

But that will happen “In a little while.”

Matthew 25:23 NLT - 23 "The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus told parables of wise and foolish servants. While they awaited the master's return, some did nothing, while others worked with what they were given. In Mat 25:23 the master commends the good and faithful servant who waited “actively” for the master.

Is there something you are waiting for God to bring to pass “in a little while”? What can you do in cooperation with Him while you wait and trust His promises? What did God say the Israelites would receive if only they were patient and persevered? (v.9)

Haggai 2:9 NIV - 9 '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.'

WRAP-UP

We, like the Israelite remnant, have seen a lot of change and many things we knew and loved in the past seem to have vanished. But this can be an opportunity to draw near to God and work alongside the Spirit to move forward again. Even though things don't look like we expected them to, God is still with us and has promised good things for the future. We want to take hold of those promises and do the work, by His grace, while we look to the promise of greater glory and peace. Because we know God's Spirit is with us, we have nothing to fear.

MEMORY VERSE.

4b ...Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the LORD, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the LORD Almighty.

- Haggai 2:4b NIV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life _____

Challenge. Listen to “Do It Again” by Elevation Worship and let the truth of that song be an encouragement that God has great things ahead for us.
<https://youtu.be/ZOBIPb-6PTc>

“Courage to Move Forward”

Haggai 2

INTRODUCTION

The radical changes of the past two and a half years may be unprecedented in our lifetime, but there have been times in the past when God's people have been faced with radical change as well. In the book of Haggai, the Israelites returned, after 70 years of exile, to a devastated Jerusalem. Everything had changed. They had been granted their freedom, but all they knew and loved from their past was gone. In the face of frustration, despair and hostility how would they find the courage to move forward? How will we?

Ice Breaker

What is the longest you lived at one location? Where and when was it?

Key Passage

Haggai 2:4 NLT - 4 But now the LORD says: Be strong, Zerubbabel. Be strong, Jeshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people still left in the land. And now get to work, for I am with you, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. That was then, this is now

Haggai 2:1-3 NIV - 1 on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: 2 "Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, 3 'Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory (kāḇôḏ)? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?"

Some of the oldest members of Israel's remnant could remember how things had been before the exile. The centerpiece of Jerusalem was the temple. Solomon's temple had been extraordinary, not only in its size, and its opulence but in what it held- God's glory, in Hebrew -kāḇôḏ.

What was the purpose of the temple? What would the Israelites lose if the temple was not rebuilt?

2 Chronicles 7:1-2 NIV - 1 When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory (kābôd) of the LORD filled the temple. 2 The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it.

God asked the people if they remembered the former *glory* (kābôd) of Solomon's temple. That glory is described in 2 Chronicles as so powerful that the priests couldn't enter the building. He asked them to compare the temple then (with God's glorious presence) and now (in the absence of God's presence) as His temple lies in ruin.

What has been some of your most powerful encounters with God? Were there times you felt that He was particularly close? Have you experienced that closeness recently?

If we reflect on what has changed lately, it might seem like our current situation is "nothing" compared to what we once had. We have a choice in how we respond to these changes. We can feel that we have been wronged and are the victim of circumstances. We can become cynical and critical and blame others for the situation we find ourselves in. Or we can courageously move forward in response to God's direction and call to "rebuild the place He dwells".

2. Be Strong

Haggai 2:4 NIV - 4 But now be strong, Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD. 'Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the LORD, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the LORD Almighty.

When construction of the temple first began the people made progress, completing the foundation, but when confronted with hostility and challenges they had stopped trusting God, retreated and focused their energy on caring for themselves. God both admonished and encouraged them through Haggai in verses 4 and 5. In the Hebrew text the word *hāzaq* can be translated strong or courage. It is used six times in these two verses (in the original text). Twice to Zerubbabel, twice to Joshua and twice to the people- emphasizing be strong, be courageous!

What do you think would happen if God had only said, "Be strong and do the work."? Why is it important that He also said, "For I am with

you"? God is described in many ways; holy, compassionate, all-knowing, ever-present.. Why is it significant to the Israelites that He identifies Himself here as "Almighty" (also translated as Lord of heaven's Army)?

God does not ask us to do something we are incapable of. When He calls, He also provides what is needed to complete the task. We may think that a life of ease and comfort is evidence of God's blessing, but challenge and struggle are often the crucible by which dependence on God increases, transforms us, and brings forth purpose in our lives.

Can you share any times in your life when difficult or challenging time drew you close to God?

Haggai 2:5 NIV - 5 'This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.'

To dispel had any fears the Israelites had that God wouldn't be with them in the struggle to rebuild the temple, He reminded them of what He had promised when He brought them out of slavery in Egypt- My Spirit (ruach) remains among you.

God had promised His Spirit would be among the Israelites, but for those of us who follow Jesus, the Spirit dwells in us. God's power is always with us. Are there areas you need the Lord of Heaven's Army to do battle for you? Share those with members of your group and pray that God's Spirit will strengthen you in the battle in those areas.

3 God's Perspective

Haggai 2:6-9 NIV - 6 "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. 7 I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty. 8 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty

God has already reminded the people that He is the same God who freed them from Egypt. They knew the power of the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea that God used to free them there. He also reminded them of His glory found in Solomon's temple. Now, He tells them He will shake heaven, earth, land and sea and He will fill His house with glory again.