doesn't end in Haggai. It runs all the way through the Bible, and it includes God's people today.

It includes us. And so it shouldn't be a surprise to us that we find it in the very last book of the Bible, almost to the very last page, Revelation 21.

In the description of the coming new heavens and new earth, we read these words in verse 4. From God, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

[10 : 14] He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. If you're in Christ this morning, this promise is for you.

God says, You are my people, and I am your God. And one day, God says he's going to come, and he's going to dwell with us. He's going to live with us.

So if we are God's people, if the Lord is our God, here's the question for us from Haggai 1 this morning. How then should we live? If we are God's people, if he says to us, as he said to his people all through history, You are my people, I am your God, how then should we live?

We see four ways that we should live this morning as we look to the people of God in Haggai 1, and we see how they live. So first we see, we obey the chastening voice of the Lord.

We obey the chastening voice of the Lord. Look back with me at verse 12. Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him.

[11 : 41] We can be really quick. We can be really quick to focus on the failures of God's people in the Bible, to focus on their sinful ways. Look at how Adam failed.

Look at how Abraham failed. Look at the Israelites. Look at the disciples. They just keep falling back into sin. They just keep messing up. Now don't get me wrong.

It is good to see where the people of God have failed, where we see that they have fallen short in their sin. It reminds us that our biblical heroes are sinful fallen men and women like you and I are, and they need a Savior just as we do.

Looking to God's people in the Bible often reminds us we're a lot like them. We need a Savior. We need Jesus. It's also good for us, though, to see when, by God's grace, his people obey.

His people live in humility and submission. When we see them repent, when we see them fear God, when we see them trust in God, it's good for us to recognize this, to learn from it, and then to be spurred on by their examples.

[12 : 55] That's Hebrews chapter 11. We think of that really quickly. All of those who have gone before us and lived by faith as they look to Jesus. It's good for us to consider, to imitate those examples.

Look at God's people. Look at how they responded when their sin was put on display. We could definitely learn from them. So God had given the people in Haggai this scathing rebuke.

He had asked this question. Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies in ruins? And then he had brought severe discipline.

You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. And it's here that we see a bit of a surprising twist.

The people turn from their sinful ways. There's this positive response to the word of God. Now we might not respond as Jonah did when the people of Nineveh were granted repentance by the Lord.

[14 : 00] Jonah was angry with God that he would grant them repentance. But I know that I am a bit surprised. Wait, the people obeyed? They responded favorably to God's word?

Really, they did? And sometimes I actually am kind of hoping that they wouldn't. I'm actually hoping that they wouldn't so that I can say to myself as I read Haggai, wow, the Israelites were really sinful.

I can relate. I struggle too. And maybe even in that response, there's a little laziness. I can more easily excuse my sin if I see Israel sinning.

I can more easily put off dealing with my sin if the Israelites are putting off dealing with theirs. The Israelites sinned and they didn't do anything about it. I can sin and not really do anything about it either.

But God puts the obedience of his people on display. No getting around it now. Those who had been brought into covenant relationship with God, those who can say we are his people and he is our God.

[15 : 04] They live like it. We need to see that here in our verses this morning. We need to see how God's people live. We need to be reminded how we too should live as God's people.

So God had rebuked. He had disciplined. And then he brings in our verses transformation. The people. All the people. From the leadership to all the remnant, they responded in obedience to the voice of the Lord their God.

They did what the Lord had said through the mouth of his prophet. Now before we look at the people's obedience to the voice of God, we should pause for a moment and we should see how God's voice came to them.

It came through the mouth of Haggai as the text says, because the Lord their God had sent him. God's word came to God's people through the mouth of a prophet.

And clearly the people recognized this. They recognized that Haggai spoke the very words of God to them. Otherwise they wouldn't have obeyed. Who is this guy? He doesn't speak for God.

[16 : 13] But they recognized he does. He brings God's word. They recognized the channel that the message came through. They recognized that Haggai had been sent by God with this message.

It was not Haggai's voice that they were really obeying. It was God's voice they were obeying. So how do we hear God's voice today?

What's the channel? If you were with us in Sunday school, you already know all these answers. Hebrews chapter 1. How does Hebrews 1 begin?

Long ago at many times in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. Insert Haggai. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son.

Jesus Christ is the final, supreme revelation of God. God once spoke through the prophets. And now he has spoken to us through his son.

- [17 : 18] And he has spoken through his son to us. To us. Meaning, not just in Jesus' earthly ministry did God speak through him, but he continues to speak through him to this day.
- And how does he do that? In our Bibles. Not just in the recorded words that Jesus spoke. If you have a red letter Bible, not just in the red letters. He speaks through all that is written in our Bibles.
- Including the words of the prophets given to us in our Bibles. And so we hear God's voice in his word. And we hear it today.
- So don't look outside of the word to hear God's voice. Don't look inside of yourself to hear God's voice.
- Look at the word and listen intently to his voice found there. He has much to say to us. And if you're not a Christian this morning, listen to God's voice from his word.
- [18 : 23] There are so many voices that are vying for your attention. So many voices that are vying for your affection. Voices that say, listen to your heart. Look inside yourself for meaning and purpose and fulfillment.
- And those same voices are saying, plug your ears to what God says in his word. Don't do that. Don't plug your ears. Listen.
- And what does God say in his word? God says, this is my son, my chosen one. Listen to him. And what does the Lord say to us? Repent and believe the good news.
- The good news that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of sinners like us. And he rose again. And all of those who put their faith in him find eternal life.
- Listen to the voice of God. And we hear his voice in his word nowhere else. So if we're called to obey God's voice and we hear his voice in his word, then we need to obey what his word says.
- [19 : 29] The people of God in Haggai obeyed the voice of the Lord through the mouth of the prophet Haggai. And now we obey the voice of the Lord through the mouth of his son revealed to us in scripture.
- Okay, that's enough refreshing of Sunday school for those who are in Sunday school. Obedience is never easy. But obedience is especially hard when the call to obedience comes as a result of our sin.
- The people of Israel, they were selfishly building their houses and God called them out for doing that. It wasn't like the people were patiently waiting off, sitting on the ground, waiting for their marching orders.
- Saying, okay Lord, what would you have for us to do? We're ready. Instead, the people were living sinfully. They were living in disobedience and they were called out for it.
- And what is the response? They obeyed. We can relate to that experience, can't we? It's one thing to obey when we're eager to obey. It's another thing when we hear God's voice chastening us in his word.
- [20 : 41] When we read his word and we're convicted because we've been living one way. We're struggling with a particular sin and the word is calling us to put that particular sin to death and to replace it with obedience.
- I don't mind being called to love my wife, to live sacrificially for her when I've been working especially hard to obey that. But when I've been failing to love my wife, when I've been failing to sacrifice for her, when I've been living for myself and I know it, but I'm just justifying myself or I'm ignoring my sin, then obedience is all the more difficult.
- When God in his word points out my disobedience, when the Lord in his word chastens me, or when a faithful brother comes alongside me and he draws my attention to the word and how I've been living in disobedience, that's hard.

Obedience is never easy, but when our sin is laid bare like the sin of the Israelites was, God's people are called to obey the chastening voice of the Lord.

Now here's something that's obviously true, but we need to be reminded of it. We can't hear God's voice in his word if we are putting ourselves in a position, if we're not putting ourselves in a position to hear it and to receive it with humility.

[22 : 08] humility. We can't hear God's voice in his word if we aren't putting ourselves in a position to hear it and to receive it with humility. If you go to cut down a tree and you're in the wrong position, your life could be on the line.

If you're playing basketball and you go to defend the ball and you're on your heels and you're standing up straight or you run at the ball and you don't close out, that defender's going to blow by you every single time.

We need to be in the right position when coming to the word as well. And so if we're not daily reading the word, if we're not sitting under the teaching and the preaching of the word, and if we're not coming to the word with a humble, submissive spirit, then we are not going to obey when our sin is pointed out to us.

We're going to excuse our sin. We're going to defend our sin. We're going to ignore our sin. I got caught this week watching videos of raccoons trapped in traps.

And it made me think that is how I behave when I'm confronted with my sin and I don't want to hear it. I'm like a rabid raccoon trapped in a cage. We have to come to the word and we have to come to the word with a humble, submissive spirit.

[23 : 32] So the Israelites serve as an example to us here in Haggai. They heard the chastening voice of the Lord and they obeyed him. So should we. We need to come to the word but we need to take what it says to heart.

We need to obey it. Like God tells us in James 1, we've prayed this already this morning, take it to heart. James 1 beginning in verse 22.

But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he looks like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

God's people obey his chastening voice. We also see from our passage in Haggai that God's people fear him too. So God's people fear him too.

[24 : 38] We fear the Lord. Look at the second half of verse 12. It's not long at all. And the people feared the Lord. That's it.

Just half a verse. Easy to miss in the overall narrative. The people obeyed the Lord and they feared the Lord. This is so important. Because fear had dominated the lives of the people in Haggai for years.

10 to 15 years they had put off building the temple. Why had they done that? Remember Ezra chapter 4? It was the opposition that they had faced.

And do you remember what that opposition that they had faced had done to them? Listen to Ezra 4 verses 4 to 5. 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 purpose.

They were afraid to build. They feared the opposition and that motivated them to stop building. But now here in Haggai 1 their fear of the Lord had motivated them to start building again.

[25 : 53] Fear is usually something that we think of in negative ways. It's a bad thing to be afraid. But really fear can be a good thing if it's in its proper place.

It's all about what or whom we fear. The Israelites had feared man. That is a problematic position to be in. Fearing man demonstrates a lack of trust in God.

Fearing man means that we have a small view of God. Fearing man means that we're considering what others think of us or might do to us instead of considering what God thinks of us and what He has promised to do for us.

The Israelites had feared man but now their fear was redirected away from man and toward God. It's good for us to fear God.

Not in expectation of punishment. The Christian has no fear of that. That's not the kind of fear that God's people should have. That's misplaced fear. But a humble submissive posture of awe.

[26 : 57] We need more of that in our lives. It's recognizing our proper place in the relationship. God is creator and we are the creatures. It's recognizing that He is holy and righteous and good and we are not.

It's recognizing that He is worthy of our worship. He's worthy of giving commandments. He's worthy of setting the terms for our relationship to Him. And so He's also worthy of our obedience.

It's right to fear Him. If we don't fear God, there is something seriously wrong with us. We're not taking the Word of God seriously if we don't fear Him. We're not living in obedience to God if we don't fear Him.

Because, we have to get this, fear is the internal heart posture that God's people should have. And obedience is the outworking of that internal heart posture.

Those who fear God obey God. Those who are living in obedience, true obedience to God, they're doing it because they rightly fear Him in their hearts. We see this connection played out in Deuteronomy chapter 6.

[28 : 04] I picked one place. There's lots of places we could go to. God is preparing the Israelites to enter into the promised land for the second attempt. And through Moses, God is reminding Israel of what their relationship to Him should look like.

And listen to Deuteronomy chapter 6, beginning in verse 1, and listen for this connection between fear and obedience. Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the rules that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over to possess, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

So how do we fear God? How do we demonstrate that we fear God? By keeping all His statutes and His commandments. Our heart posture, it works itself out in the way that we live.

So the people of God in Haggai, they feared Him. How do we know? They obeyed His voice. Do you fear God? Are you living in humble submission to Him?

Are you more concerned with what God says than what man says? Do you hunger for His word or do you hunger for human input?

[29 : 29] Do you fear God? It'll show up in how you live. We'll think less and less of what man might do to us and more and more of what the Lord requires of us.

We see that with the Israelites in Haggai. If the Lord is our God, then we fear Him. Here's the third way that we ought to live as God's people. We cling to the Lord's promised presence with us.

We cling to the Lord's promised presence with us. We see that in verse 13. Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message.

I am with you, declares the Lord. I find it so interesting that God took quite a bit of time. He said quite a bit in His rebuke and discipline of the Lord.

But it just took this short word to reassure them. I am with you. And they got to work. We all need reassurance.

[30 : 36] I can think of lots of examples in the parent-child relationship. Learning how to ride a bike. Jumping into the deep end of the swimming pool. Riding a roller coaster for the first time.

All kinds of situations that are hard and scary for kids. And maybe some of us adults as we think about roller coasters. But in almost all of those situations that come to mind, all of these situations that require reassurance as varied as those situations may be, my words to my kids are almost always the same.

I'm right here. I got you. I'm with you. And when I say that, what I mean is more than just I'll be with you even if this all falls apart.

I'll be with you even if this fails. I'm not just here to comfort you when you fall or when you go under the water or when you get sick on the roller coaster.

But I'm going to see you through whatever it is until you're out on the other side. I'm going to see to it that you succeed. This is what God says to the people of Israel.

[31 : 42] I am with you and I won't let your efforts of obedience fail. They won't fail. God's promised presence is an assurance that His people's efforts will succeed.

God will see them through to the end. He will ensure that what they've set out to accomplish according to His word, done in obedience to Him, out of fear for Him, He's going to make sure that it happens.

They can be sure that they will succeed. And that's obvious motivation, isn't it? We see it in verses 14 to 15. God's people got to work. They came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God.

And the same is true for us. God promises His presence with us. And that's an assurance that our efforts will succeed.

What we have set out to do in obedience to His voice as revealed in His word, in fear of Him, we're going to meet with success. Maybe not success as the world defines success.

[32 : 51] Maybe not even success as we envisioned success to be. God may teach us, He may show us in painful ways what success looks like for Him.

For the Christian, we measure success by the standard of the cross. God perfectly achieved everything He intended at the cross. And that meant the death of Christ.

That's not how we naturally think of success. The death of Jesus would have been a failure in the eyes of the world. Perhaps you are sitting here this morning and the Lord has opened your eyes and you are thinking that sounds like a failure.

But it was anything but a failure. It was the ultimate achievement of success. Through His death, victory over sin and death and the powers of evil was won.

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave us the Great Commission. Sunday School rehash yet again. And this is what He says in the Great Commission.

[33 : 56] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Now that is a weighty command. That is a command that requires much of us. That is a command that requires a lot of effort. And so how did Jesus bracket this great command?

What words did He give surrounding the commissioning? He gave words of reassurance that their efforts would not be in vain. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. And so Christian, what you endeavor to do will succeed. It may be costly.

It may be painful. Some of the men who heard those words on Jesus' lips, they lost their lives. But their efforts succeeded as God defines success.

[35 : 00] Their efforts succeeded to the glory of God. Lose your, lose all that the world has to give and gain your soul. So this is so good for us to remember.

Yes, God is with us. But too often those kinds of words are like plastered on paintings, like a warm fire with a cozy blanket and a cup of hot chocolate.

God is with us. But walking in obedience to him, it may be hard, it may be painful. It helps us to keep an eternal, God-centered perspective.

My life is not all about me and my comfort. It's not all about me and the warm fire and the cup of hot chocolate. It's all about God and his glory, which brings us the greatest happiness, the greatest delight.

I want to succeed, but not as the world measures success. I want to succeed, not even as I may think success may be. I want to succeed as God measures success.

[36 : 05] And that might mean that our best efforts go unnoticed by others. That might mean that our best efforts don't produce the results that we maybe hoped for, but we remember that God doesn't measure success as we do.

We might not know all that God is up to, but we cling to the promise that he is with us. That's the third way that we live as the people of God.

And finally, we come to the last way. We remember that God is working in and through us. We remember that God is working in and through us.

Let's read again, beginning in verse 14. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehoshadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people.

And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts their God on the 24th day of the month in the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king. The people came and worked, and this was the doing of the Lord.

[37 : 12] The Lord had stirred up their spirits. Interestingly, the same thing happened in Ezra chapter 1. We read that a couple weeks ago, kind of setting the context for Haggai.

And in Ezra 1, Darius allowed for the people to return to the land. Sorry, Cyrus. Cyrus allowed for the people to return to the land. But it wasn't just that Cyrus had this great idea.

It wasn't like, oh, I should let the people go. I, I'm a smart guy. God was at work. Ezra 1.1 says, 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.

God stirred up Cyrus' spirit so that he acted. God stirred up the spirits of Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the remnant of the people.

That term, stirred up. It has the idea of being awakened from a slumber. The Israelites had grown spiritually complacent.

[38 : 18] They had grown spiritually lazy. They'd been running to their own houses. They'd been busying themselves with their desires, but they had been sleeping on God's desires.

They needed to wake up from their slumber. They needed to be roused from their sleep. And they were. God woke them up. God stirred them up. And because God was at work in them, they came and they worked on the temple.

God had promised his presence to them. God had promised success. And God ensured the work was completed. This is how he did it.

King Darius put an end to any possible opposition. He wrote a decree. And Darius wrote this decree ordering that the temple be allowed to be rebuilt.

This is the means that God uses to accomplish his purposes. Listen to Darius' decree from Ezra chapter 6. Also, I make a decree that if anyone alters this edict, a beam shall be pulled out of his house and he shall be impaled on it.

[39 : 24] And his house shall be made a dunghill. May the God who has caused his name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who shall put out a hand to alter this or to destroy this house of God that is in Jerusalem.

That's pretty reassuring. Man walks into your house, pulls out a beam. What are you doing with that beam? Oh, you'll see. You'll see. Pretty serious consequences to those who would try to put an end to Darius' edict.

Well, who do you think was at work in Darius? The Lord. The text doesn't tell us he stirred him up, but what does a sovereign God do? He stirs up. Even the hearts of kings in Persia.

God was at work in Darius. He was at work in the people stirring up their spirits to accomplish all that he purposed. God can promise success.

He can do it because he is the one who works in us and through us to bring that success. I can promise my child success, but sometimes I fail to make good on that promise.

[40 : 34] I can promise my son that I will catch him when he jumps in the pool, but there are all sorts of variables that I can't account for. He might jump when I don't expect it.

He might jump too far out of my reach, or I might not have good footing when he lands in my arms, or I might not be as strong as I thought I was. And I might let him slip under when he jumps in.

You can ask my kids, has dad been perfect at catching you in the pool? All kinds of ways that I can promise success but fail to make good on that promise. Not so with God.

He promises success, and what he promises will succeed every single time because he is the one who is at work in us and through us. I'm finite and weak and fragile.

God is infinitely wise. He's all powerful. He is good. And so when he promises success, we can be sure that success will follow. He promised the Israelites success in rebuilding the temple, and it was rebuilt.

[41 : 39] Maybe not in every way that they expected. We'll see that next week. But it succeeded as God defines success because God was at work in them.

God stirred them up from their sleepiness to accomplish his good purposes. And so what did Paul say to the Philippian church? He who began a good work in you will see it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

And how did Paul introduce that wonderfully rich, comforting word to us? Paul said, and I am sure of this. He who began a good work in you will see it to completion.

I am sure of this. We can have confidence. God who began a good work in us will bring it to completion. Just as God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, just as he stirred up the spirit of the people in Haggai, God is at work in us, and he's at work through us.

He is stirring us up to accomplish his good purposes. So are you in a spiritual slumber this morning? God's word to you is wake up.

[42 : 52] Paul says in Ephesians 5.14, Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Wake up and live like the people of God.

And remember who it is that works in us and through us. Wake up and remember. Wake up and take comfort and strength, knowing the one who strengthens you.

Knowing the one who began a good work, he will see it to completion. Wake up. Obey the chastening voice of the Lord. Fear the Lord.

Cling to the promised presence of the Lord. And remember who it is that works in us and through us. May we live like the people of God by the grace that God provides.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we count it such a privilege that we can pray to you because we are coming to you in desperate need.

[43 : 52] We can't do all that you have said in your word apart from your work in us. And so Father, now, what a wonderful thought that we're not just hearing the word preached, but we're entering into your presence and we're pleading with you, do this good work in us, we pray.

Be at work in our hearts that we might succeed as you define success. That we might remember that your promise is ever true. You are with us.

And we pray, Father, that you would be at heart, at work in the hearts of those who don't know you. That you wouldn't just wake them up from slumber, but that you would bring them back from death.

We pray, Lord, that you would save the lost this morning. That your word would take root deep in their hearts and that it would take root in ours all the more as well. And that we would be a people who live as your people because you are our God and we are your people.

And we need your grace to do that, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. Let's stand to sing one final song together. And we'll sing, All glory be to Christ.

[45 : 01] One final word. Psalm 100. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness.

Come into His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God. It is He who made us and we are His. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him. Bless His name. For the Lord is good, His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.

Amen.