

Haggai 1:¹² Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, 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.

Haggai 2 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? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing?

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.

⁵ "This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear."

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.

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."

Good Morning First Baptist Members and Friends! I greet you this morning with the joy that comes from serving a Risen Saviour. Remember joy is not the same as happy. Happy is the result of your circumstances, but joy comes from God.

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.¹

So I invite you this morning to find the joy that comes from knowing and serving a God who has promised to never leave you or forsake if you put your faith in Him. If you have that joy, unspeakable joy, then you ought to want to praise God. Praise Him for keeping you, for loving you, for providing for you, for giving you another chance to get it right. Praise Him because He is God all by himself. Let everything that has breathe praise the Lord.

We continue this Sunday with the second sermon from the book of Haggai. On last Sunday we looked at verses 1-11 of the 1st chapter and worked with the theme: **GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO YOUR WAYS.**

The key teaching points revolved around the fact that failure to give careful thought to your ways could result in missed blessings and I shared three possible blessing, which might be missed.

- **God's blessings are missed because people procrastinate.**
- **God's blessings are missed because people fail to remember God's will, word and ways.**
- **God's blessings are missed because we fail to put God's purpose, priorities and plans first.**

¹ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+1%3A2-3&version=NIV>

Today we look at the 12th verse of the 1st chapter and verses 1-9 of the 2nd chapter. I want to draw your attention to verse 4:

***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*

On last week I asked you to move beyond the physical building of the temple and to apply the words of the Lord spoken by Haggai (HAG-eye) to our spiritual building, our bodies. I believe that the message for today is also to be found in the same way. The Lord God tells all the people of the land to be strong and work "...For I am with you..."(v4).

I know many people believe that when the Lord is with you and you are with the Lord that your troubles become diminished and you are in for a life of smooth sailing. Indeed my research showed me that this passage is one that is often used to support a prosperity gospel. But I want to tell you this morning/afternoon that God has not promised smooth sailing. What God **has** promised is to be with you as you encounter your trials, test and tribulations. So I ask you to stay with me and pray with me and for me as we consider this thought:

THE MOUNTAINS COME TO MAKE ME STRONG!

SHALL WE PRAY!

God of Heaven and Earth for some of us this past week has been one of trials, test and tribulations. We have experienced the death of a loved one; the bad news of poor test results; the frustration of not being able to pay our bills; as well as physical and emotional pain. But within all of this we know that you are with us. We come this morning asking you to help us to understand that our trials, test and tribulations are just mountains we must face on this journey with you. Help us to name our mountains and

understand its purpose in our lives. Help us to remember that we might return to the mountain, time and time again, but each time we return you are there to guide, to lead, and to hold our hand. Father, I ask as we move into this teaching moment that you transform my thoughts and my words into what your people need this morning. Move me and allow them to see and hear from you. In the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ we pray. AMEN and AMEN.

THE MOUNTAINS COME TO MAKE ME STRONG!²

In the life of every believer there are mountains that we must face. In fact some of them we must face more than once. One way to label these mountains is:

Mount Olivet
Mount Calvary
Mount Sinai

as we take a look at these mountains, mountains which represent the trials, test and tribulations in our lives, remember that as you mature these mountains may have different meanings. Let us look first at **Mount Olivet** or **Mount of Olives** located east of the city of Jerusalem.

During the reign of Solomon this same location was called the Mount of Offense or the Mount of Corruption because of the heathen altars erect there. But in the life of Jesus, four great events took place on this mountain. (When Jesus gets to the mountain, its name might be changed)

1. The triumphal entry (Matthew 21:1, Mark 11:1)
2. The prediction of Jerusalem's eventual overthrow - this passage of Scripture is known as the Olivet discourse (Matthew 24:1; Mark 13:1)
3. Where Jesus prayed and was eventually captured and brought to the High Priest (Matthew 26:30, 36; John 18:1)
4. The Ascension (Acts 1:9)

² I acknowledge the work of Mario Bruni Four Immovable Mountains Every Christian Must Face

Perhaps the greatest test of the faith of Jesus occurred in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives.

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."³

A test of faith can come so unexpected. A job is lost, a loved dies, the significant other decides you are no longer significant and you ask God why. There is nothing wrong with the question for Jesus the Son of God asked a question. What is important is YOUR response: "yet not my will, but yours be done". So when you arrive at the trials, test and tribulations that challenge your faith and your belief in God say to someone "I am at Mount Olivet but I trust God to bring me thru."

If you continue your journey with Jesus you will eventually come to Mount Calvary, the mountain where Jesus and two others were crucified. There is another sermon to be preached about the three crosses, but this morning I want you to think about the cross in the center. On that center cross on Mount Calvary the Son of God, Jesus the Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world hung. He hung to make the payment for our sins. Because Jesus did it we do not have to. But sometimes when we get to our own personal Mount Calvary, sometimes when it seems like we are being tempted, persecuted, lied on and mistreated we need to remember three phrases:

I have already been justified by the blood –
it is like my sin never happened

I am sanctified by the blood –
set apart for a plan and a purpose

I will be glorified when Jesus returns.

I have, I am and I will be – if I keep the faith and never cease to pray.

³ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+22%3A42&version=NIV>

I don't have to be and I will not be defeated at Mount Calvary for I have a Saviour who has already died for me.

There is one final mountain I wish us to consider this morning and that is Mount Sinai or Mount Horeb. We learn of Mount Sinai during the journey of the Children of Israel in the Wilderness. After three months of travel God leads them to Mount Sinai and here God makes His covenant with them a covenant based on only one term – their personal and corporate obedience.

To the Israelites Mount Sinai was a:

Place of Provision (Exodus 17:6)

Place of Gathering (Exodus 19:2, Deuteronomy 4:10)

Place of Revelation (Exodus 19:11, 18)

Place of Calling (Exodus 19:20)

Place of Consecration (Exodus 19:23, 33:6, 34:32)

Place of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)

Place of Covenant (Exodus 29:1)

Place of Learning God's Will (Exodus 31:18)

Place of Fellowship (Numbers 9:1)

Place of Ordination (Numbers 28:6)

Place of Sending Forth (Deuteronomy 1:6)

So where are we to find our Mount Sinai today? It must be found in the church, our church and all churches open in the name of Jesus. Acts 2:42-47

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

⁴³Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.⁴

⁴ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2%3A42-47&version=NIV>

The New Testament church is

- Place of Provision (Acts 2:45)
- Place of Gathering (Acts 2:44)
- Place of Revelation (Acts 2:42)
- Place of Calling (Acts 2:44)
- Place of Consecration (Acts 2:46)
- Place of the Ten Commandments (Acts 2:42)
- Place of Covenant (Acts 2:46)
- Place of Learning God's Will (Acts 2:42)
- Place of Fellowship (Acts 2:42)
- Place of Ordination (Acts 2:43)
- Place of Sending Forth (Acts 2:46-47)

But just as the Children of Israel could not remain at Mount Sinai neither can we. We must leave these walls and go back into the wilderness to tell men and women and boys and girls what they need to do to be saved. We must invite them to the Mount of Olives and share our stories of test, trial and tribulation. We must journey with them to Calvary and help them to see all that has been done, is being done and will be done to reconcile them back to the Father. And finally we must bring them to Mount Sinai – to the place where we serve the Lord; to the place where we learn; to the place of gathering of believers.

I hear you – what does this have to do with continuing the work on the temple? If the physical building is in disarray those whom you bring may be confused and wonder why God's house does not look as good as your house. But if your spiritual building is in disarray, incomplete, has a leaking roof and broken windows there is very little reason for anyone to believe that you serve a God who is with you and urging you to be strong.

As you face each of your mountains think about these words

Life is easy, when you're up on the mountain
And you've got peace of mind, like you've never known.
But things change, when you're down in the valley.
Don't lose faith, for you're never alone.

For the God on the mountain, is the God in the valley.
When things go wrong, He'll make them right.
And the God of the good times
is still God in the bad times.
The God of the day is still God in the night.

We talk of faith way up on the mountain.
Talk comes so easy when life's at its best.
Now down in the valleys, of trials and temptations
That's where your faith, is really put to the test.

For the God on the mountain is the God in the valley.
When things go wrong, He'll make them right.
And the God of the good times
is still God in the bad times.
The God of the day, is still God in the night.
The God of the day, is still God in the night.⁵

⁵ Read more at <http://www.songlyrics.com/lynda-randle/god-on-the-mountain-lyrics/#FX9WUIOlluekebz.99>