

Introduction: Good morning everyone, lets pray. You know, since we moved here, one of the things my wife and I have gotten into is “DIY” projects. Basically, they are house projects that you do, instead of paying someone else to do it. The main project that we took on was re-staining an old dresser that was gifted to us. Now, in the beginning we were extremely excited to do the project; we were excited for how the dresser would look and how it could be so helpful to us in our house! But as months went on, hands got sanding burns, schedules changed, and weather got worse, we found it hard to be excited about the project because of how bad the dresser presently looked and how hard the circumstances were! In a sense, we had stopped working because we were discouraged. And as we look at our passage today, we see that one of the biggest threats to the reconstruction of the temple was: discouragement.

For the past two weeks, we have been studying how the book of Haggai was meant to remind God’s people, these people who had returned from exile, of their call to rebuild the temple the place where God’s glory would dwell with his people and his glory would be sent out to fill the earth; basically they were called to build God’s house! And even though they had abandoned God by abandoning the construction project 18 years later, ch. 1 shows us that God reminds the people that now is the time to build and that he will empower them to do it. But as we look at our passage, we see that just after 21 days of work, the people have become extremely discouraged and it threatens to entire construction project! And we see why they are so discouraged in vs. 3, “Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? It is not as nothing in your eyes?” Basically, these questions show us that while the people were building, they remembered the previous glory of the original temple and saw how the current one would not look like it, and it powerfully discouraged them. And as God’s people today, we see that because of the greater-temple Jesus, that the local church become the means by which God’s glory is seen and is sent out to fill the earth! And our call as God’s people is to build his house; build up and serve the local church. But in honesty, reality of discouragement isn’t lost on us as well. Even though this Christ’s church, on this side of glory, it is imperfect. And because we are building it up in a broken world and we are group of imperfect sinners all stumbling toward Jesus together; there is plenty opportunity to be discouraged with the church. And maybe that is you this morning, you’ve felt or seen the imperfection of the church and feel discouraged. Look what God says to the people, “I am with you.” He doesn’t tell them to get over it or that it is not that bad; instead he encourages them! And my hope for this morning is that if you are discouraged, you will see that God listens and encourages his people as they build God’s house! And so our big idea this morning is this: “God encourages his builders.” And the main way he does it is through:

- His Grace
- His Glory

Body:

- I. **His Grace (2:1-5)**

- A. **The first way God encourages his builders is through his grace.** As we mentioned earlier, the main cause for the people's discouragement has been their thoughts of the past "glory" the former temple. Many of the people's minds were filled with the memories of the how beautiful the temple looked and how it was constructed with the gold and the best craftsmanship! And how it represented the people being "on fire" for God and living according to his word. And then they would look at the present state of the temple, and realize that it wasn't going to have the craftsmanship or beauty of the former. And even the community who was building it wasn't filled with zealous people, but people who constantly had to be exhorted to build God's house! It just wasn't the same. And what we have to see is that what the people were really doing with this comparison was focusing on the "gap" between a past ideal and present circumstances. And by consequence, that "gap" influenced the way they saw their situation and filled their minds with thoughts like, "This isn't worth it" or "Things will never be the same."
- B. And even though we don't have the literal temple, that issue of the "Gap" influencing us is a issue for us too as we build up the church! Maybe for some of you here, you have felt the "gap" remember when the church services were so impactful, you were actively serving, and zealously sharing the gospel. But now, the services aren't hitting you like they use to, you hardly serve, and you hardly share your faith. Or maybe for others, you felt the "gap" when you remember the time you were a part of an amazing campus ministry like Cru or FCA, and you don't feel that same closeness in your spiritual friendships now that you're out of that season of life. Or maybe even you feel the "gap" when you are reading scripture and you are seeing how impactful the early church was and how it powerfully reached the community; but now, you feel the church today is far from that ideal. **For me, I know I felt it when I thought of my GC in Philly. I remember the awesome times in the word we had, live-giving prayer nights, and awesome hangouts. But then people moved away, COVID hit, and we shrunk from 20-6; and it felt like all of that disappeared and it felt that things would never be the same!**
- C. But look at God's first response to the people's discouragement. He says, "I am with you." We see this promise in the previous chapter, and last week we talked about this promise was really a promise of security and comfort. But here, it takes on this another dimension and becomes a promise of grace; and you can simply define grace as this, "God showing favor and love to his undeserving people." And I love how my Philly Pastor Matt Cohen, describes what this promise of grace is doing in the verse. He says God used the promise to "take the eyes of the people off themselves and to put it on him." He was telling the people that yes there was a gap between the past and the present, but that his spirit would be in their midst and give them a surplus of his grace. If his grace was powerfully enough to liberate them from Egypt, it

would be powerful enough to comfort them in their pain and help them; God is giving them exactly what they needed: himself!

D. And although this is great, this promise of grace is way more impactful for us! Because of the greater-temple Jesus, God doesn't just promise to give us his spirit on certain projects, but instead for his spirit to dwell in us. Because of Christ's life, death, resurrection, he has ascended to the right hand of the father and pours out his spirit on the church; which was powerful enough to bring us from death into life, and it is powerful enough to comfort us and help us! And that is what is amazing about God, he doesn't give us false platitudes, doesn't lie to us saying "you're enough" or just be more positive. He says, "take your eyes off you and put them on me; my grace is enough for you!" Look at how 2 Corinthians 12:9 brings this truth out, "*But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me*" God encourages his builders with his sufficient grace.

E. **Implication:** So let me ask you a personal question: "*What would it look like for you to embrace God's grace as you build up the church?*" And I know when we reflect on this question, a billion ideas pop into our brain. But I believe we should look to the passage to see how we should answer this. When we look at the passage, we see three commands: Be strong, command, and fear not. So, for this morning, I just want to condense all of those into 2 main steps. The two main ways to embrace God's grace as we build the church is: 1. Let God's truth be the main thing you listen to and 2. Keep working! *So for example, if you are feeling discouraged because you see the gap between now and your experience with the church, or the early church, even pre-COVID. First, instead of giving the "gap" position of influence, turn away from it and turn to God's truth; don't allow social media, news outlets or despair to dive you deeper into the gap, dive into the Gospel; preach to yourself "this is hard, but God's spirit dwells in me and his grace is enough! And then, keep working; keep serving building God's house; not because you are so strong, but because God is enough! Redeemer, yes the church on this side of eternity is imperfect, but God's grace is enough!*

II. His Glory (2:6-9)

A. *The final way that God encourages his builders is through his glory.* These verses open up by saying that soon, God is going to shake the sea, land, and the nations. And if we are going to understand what is being said there, we have to focus on the word "shake." Haggai is using this word to show God's sovereign power over the entire universe. And he is saying that God is going to sovereignly move in the cosmos so that his house can show and send out his glory! And this divine announcement has a present and future aspect to it. For Haggai's people, we see God fulfill this promise in Ezra by moving King

Darius of Persia to guarantee complete funding for the temple. Basically, the Persian Empire, which was comprised of hundreds of Gentile groups, would give the funding necessary to complete the building of the temple; where God's glory was seen and set out to fill the earth! God is telling his people that this lackluster temple would be filled with his glory and that the glory would be sent out into the nations!

- B. And today, even though local church is not perfect, Redeemer is not perfect, we see God using it for his glory! I still new here, so allow me to point out some evidences of God's glory in this church. During a global pandemic, you all gave generously to help meet the needs of those who were struggling in the community. During the pandemic, you baptized over 10 people, and as part of the RN/A29 you all help plant multiple churches in Texas! And you are currently raising up a team of people to send out to plant a church in East Amarillo. God's glory is being seen in and sent out here! And it is not because we are so great, but because God is sovereignly working around us to use an imperfect church for his glory! Praise God for that!
- C. So we see the present, but now lets look at the future. In the last verse, God makes a unique claim, that the "later glory" of this house will be greater than the former; that a bold claim. But when go back over the verses, we see a lot of unique things taking place. The Gentile nations are giving to the building of God's house; basically they are building God's house as part of God's people. And he even says that he will fill the house with peace or shalom, which means it will be sent out from there. And it seems all this creative imagery to point to another prophetic book; look at what the prophet Isaiah says (2:1-3), *"It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."* You see, God is pointing the people to the day where the temple is the center of the world, and the nations are coming to serve and worship the Lord. And it is from the temple that the world is filled with peace! He is reminding the people that this temple is leading up to something amazing, and that is why it is glorious!
- D. And what we need to see is that this amazing truth is fully seen in Jesus. Because of his life, death, and resurrection, he has redeemed a sinful and messed up people who come with nothing to offer except the empty hands of faith, for his glory! And he has made us right with God and makes us movie

trailers that point to the day when will restore this broken world. The church becomes this place where we point to the day when the city of God comes down, and God's people from every tribe, nation, tongue have everything they need because they will have God; who will destroy all evil and restore this broken world. The reason why Redeemer exists is to point to that day; we build up God's house the church because it points to something amazing. If you are discouraged this morning, please hear this. Even in our imperfection, in the church's imperfection, we point to the day when we will see God's perfect glory fully and beautifully! God encourages his people with his glory!

- E. **Implication:** Here's one last question: "**What would it look like for you to set your eyes on God's glory as you build up the church?**" This answer will look different for many of us in this room. For those of you who don't consider yourself Christian, maybe you came because you wanted to know why we gather every week and do collective karaoke and eat stale wafers and juice. For you, the answer would be to let God's glory transform you through repentance and faith. It would be to confess the ways you have lived for your glory and to believe that it is only because of Jesus you can be made right with God. But if you have placed your faith in Jesus, the answer would be to point your remind your fellow builders of God's glory; when they are discouraged, point them to the glory that we are representing; point yourself to it! **For me, the best example that I have seen of this is my wife. I could spend hours telling you how awesome she is. But one of the best ways she has blessed me, is by pointing me to God's glory. When I have felt down about the church, she didn't tell me that its not a big deal, I need to get over it, or that I am so great, she reminds me that building up God's house is glorious. That the glory we are pointing to is better than we could ever imagine and that its worth it! Redeemer, if you are discouraged this morning, I encourage you, set your eyes on God's glory!**

Conclusion:

To finish, I just want to bring everything we talked about together. I know that many of us who walked in this morning might feel tired, worried, or discouraged, when we think church or even just life. But please let Gospel-truth encourage you this morning. The truth that although our failure to meet God's standard separated us from God and broke the world; it put us under judgment. God in his love, sent Christ to live the life we could never live, die the death, we deserve, and resurrect so we can be made right with him and look forward to that glorious day when he makes everything new. That grace that was powerful enough to raise you, is powerful enough to give you comfort and strength today! The glory of God that captivated your heart in the beginning, is still powerful enough to give you hope even when it doesn't look good! Please rest in encouragement that God is giving us this

morning. Redeemer, lets be a people who take our eyes off ourselves and put them on God.
Lets be a people who are radically captivated by God's grace and glory!