



## Insights

### Making Place for God's Glory: The Message of Haggai

**Date:** Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May

**Speaker:** Rachel Binder (City Centre Site), Becky Stamps (South Site)

**Key Verses:** Haggai 1:1-15; 2:1-9

#### Talk Summary:

If appropriate to your group, you may want to watch the Bible Project summary video for Haggai together (approximately 5 ½ minutes long). It can be found here: [https://youtu.be/juPvv\\_xcX-U](https://youtu.be/juPvv_xcX-U)

Through His prophet, Haggai, God invited His people to take a hard look at how things were going for them (they were struggling and dissatisfied!) and told them that they had their priorities wrong. They had been investing in their own properties for years while the Temple remained in ruins. God wanted them to put Him in first place and trust Him to provide for their practical needs.

The Temple represented the presence of God Almighty in their midst. Today God's Temple is His people, the Church, and He dwells in us through His Spirit (Eph 2:21-22; I Pet 2:5). Just as God wanted the people to rebuild the physical Temple in His strength ("I am with you"), promising them that He would fill it with His glory, so He also uses His people to extend His Kingdom (both in us and through us) in our generation through our simple steps of obedience.

The people of Haggai's day responded to his message with obedience and began rebuilding of the Temple. However, within about a month they became discouraged. The new Temple was much smaller than the previous one, which had been built by King Solomon at the height of Israel's glory as a nation. Now, a

1. **Ponder-** "Consider..."(1:5, 7)→ God wants our attention
2. **Priorities-** "It's not the right time..." (1:2-5, 8-11)→ God wants to be first
3. **Promise-** "I am with you" (1:12-15, 2:4)→ God is with us as we step out in obedience
4. **Perspective-** "It looks like nothing" (2:1-9) → God can do amazing things through our obedience

conquered and humbled people, their work seemed “like nothing.” But God encouraged them to continue, reminding them again that He - the Lord of Heaven’s Armies—was with them and promising to fill the Temple they were building with His glory. Indeed (after about 500 years of more set-backs and renovations!), God’s glory in the person of Jesus—the “desire of all nations” (Haggai 2:7) - entered the Temple in Jerusalem.

The builders were looking at the situation from a human perspective, discouraged by what they saw. But God knew that what He was going to do through their obedience would be far more significant than anything they would see even in their lifetimes. For them, as well as for us, the key is not in how we evaluate our “work for God,” but in our connection with God Almighty. If as individuals and a community we cultivate relationship with God as first priority and live in a way that aligns with that priority, we can be confident that God will bring His kingdom, power and glory in and through us, even when our lives and obedience seems to us to be small, mundane and ordinary.

### **Worship**

*Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.*

*(Small group worship resources can be found at [bvc.so/sgworship](http://bvc.so/sgworship))*

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

*If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:*

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

### **Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)**

- What strikes you most from the story of Haggai?
- Have you sensed God trying to get your attention lately? How?
- If you look at how you spend your time and money, what would that indicate are priorities in your life? Do you sense an invitation from God to realign your priorities in some way?
- Have you seen God act when you were obedient? Do you have a story you can share?
- Has God been speaking to you about an area of life where He is asking for you to take a step of action/obedience? Perhaps something which will cultivate a deeper connection with God in your life, someone He is asking you to reach out to, or a new area of ministry He is calling you to? (“Ministry” is not just what we do through church, but everything we do in our daily lives as followers of Jesus). What is it and how can we pray for one another in this?
- The people were discouraged following what God had clearly called them to do. Has that ever happened to you? If you are in the midst of that now, maybe it is a time to allow the group to pray and minister to you. Does anyone have a testimony they can share about how God sustained and encouraged them in “dry seasons”?
- What words of encouragement does God want to speak to your small group today?
- Finally, it is easy for us to look at the message of Haggai from a very individualistic perspective. Is there anything you sense God saying to you as a group? Is there an area where you sense He wants to challenge your priorities and encourage you to take a new step of faith together?

**Witness** - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
  - Upcoming Events (go to [bvc.so/whats-on](http://bvc.so/whats-on) for details)
    - Big Church – 22<sup>nd</sup> May
    - Encounter Night – 28<sup>th</sup> May