

Haggai 1:1-7

Sunday 1/23/2005

I hope that you have been enjoying our time through the Word of God together. When we started our church, we took the time to lay out a bunch of concepts about starting a church and building a church. Then we started to focus on the aspect of really taking a church and developing it.

We talked about how it was important for everybody to kind of get on the same page as far as the Bible is concerned. So we began a study coming through the whole Bible, laying everything out as far as each book of the Bible. So you would have an understanding of it when we were finished, and yet we would have a record of it long beyond when we finished our study, that you would be able to go back or new people coming in would be able to have the resources to really learn the Bible book by book, as far as giving you a cohesive understanding of it.

Last week, remember, we were in the book of Zephaniah. The book of Zephaniah was a book that really focused on for us, from a... And we've been looking at the Bible now, and I told you this when we started, how the Bible has three distinct applications to it.

- The Bible will have a historical application. That means it is accurate in history. The Bible is one of the greatest history books you will ever find anywhere in the world. Then it also has a doctrinal application. That means it is a prophetic application. It has something to do with the end times and the second coming of Christ, which is the theme of the Bible, and Christ coming back to establish His kingdom. But we are living on the earth right now. So the Bible has a third application, and that is what we call the inspirational or the practical application. These are things that the Bible teaches that really help you and I go through our daily lives and struggle with all the struggles that we have to deal with.

We have seen where in the books of the minor prophets, last week in the book of Zephaniah, we saw how to build a lasting relationship with the Lord. I showed you how these smaller books really focus in on some issues that are very important for us in our individual lives, and it really lays them out.

I. The Historical Context of Haggai

Today we are going to study the book of Haggai. Haggai is very important because it is one of the last three books in your Old Testament. Because they are the last three books in the Old Testament, they form the last section of what is called the prophets.

These three books are important because, remember when we started laying all this thing out, we talked about how the Bible, the Old Testament, really breaks down into three concepts.

- The first concept would be what we call the formulation of the nation of Israel. I gave you this on New Year's Eve, that runs from Genesis up to the book of Joshua. In that time period, we see the nation of Israel being formed. We see all of the concepts that bring about the nation of Israel as a nation. Then we have the establishment of the nation of Israel that would bring us up to the book of Judges right up through the book of Second Chronicles. In those books, we see Israel established. We see the kingdom under David and Solomon, and all the

kings of Israel are listed out from there. Then we have the third period, which is commonly called the captivity. The captivity is a time period that focuses on the nation of Israel's rejection of God and then God bringing in the Gentile nations. This is also called the times of the Gentiles. That will basically bring us up through the prophets and the minor prophets. That is basically how your Old Testament breaks down.

Your last three books of the Bible are Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Those last three books are all books that are written after the captivity. Remember now, we saw that all the prophets were written either before the captivity, during the captivity, or after the captivity. These last three books, starting with Haggai, this is why it is important: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi all deal with the post-captivity period after Israel goes back.

You will find that Haggai, and this is something you need to know, Haggai is written during the time of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. Remember those books? Those books were the books that dealt with it. We studied those books when we first started our church. It was in those books that we saw the nation of Israel going back and beginning to rebuild and to reestablish a nation of Israel after the captivity. So you are going to find that these three books, as Haggai, go along with Ezra, Esther, and Nehemiah. They are written during that period of time.

Remember from our study, just to kind of jog your memory, I told you that in 538 BC, the Babylonians had been defeated now by Persia, and Persia was that great kingdom under the king of Cyrus, king of Persia. In 538 BC, Cyrus, the king of Persia, issues a decree allowing the Jews to go back to the land after the 70 years captivity. They are allowed to rebuild the temple and rebuild the city of Jerusalem, which was destroyed when Nebuchadnezzar led his three phases of sieges. We talked about that when we studied 2 Chronicles and the book of Daniel and the book of Ezekiel.

Now, the work is led by a man by the name of Zerubbabel. You will find him in Haggai 1:1. He is a governor. He is a Jewish man. You will also find him in the book of Ezra. Remember now, when we come through those two books, I showed you how Ezra is a book that focuses on the building of the temple. Nehemiah is a book that focuses on the building of the city of Jerusalem. Zerubbabel, as the leader, brings the people back.

In 536 BC, the work begins. This will be the work that is covered if you want to go back and look at it in Ezra 4-6. Then we know what happens, for we studied those books when we came through them in our course of the Bible. The opposition comes. We studied how that opposition is a picture of the opposition that you and I face when we try to do something meaningful and lasting for the Lord.

We find out that they lied about them. We found out that they made false accusations to other people about them. We found out that they took half-truths and developed them into whole lies and concepts, all for the purpose of slandering the nation of Israel. These are the sins that God's people do so well today. All of that thing is a picture of their struggle, it is a picture of our struggle.

II. The Core Problem in Haggai: Abandoning God's Work

Now, with all this pressure, and this is where the book of Haggai comes in. With all this pressure, with all the slander, with all the lies, with all the political intrigue that is going on during this time of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. As I said, the book of Haggai really covers Ezra 4-6 at the same time period.

With all this pressure, the nation of Israel finds that it is easier to stop building the temple than finish building it. So after 16 years of laboring to try to get this thing going and piddling around trying to build it and get it done, they stop the process of the building of God's temple in God's city. They begin to turn their attention to their own personal projects, and they leave God's project pretty much dead in the water.

That is basically the story of Haggai. When you look at that book, that is what you need to know. Haggai has only got two chapters in it, and it is a real easy book to understand. If you just take what I just told you and put it someplace up in the top of your Bible there in your wide margin, it will give you a little understanding that before you read it, you want to read that so you understand what you are reading, and then you understand better what you are looking for.

So we see that the book of Haggai is basically a book that focuses on them starting to build the temple of God, and then they quit building the temple of God. The breakdown is really pretty easy. Only two chapters.

- Chapter 1 really deals with a summons to build God's house. Chapter 2 deals with a summons to obey the commandments to build God's house because they quit.

As I said, the theme of this book is the building of God's house. I want to read for you Haggai 1:1-7, just to kind of set the stage here, and then we will get into it from there. It says this:

Haggai 1:1-7

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.

Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

Now, Father, we thank and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. I ask You, Father, today to step beyond just the pages of this book. Lord, we understand that historically this great book

focuses on a time when the nation of Israel again turns their back on God and goes their own way. But Lord, the lessons here are so incredible for us. We want to do what is right in these last days.

I believe that every man and woman in this building that says, "I am a part of this church," I believe they are a part of this church because they want to do what is right. They want to make their marriages right. They want to raise their families right. They want to honor their spouses right. They want to do everything that needs to be done the right way. They may not all know how to do it. There may be struggles and trials, but Lord, I believe deep down inside, they want to accomplish what You want them to accomplish. Help us today to learn from this great little book the things that we need to see. And though these books may be small in chapter, dear Lord, they are great in concept and principles for our lives. So help us today to see it. And we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

III. Pondering Spiritual Growth and the Wise Master Builder

I do not know what your own relationship with the Word of God and the Lord is like. I mean, I know most of you are, if not all of you are saved, and you really want to build a relationship with God. But do you ever come to the place in your life where, and I do not even know how to say this, you ever come to the place in your life where you just think about things?

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is found in Luke 2:19. It is not a great doctrinal verse. It does not really, but it is just one of those verses that to me suggests where I am at a lot with the Lord. It is talking about Mary, Mary, the mother of Jesus. She was confronted with a lot of things. She was confronted with the fact that she had not known a man yet, but she is going to have a baby. She was dealing with all of that. Angels were popping up in her kitchen showing her about all these great truths that were to come. Needless to say, I am sure it was a shock to her system. Here is a woman, just an ordinary woman, and suddenly she is thrust into the biblical spotlight of visiting angels and hearing all these great decrees that she is going to be the one that brings forth the Savior of Israel. I am sure it was hard for her to grasp all of that, just like it is for us sometimes. We stand in awe of the Word of God and what God does.

But that verse there in Luke 2:19 simply says this:

Luke 2:19

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

She was thinking. I think the reason why people like the book of Psalms so much, most people do not even know this, but the book of Psalms is a book about a man who is pondering things. It is a whole book of a man talking to himself. The book of Psalms is a man thinking about things in life and pondering them.

I look at it, not even as a pastor, but as a Christian all my life, when I grasp the concept of God that I could not understand, when I was faced with all the issues, dealing with people, when the aspect of the ministry and the Bible and how it all dovetails together and how people grow or do not grow, so many times I have just sought and thought. I used to have a job that I drove like 250

miles a day, and I enjoyed that job because it gave me a lot of time to think while I was driving. But it is a pondering thing.

Do you ever wonder why things are the way that they are? I mean, stop and look, take any two people, take two saved people and ask yourself why one makes it and the other one does not. The truth of the matter is, I wish that everybody would make it. When I say make it, I mean not get swallowed back up with the world. I mean that a saved young man or a saved young lady or a mom and a dad would, when they got saved, that they would do what they need to do. They would build the relationship with God and the Word of God, that their life would only get better, stronger, closer to the Lord. But I know the reality that is not going to happen.

I am a people person. I may not always show it, but when somebody does not make it, it bothers me. It bothers me because of the fact that I want them to make it. It bothers me from the fact that I do not want to see anybody at the judgment seat of Christ lose the rewards that God has for him. It bothers me that some people make it and some people do not. I have pondered that.

You look at the fact that they are both saved by the same God. It is not that one was saved by a greater God and one was saved by a lesser God. No, they are both saved by the same God. The same Holy Spirit of God is inside of both of them. It was not the fact that, "Well, one got more of the Spirit of God than the other." No, no. The moment they got saved, they got saved by the same God, and they got the same Holy Spirit of God, equal that everybody else got. They got the same measure of grace and the same measure of faith the Bible talks about. They all get the same teaching, so to speak, teaching about the Lord. Maybe it all was not perfect, but it certainly is enough for a young Christian to get them going.

We cannot make the argument, "Well, one was smarter than the other intellectually," because that has nothing to do with learning about God and the Bible. In fact, really, the dumber you are, the better you are. So that has nothing to do with it. We cannot say, "Well, so and so had a better education," because education has got nothing to do with it. We cannot say, "Well, you know what? This guy was raised in a Christian home, and this guy was raised in the world, so therefore, hey, that argument will not work." Some of the strongest people I know, young men, did not have a Christian home when they grew up, and some of the ones that did have a Christian home do not make it. It gets confusing. We cannot blame it on that because the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

You cannot blame anything on anything anymore once you get saved. It comes down to something I have to ponder all the time: Why does one make it? Why does one not? The book of Haggai answers that question, and it is the book of Haggai that really deals with the fundamental problem.

Now, I know what the theological answer is. I mean, I read all the books, but I have read them years ago. I know what the theological answer should be, but you see, I want to go beyond that. I

am not satisfied with just the norm. I want to look inside, and I want to find out what makes a man think one way versus what a man or a woman thinks the other way. I want to look at the book of Haggai, and the book of Haggai really begins to answer this question.

Now we know from 1 Corinthians, you do not have to turn here, you know that in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, and also again in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, we talked about this Thursday night a little bit. We know that those are the two great chapters in the New Testament on the judgment seat of Christ, especially 1 Corinthians 3:9-16. There is no greater chapter in the Bible that probably says it clearer.

We know that it says that once we get saved, verse 11 talks about the fact that the day we get saved, we lay a foundation in our life. I know I am not telling you nothing you do not know. I am just building up to where I want to go here. I know this is old news to most of you. We know that verse 11 talks about the fact that the day you got saved, you laid a foundation in your life. That foundation the Bible says is Jesus Christ.

Then the Bible says in verse 9 that we are laborers together. We are in this together. The Bible says in verse 9 that you and I are God's building. This is where the book of Haggai begins to come in and answer some of these questions. We know that the Bible says that once you lay that foundation, that you build upon that foundation either gold, silver, precious stones, and we talked about that from a spiritual aspect, or wood, hay, and stubble.

We know that the Bible says that the day of the judgment seat of Christ, the day is going to declare it, and all of these things that we build upon this foundation are going to be tried by fire. The gold, the silver, and the precious stones, when you submit gold and silver to fire, all it does is purify all the impurities out of it. But the wood, hay, and stubble, the Bible says that represents the person that does not make it, where the gold, silver, and precious stones represent the person that does make it.

Now I am not talking about getting saved, being saved. I am talking about once you are saved, finding the will of God in your life and doing that, that you really become everything that God wants you to be, that when you stand in the judgment seat of Christ, God says to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." You did exactly what I wanted you to do. You did exactly what I saved you for. You saw the big picture. You understood what life was all about. You found out where, why I saved you and where I put you. You looked beyond yourself and found the real purpose and meaning in life, and now you are standing here giving me your life, now I am going to give back to you an inheritance. We talked about that the other night, did we not?

Here lies the answer. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3:10 that we are God's building and the foundation we get laid in, and it says this in verse 10, that we are to be a wise master builder and that we are to take heed how we build. In these two concepts, a wise master builder and taking heed how you build, here lies the answer of why one makes it, why one does not, which is really typified in this great book of Haggai, even though it has only got two chapters.

You know in Matthew 7:24-29 there is a story. The story is the story through the Bible. It is a story of a wise man and a foolish man. From a practical aspect, really the Bible really breaks

down all the way through two kinds of people, a wise man and a foolish man. A wise man is someone who figures out what God wants him to do in his life or her life and does it. The foolish man is someone who never does.

In that story it talks about the wise man building his house upon a rock. Then it talks about the foolish man building his house upon the sand. Then a storm comes. The Bible says that the storm, the wind blows, and all this is a picture of life, you know that. The winds and the sand and the howling water and the rain and all the torrent that comes down is a picture of the things in life that we all have to go through. The one who built his house on a rock obviously is a wise master builder. He took heed how he built. The one who built it on the sand, the foolish man, is someone that was not a wise master builder. In this little collective story here we begin to see and understand why one makes it and why one does not. Why one Christian will wind up at the judgment seat of Christ with everything that God has for him.

By the way, that is my job. My job is only one thing: that is to teach you everything I can about God, to be as honest as we know how to be with you, and to put all the emphasis and all the focus on you and the Word of God and in your life because that is what is really going to matter. That is all that it is.

IV. The Microscope of God's Word: Identifying Spiritual Imperfections

The longer I am saved and the more I study and the closer I try to get to God, the more I realize how far I fall short of really what God is and how unlike we really are. I had a missionary friend one time, this is years ago, and this missionary guy told me, he said, "You know what," he says, he was a doctor. He said, "I went into," he was in the Amazon someplace and he said, "You know," he said, "people were getting sick or they were drinking the water out of the stagnant thing because," you know, "and it had all kinds of diseases in it." He said, "I spent the longest time trying to get the chief to have him not drink the water, that we had to boil the water, and he just could not see it." He went down there to the river and he picked up a glass of water and he says, "Hey, I was trying to tell him there is all kinds of stuff in this water." He said, "He picks up a glass and he holds it up and he said, 'No, no missionary man, water nothing in the water.'" He says, "I do not know what to do." He said, "Then I got an idea. I took a little bit of that water and put it on a microscopic slide and put it under my microscope and then had the chief come over." When he looked down in there, he saw alien one, two, and three floating around in the water he was drinking. He said, "Then I had another problem." He says, "At first I could not get him to stop drinking the water. Now that he saw what was in it, I could not get him to drink it at all."

You know what? That is what the Bible does for us. You see, we look good as we look at each other. But the Bible is a great book because the Bible is our microscope. The Bible lets us look beyond. I am going to, you can put it in perspective now. When you got saved, you want to know how you are growing spiritually? I will tell you how you know. Just ask me. No, you want to know how you are growing spiritually? Here is how you know.

When you got saved, there was some big thing in your life. I mean, there is some sin you are carrying on your back when you got saved. I do not care what it is. I do not know what it is. Maybe to you it was, I do not know. Maybe it was alcohol. Maybe it was, it does not matter what it is. But there was something in your life that God dealt with you on when you got saved. Maybe it was pride. Maybe it was money. Maybe it was this. Maybe it was that. I do not know. But there was something in your life that when you got saved, it was the thing that you struggled with and it was the thing that you had to deal with.

Now you have been saved 10, 15, 20 years, five years, 10 years. And now the thing you struggle with is the fact that you did not have time to read your Bible this morning before you went to work. Now the thing you struggle with is the fact that, "Man, I did not. I got up late this morning. I did not pray." You know what? When you got saved, you felt terrible about the sin in your life because God was dealing with you as an old-fashioned sinner. 20 years later, five years later, 10 years later, you get just as upset over not praying long enough, not getting to read your Bible or something that we would look at and say, "Well, if that is the only problem you got, you do not have any problems." But you see the difference? To you, it is a problem because God took you when you got saved and then cranked down the magnification. First year, He puts you under 20x magnification. Third year, 50x. Fourth year, 100x. By the time you are saved five, 10 years, you are looking at your life through a thousand x magnification, seeing all the cracks and crevices and all the imperfections. When you got saved, it was a glaring sin. Five years, six years later, as you grow spiritually, it is the fact that I did not pray this morning. It is the fact that I know how it is. If I get out of the house before I get to spend time in the Word of God in the morning, my day is ruined. I just cannot get anything right. I mean, if I get up and get so busy, and it happens to everybody. You run out the door, and we do not even think about God. Then later, it just, it really makes me feel bad because I forgot God. But you see, that is the difference. Man, when I first got saved, I would not have felt bad about that. I was feeling bad about too many other things in my life. But you see, through the process and the magnification process, when we start out looking at glaring sin when we get saved, now we ought to be looking at the everyday, Monday little things and making those things because they impact our relationship with Christ.

James 1:22-25 talks about being not doers of the Word, or be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own self. Then he says:

James 1:23-25

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Now see, that is why men do not like the Bible. That is why people have an axe to grind with the Word of God. That is why Christians love to go to church in churches that do not have to bring

your Bible. That is why people love churches where they never really preach anything out of the Bible. Now we have got a prejudice against that Bible because the Bible is like a natural looking glass.

Now ladies, I must say, you all look really lovely today. You really do. Your hair is done nice. Your makeup, a little smeared, but it is okay. No, I am kidding you. You really look nice. But you know what? Is that the way you really look this morning when you got up? I do not think so. Guys, what are you laughing for? You look like you just fell out of a tree this morning when you got up. You had to work on it. And I am glad you did. I am glad I did.

But let me tell you this. You know what? The Bible does just that. The Bible shows you what you really look like with all the makeup on. No, I am not arguing makeup, but I am glad that you did. I mean, that is just part of our culture. I like old Bob Jones Sr., "the barn door needs painted." I have no problem with it. But what I am saying is this: that is what the Bible does, and that is why men do not like the Bible, because the Bible shows us what manner of man we really are. When you look into the perfect law of liberty, you see exactly what you are. We do not like that. That is what it says there. The man went his way so he could forget what manner of man that he was.

The book of Haggai is a great study on human nature. Again, we fall into the trap because we think that Haggai is written back here in 536 BC. Here we live in 2005. We think that there is a difference, and there is no difference. The book of Haggai is a great study on human nature after all the nation of Israel had been through. Boy, they had been through it. All the bad kings, all the judgment, all the famines, do not even add into the fact that when Sennacherib came down from the north and Nebuchadnezzar came in and destroyed them and murdered them and killed them and put out Zedekiah's eyes and killed his kids in front of him and hauled him off into chain, Daniel and Ezekiel and all the other captives, all what they had been through. My friend, as we studied in our process, they had been through it. Now God gives them another chance to build God's temple, to build God's house. And what do they do? They go right back to the same old ways that they were before. That is us. That is human nature. That is human nature.

1 Corinthians 10:6, another familiar verse, talks about the Old Testament scenarios and the things that took place. It says all of those things in the Old Testament happen for our examples and our own samples. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says:

1 Corinthians 6:19

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

You are bought with a price. Haggai 1 and 2 shows why Israel stopped building God's house. 2500 years later, it shows why God's people get saved, start going to church, and then stop building the temple of God. Very frankly, that is the wise man and that is the foolish man. The wise master builder that takes heed will understand the importance of building his temple.

Now there are a number of things here that I want to look at. These are practical things, but these are things that are true. I told you, I was not interested in the theological answer. I want to get down and look inside of me. I want to understand me better. I am not preaching this to you. I am

preaching this to me. I want for me to be what God wants me to be. I already know how far I fall short. I have to look and focus on where I am at. I will tell you, when I look at this book, Haggai, and I see the nation of Israel, and I see them to the place where they stop building because of the opposition, they stop building their temple, that temple and that city. I see in a practical application why God's people, why one makes it and why one does not. Some kid along the way, some mom or dad along the way, some senior citizen along the way, some boy or girl along the way will simply say, "You know what? I am going to stop building it and I am going to do something else." There are a couple of things here that I want to look at that why they did that.

V. The Dangers of Self-Focus and Procrastination

Now the first thing I want to talk to you about, and this is something that you have to get down. The first thing they fail at is they fail to learn from their mistakes. I never hold anything against anybody, what they did in life, whenever. I do not care. It does not matter to me because I understand all flesh is grass and I understand, but except for the grace of God, there goes me. I never, never, never, in dealing with people, ever care. I do not think twice when somebody tells me some horrendous thing in their life. I do not think once about it because I know that what God knows is it does not matter where you have been. It only matters where you are at and what you want to do right now. As a child of God, we cannot ever get into the place where we hold anything against anybody, whatever they have done in the past or whatever they have not or whatever the case may be. You know why? Because we all make mistakes. The question I ask is, have you learned from your mistake? That is the deal. That is the issue. Because the more you learn from your mistakes in time, the less mistakes you make.

Remember those seven men in the Old Testament I told you about? Remember a while back, it was on a Thursday night and I even talked about them on Sunday morning. I told you there were seven men in the Old Testament. I even gave them to you: Noah, Moses, Abraham, Jacob, Samuel, David, and Daniel. I told you that those seven men are given honorable mention in the Bible to the extent that if you lift up those men and you take them out and study their lives, and boy, you will be in exhaustive study. But if you study those seven men's lives, you will find everything in your life, everything in your life that you need to have in your life to have a working, wonderful, viable relationship with God that will land you with the judgment seat of Christ in perfect peace. But you know what else? You take those same seven men and collectively go through their lives and list all the sins they did, there is not any sin left they did not commit. I do not know of any sin in this world that one of those seven men did not get into at some point in their life. You know what the difference is between them and the guy that does not make it? They learn from their mistakes. Most of us do not. Most of us do not. When we do not learn from it, then we are doomed to repeat it.

I mean, you cannot. I mean, somebody says, "Well, David is my hero." He was an adulterer and a murderer. "Moses, he is my great leader of Israel." He was a murderer. There is not any sin when you get into these collective guys' lives and look at it. There is not any, there is not any sin left that was not committed. And yet they all wind up being great leaders for God. They all wind up being men who get honorable mention in the Word of God and somebody that God points you to

and says, "Follow their lives." You know why? Because nobody is perfect. Everybody makes mistakes. The bottom line is, have you learned from your mistakes? Because a process of growth includes problems, struggles, circumstances, and failure. There is not a man that ever walked the face of this planet that ever lived his life sinless. The bottom line is, everybody fails. We have all failed. We all have failures in our life. The question is, did you learn from your past mistakes? That is the question.

There is a great principle in the Bible taught in Matthew 6, Luke, all through the Gospel. It simply says that you forgive other people and God will forgive you. You do not forgive other people and God will not forgive you. Your forgiveness with your daily relationship with God is based on your forgiving somebody else. In other words, understanding that whoever you look at out there and whoever you do not like and whoever you like to talk about, they are no better and they are no better than you are and you are no better than they are. Learning from your mistakes.

Then there is a second thing, and this is the real killer. This is the real killer. The second thing we see in this great book is procrastination, putting it off. Haggai 1:2 says:

Haggai 1:2

This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.

Sure it had. Why, God had cut the king of Persia's heart, Cyrus. He had passed the decree. Why, if you study the whole book of Esther, Queen Esther had something to do with it. God is working behind the scenes here. Yes, it was time, but we like to put things off, do we not?

Now the theological answer to that is this: "Well, we procrastinate because we are undisciplined." "Well, we procrastinate because we are dysfunctional." I like those words. "We procrastinate because we have no foundation of the structure of God in our lives." Now, those are the theological terms you read in all the bestselling books on why you procrastinate. But let me bring it right down where we all live. You know why you and I procrastinate? Because we are just not ready to get both feet out of the world yet. That is why.

The three most terrible studies you have ever taken in the Bible are Exodus 8, Acts 24, and Acts 26. The three most terrible studies that you will ever take in the Bible. Exodus 8, Acts 24, Acts 26. Now they are all unsaved men, but there is no difference in human nature. In Exodus 8, Pharaoh is faced with the word of God and doing what is right. He is faced with, you know what he says? He says to Moses, "I will do it tomorrow." "I will do it tomorrow." In Acts 26, King Agrippa is faced with a message from Paul of doing what is right. You know what King Agrippa says?

Acts 26:28

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

And in Acts 24, you have Felix up against the same thing. You know what he says?

Acts 24:25

And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Procrastination. The greatest three things that God's people tell God about building their temple when God calls them and gives them the urgency of the hour, they never see where they are at. They will say, "God, I will do it tomorrow." "God, I will do it when it is convenient." And they will say, "Boy, almost." "God, I did it. I am too young right now, Lord. You do not understand. My whole life is ahead of me." "Well, I am excited. I am doing this. I am doing that." "Well, I got friends. I cannot give those friends up." "Well, you do not understand, Lord, my family, my family." Somebody else said, "Well, Lord, you do not understand my career." Somebody else said, "Well, my friends." Somebody else said, "I got plenty of time." Somebody else said, "Well, it is my girlfriend." "It is my boyfriend." Somebody else said, "It is my job." Or we just come down and say, "You know what, God? I am just too busy." No, it never comes. It is never convenient. And almost never gets here. Almost never gets here. I am telling you. My Bible says in Ephesians 5:16 that you and I, as the child of God, are to redeem the time.

Then there is the third thing. That third thing is self. It was last week when John talked to me about the city and the mission. We put the thing together. It brought back a flood of memories. One of the great lessons that God has taught me, and God has taught me a number of great lessons, but in a very, just an everyday life. Because like I said, I think about things. I ponder things. I will never forget. It must have been 40, 35 years ago. Maybe 25 years ago. It was a long time ago. I remember my first time at a mission. At the same time, it had worked out that we were invited over to some great, big, rich guy's house in the church that we were going to. He was a big fat cat in the church. He ran everything money-wise and politically wise. He was the preacher's buddy, because he had the bucks. No bucks, no Buck Rogers. He pushed funding every day and bottles way in every day.

I will never forget. We went through his house. He had us over for dinner. He walked us through this absolute incredible mansion. I mean, it looked like Ben Cartwright's Ponderosa was a dump. I mean, he had, it must have been 27,000 square feet. I think he had nine levels. It was incredible. He walked us down here, and there on the wall was his hall of, what he called his Hall of Fame. There was this picture with all the great political, religious, fiasco people down through history. He was pictured with the president. There was a picture with Billy Graham. There was a picture of this guy. There was a picture with this politician and this politician and movie stars. This guy had been around. It was obvious that he was showing off to us all that he had and all that he did. I mean, his house was immaculate. I mean, his chair cost more than our house did at the time. He had four or five cars in his garage. His garage was bigger than our house. I would have been happy to live in the doghouse. It was air conditioned, had three levels. David, you would have loved the house, doghouse. It was incredible. I do not think it had a basement open. But it was incredible.

That next weekend, we went down to the mission. I was not preaching. But when I do not preach, I usually circulate and talk to the guys. I learned a great lesson that weekend. Because I got talking to an old bum down there that did not have, his clothes were like rags. He had not washed or shaven for weeks. I mean, he was haggard and alcohol had done its work on him. He

had lost everything he had. As I stood there and talked to him, I had to stop and think where I was. Because he was bragging to me about how all the other bums, he could always find a warm place to sleep. All the other bums, he could find the best cardboard box to live in of anybody. I walked away that night with a great contrast in my life. I learned something about human nature. It does not matter if you live in a million dollar home and have everything you want or you are down at the mission in a cardboard box. Men like to brag about themselves of what they can do in either scenario. You would think that a guy that lost everything was a bum, would not see. No, why? Self. Self. I had one guy brag to me that fast. He was a drunk and he did not have anything, but he still bought his own drinks. Self.

Haggai 1:4

Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?

You see, what they have done is they stopped building God's house and left it unfinished. They turned their attention to their own house. They focused on their needs. The word "sealed house" is there. We get our word "ceiling" from that. It means that they got roofs on their house, but God's house does not have a roof on it.

Now there are two great principles here. It is simply as this.

- Principle number one is never have your church building in better shape than your church people. I do not know how many times since we have started this church, I have been asked by some preacher of whatever when we are going to get a building. You know why? Because a building is status in the day that we live in. When you have a building, you have got to have steeples because the poem does not go right. "There is the church. There is a steeple. Open the door and there is all the people" without the steeple. It does not work. You have got to have grandiose pipe organs and all kinds of stuff. You have got to have this and that. The mindset I get from them is that when you get all of that, then God finally shows up. See, God is not here today. He is running around, floating around over here looking for when we get stained glass windows and a big steeple. You know what I am saying? Those big things. We would get all of that and we get all that stuff. Then God says, "Okay, no, old paths is on the right path. Get the new path, get the new look from the steeple and look at all the people." Then God comes down and we have got a church. Let me tell you something. You have the greatest church building in the world. Somebody says, "Well, all the children's old church, well, it is 1200 people." That does not make it a church. Ringling Brothers had 2000. Harlem Globetrotters came to town, they had 4000. Somebody said, "Well, what is the difference between this church and this church?" "There is a three-ring circus and this one is only a two-ring." Crowds do not make a church. They really do not. God help me never to have any church. You know what? I am not against the church building. I just do not want to put that more important than you guys. What good is it if we have a great building but you cannot raise your family right? What good is it if we have a great building but you are so indifferent to the Word of God, the things of God that you could care less about people dying and going to hell? You know what? God wants you to give a building. He will have to give us one. We did not have any place when He gave us this. He just dropped it in our lap. He called her on

the phone and says, "Hey, we would like to talk about renting your place." She says, "Oh, I would love to have a church." He came down and talked about it. She had a contract ready to go. God gave us a place. I will stay here. But see, the mindset is, "Oh no, you have got to have a building. If you do not have your own building, you are not a real church." Well, I do not care what anybody thinks because the church has never been a building. The church is the people that are in it. Having some building that costs \$50 million to a shadow of people on the inside is a terrible thing. I would rather take that money and stay in a chair here for the rest of our lives by some place. But if we ever do build a building, I will tell you right now, it will not, it will look like a Safeway warehouse. It will be functional. It will be what we need. It will be designed for the teaching and the preaching of the Word of God and training of people. It will not be something that Jesus will come back to with the second coming of Christ and find. He will have to look it up in a phone book if he is going to find it. You know why? Because the most beautiful part of any church are you folks. You are what needs to be built. I do not need to spend my time running around the world proving to everybody, "Well, how much I know about this and that." I get my whole life and being has to come down to building the church right here, you. Because if that fails, it is all failed. You never want to have your church building. I get so sick of it so much. "Brother, when are you going to get a building?" "Oh, any minute now. It is going to be coming down the road here and being a tractor trailer. We are going to put it right where you are standing." Give me a break.

- Then a second great concept. Do not take better care of your earthly house than you do God's house. Now, let me just say this to you. You know me, most of you have been in my house. If you have not, you will be. We have got a nice house. I am not saying do not have a nice house. I am not saying to be the right kind of Christian. You have got to live in a cheese box. I am not saying that. I think that everybody has to have, you know, your own dreams and you want to have a nice house. Your wife deserves it. Your kids should have a nice environment. I am not saying any. Do not ever go out of here thinking, "Well, he is against big houses or he is against this or that. He just thinks," no, no, no. All I am saying is wherever you are at and whatever God, it is between you and God. I do not care. Everything is with whatever you have got. Do not get it more important than God. That is all. Just do not. I think you ought to have a nice house. Both my kids have nice houses. We have a nice house. Most of you have a nice house. I am not fighting it. I think it is a great thing to have a home that is a house that is fun. I am just saying it all comes back to self, to self, to self. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16:2 Timothy 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: Verse 17:2 Timothy 3:17

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. You know what all the new Bibles say? "Thoroughly equipped." Well, how do you think even in the concept that a doctrine is taught all the— Do you not know that your body is the temple of God? Do you not know that in the Old Testament it was the temple of God? Do you not know when you study the Tabernacle and Solomon's temple and the millennial temple that those temples had furnishings in them? They were not equipped. They were not thoroughly equipped. They were thoroughly furnished. Thoroughly, not thoroughly. Thoroughly because it starts on the inside. Not thoroughly. Thoroughly. It is T-H-R-O, not T-H-O-R. Just two words,

backwards, that change the whole doctrine in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Your body is the temple. The Holy Spirit of God lives inside you. You know what you do when you get into the Word of God? You know what you do when you build that temple and you do not stop building that temple? I told you before, your whole life and my whole life as a child of God, is to find out the things that God loves and put them in your life. By doing that, you furnish that temple with things that bless the Holy Spirit of God, minister to the Lord. If you do not, Ephesians chapter 4 says, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God. How do you think it would go next time my mother-in-law came to visit our house? I love my mother-in-law. Mother-in-law is good. Sandy told me to tell you that this morning. I love mother-in-laws. I love your mother-in-law. She is a sweetie. But I love my mother-in-law. She would come to visit her once in a while. I love her. How do you think it would go next time we she stepped up the door there, we picked up the airport, brought her home. We say, "Grandma, we are so happy you are here. We are just so happy you are here." Everybody was in the house and we said, and the little kids run around, you know, Jamie and Jamie. Maddie and Mackenzie run around, you know, everybody is happy. We say, "Grandma, we just have a nice little dinner, you know." And Grandma said, "Grandma is here." And Grandma said, "Grandma, you look tired. Would you like to go to your room and kind of relax and go to bed and get in a good night?" "Oh, yeah, I would like to." "Well, come on." Well, I start going up, I go down. Take her into the, open the door there, bring her in there. There is a garage, cement floor, junk back here. Stuff that you will trip over and break your neck. Shut her down here and say, "Grandma, we are so glad you are here. Enjoy your stay. Get some rest. See you." Walk out the door. And it is Grandma sitting there looking around at everything and saying, "Well, there is an old dog pen over here. Where am I supposed to sit? Where am I supposed to sleep? Look at all the junk back here. Where are broken lawnmowers? And what is that?" And this is where you hear and this over that. Just as she is trying to formulate the plan, Grandma learned a great lesson. The light is on a timer and it is only now. Grandma learned a great lesson. The light is on a timer and it is only nine minutes and it is off now. Grandma says, "Oh, I hate it when it does that." So she is walking around in there and it is cold. She has got her bare feet and feet cold. She is traveling around, cannot find anything. You know what? You think the next morning you go down and open the door up there and say, "Grandma, how was your night?" It is not going to work the way you think it is. Trust me. We look at that and we think that is funny. We think we never do that. You know, we would not do that to Grandma, but we do it to God all the time in our lives because He is living inside you and the furnishings you provide for Him are based on your relationship of building that house. Some of God's people put Him down in the old cold basement, make Him sit on a block of concrete, make Him sleep on the floor, and then feed Him all kinds of junk. Then wonder why He is grieved. Self. I am not saying you should not have nice things. I need you to think, yeah, I would have a nice car. They have got to have a nice house. They have got to have nice clothes. I think you had to have all, but they have got to because God gave them to you, not because you threw God out the window and got yourself, self, self, self in the way. I am all for it. You will never see me looking around and saying anything, brother. Hey, you know what? As long as you take care of God in your life, God will take care of you because

you see, when you do not see this thing and you get it, you are going to have to be there. You get procrastination and then you get self. Then it leads to the next thing.

VI. The Insatiability of the Flesh

That is a great concept that there is no satisfying the flesh. Look at Haggai 1:6. He says:

Haggai 1:6

Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

You know what? Let us be honest this morning, the Bible says, "Confess your faults one to another." Let us do it. Do you not just go nuts when that lottery is up around \$450 million? I do not, but Barb buys the tickets all the time. Say, "Honey, hide those. Hide those. The Christians are coming over tonight. Hide them." And hide mine too while you are at it, will you? Just kidding. But you know what? Who has not dreamed of that? Who has not drove down the road and saw the big casino billboard with some big smiley face lady up there with a big smile on her face holding a check? "I won \$10,000 at casino?"

Let me tell you the truth. It will never work. You know why it will not ever work? Because if you are a child of God, your whole life is built on a principle in 1 Timothy 6:6 that says:

1 Timothy 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

You know what happens if you win \$1 million? I will tell you, this is the truth. Years ago, there was a big fat cat preacher across the country, still in existence today. So if I told you it was, you know it. I am not going to talk about anybody. But he was in Kansas City here and I was in a little meeting there and he was there and I heard him talking with another big fat cat preacher and they were talking back and forth and the one big fat cat preacher, the other big fat cat preacher, he says, "Hey, I heard you raised \$10 million last week." And the big fat cat preacher said, "Yeah, we did." He said, "Man, that is great." And he said, "You have got to be happy as can be." You know what he said? Honest to God. You know what he said? He said, "Well, yeah, you think so. But you know what? I just mean they have got to raise another \$10 million next week."

You see, here is the thing. If you won a million dollars tomorrow, your lifestyle would go up to the lifestyle of a millionaire. That is why right now, whatever you make a year, you live within that means. You live sometimes, we all do, from paycheck to paycheck and you, you know, you live within those means. But you suddenly cashed into the limelight now where you spend \$100 bills like you spend \$10 bills right now. You are in another whole level. You are in another whole world. You start buying things that cost \$50,000 when you only bought them when they cost \$5,000. You know what you do? You just lift yourself to another whole level that you need more money to sustain that level. It just brings about more worry and more. Now, let us face it. It is a problem I would like to try to work through. God, I will give it a shot if you just let me try. The

bottom line is if God could trust any of you with a million dollars, He would give it to you. So what does that say about you? Do not get mad. He did not give me a million dollars either. Because we think it would solve all of our problems. No. No, just like the big fat cat preacher said today, the big fat cat preacher. "Well, yeah, I raised 10 million last week. Now I have got to reach 10 million more." You get into a lifestyle that you would have everything that you ever wanted, but you would have to have more money to maintain that lifestyle.

You know what? I found this out and this is true in life. You can go up here and you can go as long as you keep going higher, you are happy. But when you go below what you had before, you are not happy anymore. Why? Because you are not content with just godliness. You do not see it as great gain. They have to say, if the world sees it and they never figure out Matthew 16:26, it says:

Matthew 16:26

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

I mean, what good is what Donald Trump has got and what happened last night and made the news media? You know how many weddings there were yesterday? There was probably in America 50,000 weddings. You know how many made frontline news? One. You know why? Because it is a major fat cat guy. He has got more money knows what he does with. What is all that going to do when he has been burning in hell for 150 million years if he is not saved? I do not know if he is or is not. I am just saying as a principle.

You see, it says you have sown much. But you bring in little. Eat, but you have not enough. Your mother used to say your eyes are bigger than your belly. We go out to eat and I want nine pieces of chicken instead of four. Then she gets mad at me because I could only eat four. You think you want more, but it is not enough. You drink, but you are not filled with drink. You clothe you, but you are not warm. You know what? It all comes down to this. You know what life is on planet Earth? Do you know what life is on planet Earth without God, the Word of God in the concept of God in your life is? The greatest verse in all the Bible for it. It is a bag with holes. Life is a journey. We go down like picking up all the glittery things we can get, all you can, can all you get. I mean, you just get everything you can. You know what? You throw it in your little bag. You throw it in your little bag. "Oh, I got this. I got that." You get that. You do not have judgment. Meet God face to face. Hold up your bag and it all falls. You lost everything you had. That is life without God. I am not saying you should not have nice things. I am saying there is no satisfying our flesh. To live godliness with contentment is great gain.

I want to read you something here. Remember a couple of weeks ago? A couple of weeks ago, I gave you a message on vision. Marion gave me this. This is what you got today. This is what you are up against today. This is where it is at today. This is what this is. This is the greatest example. I know what it is. Watch this daily devotional from a periodical called "Conquer Today's Scripture Reading Habakkuk 2:1-3, Key Verse Habakkuk 2:2." Now this is where we studied a couple of weeks ago about laying out the vision. Remember that thing? "Write it out. Make a

plan. You run with understand." Here it comes. This is the 20th century. Lay it to see in verse that you are going to get in Christianity.

Habakkuk 2:2

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

"God, I cannot do that. I do not have enough money. Lord, are You really serious about this?" Have you ever said these things? "Has God spoken to you about starting a business or launching some great enterprise? Why are you sitting here looking at your finances? You never start with finances. You start with a dream." First thing that we have done is change vision now to a dream. Watch this. "Forget your doubts and questions. Go back to your dream. Start talking about it to other people. And above all, write it down. Put it down in simple terms so it will get past your head and into your heart. The more you talk about it, declare it. Write it down. The sooner the money will come." Now we went from the vision to a dream, which is now money. "Money always follows vision. If God spoke it, then you start speaking it too. Share the dream with people who also can receive it and run with it. Then God will see that the money comes your way. Today's prayer: Jesus. Jesus. Even though the dream does not seem possible." Oh, we need a little music, guys. A little background music here. "Jesus. Even though the dream does not seem possible, I believe that You will bring it to pass. Show me who will receive the dream and I will make it plain to them. And Jesus, in advance, I thank You for the capital that I need."

That is where the Christian world is at today. That is where we are at. We have lost the concept. It is all about self. The vision of God is not for your own personal, glorious needs, for your own flesh, so you can start. The vision of God was what God wanted you to do for Him. Oh, what a great, what a great contrast to the old hymn, 418 in your hymnal, that says:

Must I go and empty handed? Thus my Redeemer meet? Not one day of service give Him, Lay no trophy at His feet.

Oh, the years in sinning wasted, Could I but recall them now. I would give them to my Savior, To His will, I would gladly bow.

Oh, ye saints, arise, be earnest. Up and work, while yet, 'tis day, Ere the night of death, o'ertake thee, Strive for souls, while still ye may.

Must I go and empty handed? Must I meet my Savior so? Not one soul with which to greet Him. Must I empty handed go?

Yes, my friend, many of us will. Many of us will, simply because of the fact that versus this is the problem today. I am telling you, there is no satisfying the flesh.

VII. Losing Perspective: Comparing Present to Past Glory

Then the next thing, we are almost finished here. The next thing, when you stop building, you never stop learning from your mistakes. You become lazy and worldly. You become self-focused. It is all about your flesh. The next thing goes is you lose your whole perspective of where God is

at and what He is doing. Israel did, so do we. That is why some make it and some do not. The reason why you have got men and women in the world today that are saved, women that are going to go to heaven, that are going to lose everything, they have got a domestic crisis because they have lost their perspective.

Look what he says in Haggai 2:3. Oh, this is a great, hey, Pam, here you are. Remember that Thursday night you asked me a question? She asked me the question, "Why is it that some people just cannot see this thing? Why is it? How come so many people just cannot see the truth and get mad about the truth?" We talked about it and I said, "It comes Sunday and you shall hear." Here it is. Haggai 2:3. Here is the answer. Here is the answer to it all.

Haggai 2:3

Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

You know what he is saying? He is saying, "What is wrong with you folks? Do you not remember the way it was when Solomon built his temple? Do you not see by comparison that you guys think that this is okay to do God's house this way when there is a record, a historical fact of the way that it was, that God wanted it, when God blessed it? Can you not see that versus what we have got now is no comparison?"

Now that is the church's problem today. The church has nothing real to compare the phony stuff with. We have stopped building God's temple on a national program around the world. When you stop building that, you land right here. Do you know what the church and the preachers and the Christians were like in the greatest period in church history the world has ever seen? When he is talking to the nation of Israel, he is going back to Israel's greatest moment. He is going back to 1000 A.D. when Solomon on the throne and David on the throne brought the nation of Israel to the greatest apex in the history of the world. Solomon built the temple that was seven years in building with a cost of billions and billions and billions. On the day of that dedication, 20,000 sacrificial animals. I mean, it is unbelievable. And here they are, piddling around. Cannot even finish this temple. Saying to themselves, "That is good enough. Let us turn our attention to what we want to do." And Haggai says, "My God, man, can you not see what it was in compared to what it is? And it is nothing what God wants it to be."

I will tell you something. The average Christian today does not understand what the great church period was like during the Philadelphia church period. All they understand, all the sports stacks, all they understand, the great hitties. They have got who got the golden oldies. You know, who got all the idols and all the things down there. Brother, when they come to the greatest period in church history, the churches, the preachers, the Christians, that where it was like the greatest period in the history of the world from 1600 to 1900 when three quarters of the world were saved. Because of that, they have no comparison. They think what they have got today, an unfinished building with all kinds of stuff about vision and money with nothing to do with God. They have nothing to compare it with to see what is real.

I like to listen to people talk, man. I will tell you what. I go back there, boy, and I talked about this Thursday night a little bit. I think about old guys like old David Brainerd. Twenty-nine years old, called to be a missionary to the American Indian, struggled out there, died of consumption, died of malnutrition, died of the elements because he spent literally his whole life in the Pennsylvania woods in deep snowdrifts with fever, praying for the American Indian, praying for God to open up a door. He died. A twenty-nine year old man, broken and busted, never won one convert to Christ. Somebody, I have heard guys say, "What a waste. What a waste." Oh, read all in his life a little bit. He left a journal called *The Journals of David Brainerd*. You can still buy it today. It was that little journal that Sheldon Jackson and William Carey read, who got their lives so challenged for missions that they went to India and literally burned out their lives, winning millions of people to Christ because of what David Brainerd did.

We think about Adoniram Judson in Burma, fifty-seven years, buried two wives, all of his kids on the mission field. We think of Dr. Livingston. We always hear the little cliché, "Dr. Livingston, I presume." Dr. Livingston was a medical doctor. He was a missionary, went into the deepest part of Africa. Nobody heard from him for two and three years. The New York Times sent a reporter, Stanley, to find Dr. Livingston. Stanley went to Africa, went down through Africa, and finally a little tribe in the middle of nowhere sees this white man coming out of that hut, walks over and says the famous line, "Dr. Livingston, I presume." He was fifty-six years in Africa. When he went there, there were not any saved people. When he left there, when he died, there were not any heathen. He made such an impact on the African natives in that land that when he died, they carried his body all the way back to England where he is buried in Westminster Abbey. But before they did, they cut out his heart and they buried it in Africa because that is where his heart was. I wonder if we died today and they would cut our heart out where we would bury it. You see the difference?

Peter Cartwright, old Frontiersman preacher, a guy about five foot ten, stocky, lost an eye in a knife fight. Got saved, preached the gospel up and down all across the West. He would get up there and get preaching to a group of old wild guys out there and they start making fun of him and saying things. He would stop the service, go out, take the guy outside, beat the tar out of him, come back in and finish the sermon. Old David Brainerd lived. He lived during the time of Rousseau, Voltaire, and David Hume, the great intellectual minds of Europe that destroyed everything about the Bible.

Sheldon Jackson, 1834 to 1909, traveled a million miles in fifty years, established 886 churches. In one year he wrote 29,000 miles and started 23 churches, had over 200,000 converts before the automobile. Samuel Mills called the priest of the gospel. He gathered around him James Richards, Francis Robbins, Harvey Loomis, Gordon Hall, and Luther Rice. They called the Haystack group. They met every day around the Haystack in Central, right here in Indiana and Missouri, and they prayed around that Haystack asking God for the heathen and they all became great missionaries.

The great George Whitefield, who literally impacted this world at its inception. It was because of George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards that our founding fathers put God into Constitution. Go up to Boston Commons right now, that place up there that is so worldly and so filthy and so

violent, so anti-God and so everything against God. You go down to the Boston Commons and that little park down there and you will find a little plaque about that big and it says in that little plaque, "On this day in 1770, whenever it was, Whitefield, George Whitefield preached. And 30,000 people came to know Christ."

I stood in a pulpit in Massachusetts in the very pulpit where Jonathan Edwards preached in his church. I stood there and I looked in that church back in the 1700s when he preached his famous message, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," and people wept and cried and the old town was saved. Then I pulled out underneath the table the pastor's sermon for the previous Sunday that he had left there and it was a piece of watered down junk. As I walked out, he came in, I introduced myself and I said, "I just wanted to come and see the great place where Jonathan Edwards preached his great message, 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.'" You know what he said to me? He said, kind of chuckled and said, "Yes. It is a shame that that is the only message he is remembered for." Well, it is a shame that the people that got saved that day, and it is a shame that hundreds of thousands of men who have been transformed and women who have heard that story and changed their lives before. Now, it is only foolish today in a liberal world, liberal churches, liberal Bibles, they do not preach anything about God anymore. Because they have lost their perspective. They have lost their perspective.

He says, "Who among you can remember the old glory by comparison?" I like to hear people talk. Somebody says, they say, "Well, he is really a good man." And I will say, "Compared to who? Stalin?" "Well, that is really a great church." "Compared to what? Mao Zedong? Father Moon? Hare Krishna?" "Well, he has done a really good job." "Compared to who?" You see, people do not know today. They do not even know what they will look for in a church. They have no comparison. They are like the nation of Israel. They quit building a temple of God. It is not being built now. They have no idea what a preacher ought to be, what a church ought to be. They think because it has got a lot of people that must be good, God must be there.

Hey, I am telling you something. I am talking about a time where your Bible was translated in 1,200 languages around this world before 1900. There is confusion in America, confusion in Christianity. Right now in Washington, we cannot in our own capital agree on what the founding fathers meant when they wrote the Constitution just 220-some years ago. We cannot find anybody who can understand what they meant. I am telling you, this country has been almost 120 years now without a Bible. It dumped this Bible in 1883 with the Southern Baptist Convention in Sarasota, Florida. From that point on, America has spent the last 120 years without an absolute standard of the Word of God. Therefore, they have been taught no history. They have no heritage. They do not know where they come from. They do not know where they are going. They certainly do not know where they are at. They are confused. I am not saying they are not good people. I am not saying they do not want to do what is right. I am saying they need a church, and they need a preacher, and they need a Bible that will say, "This is what it means, and this is what it says." We have lost that. We do not even know what to look for. We have no clue. We have nothing to compare it with. He says, "Who is here today that saw the great house, the Temple of Israel in Solomon's time? Oh, can you not make the comparison?" I say this to you this morning. Who is here that can understand, because of your heritage, because of your lineage,

where we have come from, the greatest period of time that defines what the church is by the greatest preacher that ever walked this planet? That is the problem.

VIII. The Coming Day of Judgment: Consider Your Ways

Then the last thing, and I am finished, you lose sight of the day that is coming for you and for me. I told you this Thursday night, Israel's great day of judgment is called the Day of Jacob's Trouble, when they get judged in the tribulation period. Terrible time. The church age period. Their day of the day of Jesus Christ, and that is where we stand before God, 1 Corinthians 3, 2 Corinthians 5, and give an account. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5, "it is the care of the Lord." The care of the Lord.

He says in Haggai 2:6:

Haggai 2:6

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

Turn over to some time when you have got a rainy afternoon and you want to study out that "little while" seven times in John 16:16, seven times for the seven periods of the church. "A little while, a little while," church age,

Haggai 2:7

And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

Christ. I am going to tell you something, Christian, I am talking to me and my M.D.U. There is a day coming that is going to rock our world. My job is to get you ready for it. I am not mad at you. I will cut you so much slack. All I want to do is help you. I see this thing. Most of you see it. Not all of you. Even if I do not see it, you have got to know it deep down in your heart. You have got to know that there is a day coming when God is going to balance the David Brainerds out with the Christians that live today. You know there is going to be a day when God is going to bride out the George Whitefields out with the Christians that are so lackadaisical today. You do not think God is going to let those men give their lives in blood and die at young ages and burn out their life for Him and let you and I just live our lives the way we want to and all go okay when we get home to heaven. No, He says, "I am going to rock this earth. I am going to shake the heavens."

The church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:16-18, he says there that is the church that we are living in now. He says:

Revelation 3:17-18

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

That is 2 Corinthians 5:10.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

You know what he said to the nation of Israel? The last thing he said, he said in Haggai 1:7, the last verse I read this morning, our opening text:

Haggai 1:7

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

Hey, I am for you. I am for you. I am going to promise you right now. I will give you everything I have got. I will give you every moment of time you need. I will do everything in the world. I will do everything in the world to help you get to the judgment seat of Christ and be the best you can be. I will help you husband be better wives. I will help you wife be better husband. I will help you be better parents. I hope the kid be better with it. I will do whatever it takes. I will teach you whatever it takes. We will have time in the Word of God. I will give you whatever it takes, whatever it needs. The bottom line is your job is to make sure you finish building that temple. That is all. I will do my job. You do yours and I promise you God will do His. Where I may fail you, you may fail me. God will never fail you or one of us. That is the bottom line. That is what the Book of Haggai is all about. It is simply about the nation of Israel. God gave them the chance to rebuild that temple. They just could not learn from their mistakes. They go right back into the same old thing and I cannot knock them. I do the same thing and so do you. That is why the Bible says we are laborers together. That is why it takes all of us together. That is why you hold me up. I will hold you up tomorrow. That is why you cover my back. I will cover yours. That is why we take whatever we have and we just say, "God use me. I will start right there. Just use me there." I am not asking anybody to be a great theologian. I am not asking anybody to be a great preacher. I am just saying look around you and say, "God, I have this in my hand. I have this in my hand. I am this. I have this ability. I will just take this and I will start right here."