

DO THIS!
Remember the Law of the Harvest Applies to Sin and Righteousness
Haggai 2:10-19

Introduction: Before we get into today's passage, we need to make sure we understand three foundational teachings in Scripture:

The first foundational teaching we need to understand is that,

(1) FAITH isn't belief but rather the surrender that happens because of belief. (Matthew 16:24-26, Hebrews 11:6, James 2:14-26)

- A. 24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? (Matthew 16:24-26)
- B. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)
- C. James 2:14-26 presents a detailed argument to make the case that faith must contain belief, but it doesn't equal belief. For time's sake, I'm not going to read the entire passage, but instead, I want to point out the verses that make the point of the argument James is making.
 - 1. 14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ... 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ... 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. (James 2:14-26)
 - 2. In no way whatsoever is James teaching that faith is a work that earns salvation, but rather that faith is inherently inseparable from works, so much so that if you say you have faith in something, but there are no works in your life that demonstrate it, then you actually don't have faith; you have the equivalent belief in God that Satan and the demons have!
- D. Therefore, when it comes to being saved by grace through faith, the New Testament isn't teaching us that we have to accomplish works to receive His grace because that would effectively nullify the very definition of grace. Rather, the New Testament is saying that if you truly have faith in God to be who He says

He is, and that He has done, is doing, and will do all He said, then your actions (works) will demonstrate that reality.

The second foundational teaching we need to understand is that,

(2) POSITIONAL holiness refers to a person's standing with God. It is ONLY by the blood of Jesus that we are justly given the right to be God's fully favored children forever. (Hebrews 10:1-14)

- A. For a more thorough Biblical perspective on this, read all of Hebrews 10:1-14. However, just as I did with the passage in James in the previous point, for time purposes, I'm only going to show you the key concluding statements in the argument that makes it very clear that there is no religious practice, including the ones prescribed in the Old Testament law, that EVER gave, nor ever can give, anybody the right to stand with God as one of His kids. It is ONLY by the blood of Christ and His blood alone that anyone has the right to be a fully favored child of God!
- B. **1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ... 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ... 7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" ... 10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ... 14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (Hebrews 10:1-14)**

The third foundational teaching we need to understand is that,

(3) PRACTICAL holiness is not a measure of religious discipline, but of the moral and ethical character and actions of a heart truly surrendered to God (faith). (Romans 6:17-19, Galatians 5:22-25, 1 Peter 1:13-16)

- A. Religious discipline can help feed a heart and mind surrendered to God, but religious discipline does not equal a heart surrendered to Him. A person can practice all kinds of religious disciplines with extreme severity, all while having no relationship with God. One can do all kinds of religious things, while simultaneously living a life of vile immorality. Therefore, on a practical real-life level, and more importantly, on the level of how God views it, holiness is not a measure of my commitment to religious disciplines that can be performed by anybody willing to do them, but a measure of the character and actions that can only come from a heart that's truly submitted to and being transformed by God!
- B. **17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were**

committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. (Romans 6:17-19)

- C. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25)**
- D. 13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:13-16)**

Now, with that understanding of what the Bible means by faith, holiness in the context of our standing with God, and holiness as a measure of the character and actions of our heart, let's turn our attention to the third sermon in Haggai.

For those just joining us, Haggai is preaching to the Jews that God graciously brought out of 70 years of Babylonian captivity to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple and then the nation. However, after two years of doing what God sent them there to do, they quit. For fourteen years they went through the motions of offering sacrifices to God and practicing the religious traditions prescribed in the Old Testament Law, but they refused to surrender their time, talent, and treasure to the Lord to do what He called them to do with it—rebuild the temple! After fourteen years of trying to use religious practice as a substitute for living surrendered to the Lord with HIM as their first priority, God sent Haggai to call them to repentance, and they did! That's what happened in Haggai chapter one.

However, a month after getting back to work on the temple, people started getting discouraged in their faith, which is why we have Haggai chapter two. Haggai's sermon in chapter one was intended to call people to repentance, and the three sermons in Haggai chapter two are there to help the people sustain that heart of repentance, that is, a heart truly striving to live in total glad submission to God!

Today we are looking at the second sermon in Haggai chapter two and how it addressed a very real temptation in their life to quit trusting God. Last week, I mentioned what this sermon directly addresses. When we repent and turn back to God, the reality in our present, the one we created while running from God, doesn't necessarily change. Repentance doesn't change the law of the harvest; in fact, it highlights it! When we are

disobeying God, we are planting seeds of disobedience (sin), and those seeds eventually reap a harvest, a harvest that's still there when we turn and start planting seeds of obedience (righteousness), which will in their season reap a harvest as well, but only in their season.

Proposition: Haggai 2:10-19 reminded the people of three truths that were essential for equipping their faith in God.

The first truth they needed to remember was that,

(1) OBEDIENCE in one area of our life doesn't justify disobedience in another! (2:10-14)

- A. This truth doesn't need a long explanation because it should be common sense. Serving your spouse with your time, talent, and money doesn't give you the right to have sex with somebody else, nor does not having sex outside of your marriage give you the right to not serve your spouse with your time, talent, and money. Doing the right thing in one area of your life doesn't give you the right to do the wrong thing in another area of your life. So, in the very beginning of this second sermon in Haggai chapter two, which occurred two months after the first sermon in Haggai chapter one, he reminds the people of this commonsense truth, and in so doing, he reminds them of how it applies to practical holiness under the Old Testament standards of conduct.
- B. **10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, 11 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests about the law: 12 'If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?'" The priests answered and said, "No." 13 Then Haggai said, "If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?" The priests answered and said, "It does become unclean." 14 Then Haggai answered and said, "So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, declares the LORD, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean. (2:10-14)**
- C. Haggai was reminding them of the very mistake they had made for fourteen-plus years prior to the first sermon he preached to them. They had excused their blatant disobedience by their obedience in other areas and, in doing so, in their minds made their disobedience clean by their obedience. This is not only a violation of universal common sense, but for all who may not have common sense, the rationale is in obvious direct opposition to clearly stated laws in the Old Testament. In other words, they had no excuse to ever think disobeying God in one thing could be justified by their obedience in other things.

- D. Similarly, when Jesus taught a parable about seeds and where they are sown, the plants that grew up out of the good seed didn't choke out the plants that grew up out of the seeds of weeds, but rather the weeds choked out the plants that grew up from the good seeds. What was holy was defiled by what was not, not the other way around. Although the purpose of the parable of the seed and the soil is meant to teach the difference between a person who is actually born again and one who is not, it does, however, highlight the truth that is being stated here in Haggai. The plants that sprang up from the good seed were choked out by the plants that came from the seeds of weeds, not the other way around, which takes us right to the second truth Haggai needed them to remember.
- E. The following is helpful commentary to go deeper:
1. "On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month of that second year of Darius, Haggai received his third oracle from the Lord. This was just over two months after his second oracle, and about three months after the work on the temple had resumed. Converted to the modern calendar, the date of the third oracle would be December 18, 520 b.c.. By this date Zechariah had already started his ministry (2:10)."¹
 2. "Here is a kind of parable Haggai uses to show that it is always easier to spread spiritual pollution and defilement than it is to spread holiness and virtue. For example, if you take a glass of clean water and put into it a single drop of dirty water you will soon see the effect. But a single drop of clean water would have no visible effect."²
 3. "The next word that came to Haggai involved asking the priests to give a ruling. They explained that holiness was not communicated by touch, but defilement was. For example, anyone who touched *a dead body* became unclean for a week, and anything he touched became unclean (Nu. 19:11, 22). God said that this teaching could be applied to the people. Their indifference to God's presence spoiled not only their offerings but also everything else they did."³
 4. "... Consecrated meat was meat set apart for a specific sacrificial purpose (cf. Lev. 6:25; Num. 6:20). While the garment that might contain such meat would also be holy (cf. Lev. 6:27), that holiness of the garment could not be transferred to bread ... stew ... wine, oil, or any other food. But this is not true of ritual defilement, as indicated by the priests' positive reply to Haggai's question regarding the transmission of ritual uncleanness (Hag. 2:13). A person's ceremonial defilement (e.g., by contact with a dead body) is

¹ Smith, J. E. (1994). *The Minor Prophets* (pp. 508–509). College Press.

² Williams, P. (2008). *Opening up Haggai* (p. 61). Day One Publications.

³ Pennant, D. F. (1994). *Haggai*. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 861). Inter-Varsity Press.

as transferable to other things as is a contagious disease (cf. Lev. 11:28; 22:4–7). 2:14. Haggai then applied to the people of Judah the priests' answer in verse 13—disobedience renders even sacrificial worship unacceptable.”⁴

5. “Haggai then made an application of this legal principle regarding defilement. “Thus is this people and thus is this nation before me.” The language “this nation” is language often used of heathen nations. It may be a sign of contempt. Just what had defiled the nation? Perhaps they were defiled by the wicked among them (Cashdan), or by their foreign contacts (Bloomhart). More likely, however, it was their fifteen years or so of indifference regarding the work of the temple which had caused the defilement (Baldwin). In any case, just as in the case which Haggai posed to the priests, “everything they touch is defiled.” “Every work of their hands” was unclean and even “that which they offer there,” i.e., on the altar. These words probably were spoken by the prophet as he pointed to the provisional altar erected many years earlier (Ezra 3:2).⁵
6. “God is saying that during the sixteen-year period when the temple was neglected, the people may have thought themselves holy because they were back in the Holy Land and the holy city, but in fact they were defiled because of their disobedience”⁶
7. “Holiness cannot be communicated to our inner life by external things such as church attendance, baptism, confirmation, and observance of certain rituals or moral living. God can use these things to bring us to faith in Christ, who alone can cleanse the heart through the gift of the Holy Spirit and bring us into holiness of life. Peter made this point very forcefully when he preached on the Day of Pentecost: ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.’”⁷

The second truth they needed to remember was that,

(2) Their CURRENT condition was the harvest of fourteen years of spiritual complacency and disobedience. (2:15-17)

A. 15 Now then, consider from this day onward. Before stone was placed upon stone in the temple of the LORD, 16 how did you fare? When one came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten. When one came to the wine

⁴ Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Haggai](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 1542–1543). Victor Books.

⁵ Smith, J. E. (1994). [The Minor Prophets](#) (pp. 509–510). College Press.

⁶ Williams, P. (2008). [Opening up Haggai](#) (p. 61). Day One Publications.

⁷ Williams, P. (2008). [Opening up Haggai](#) (pp. 63–64). Day One Publications.

vat to draw fifty measures, there were but twenty. 17 I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me, declares the LORD. (2:15-17)

- B.** Now, Haggai had told them in his second sermon (the first sermon in chapter two) that the sovereign hand of God was going to massively accelerate them beyond what they were capable of accomplishing even in their obedience. But if the people were looking for those provisions to instantly show up in their fields and pastures, it wasn't going to happen. The present reality was the result of fourteen years of God withholding rains and sending disease on their crops for disobeying Him! It created a downward cycle in their economy and standard of living that, in the laws of the harvest, certainly can NOT be overcome in an instant nor even a year. Let me explain.
- C.** The way things work in an agrarian society means your ability to increase your profits in the next harvest is linked to the yield of the current harvest. Let me illustrate this principle with some simple round figures. Let's say 10 pounds of seed produce 100 pounds of grain. Let's also say, to keep your family from starving to death, you need to harvest 50 pounds of grain. If everything went as planned and you got 100 pounds of grain, you could put 50 pounds away to feed your family, use 30 pounds of grain to trade with other people to get other things you need, and then set aside 20 pounds of grain to plant for next harvest. If all went well, the next year you would harvest 200 pounds of grain. If you decided to break it down the same way you did the previous year, that means you could store 100 pounds of grain to feed your family, which would technically provide two years' worth of food, creating a buffer if something went wrong (AKA savings!). You could use 60 pounds to trade for things you need and maybe even want, and still have twice as much grain as you had the year before to plant for the next year (40 pounds)! It's the compounding effect of the harvest.
- D.** But that compounding effect that works to your benefit if things go well works in reverse if things go bad. For instance, if your 10 pounds of seed only yielded 60 pounds of seed, you would have just enough to provide food for your family and plant the same amount of seed you planted the previous year, but you wouldn't have anything to save for the future, nor anything to trade with. After a year's worth of work, you would be in no better condition than you were the year before. Even worse, and what was likely going on in Judah, if you harvested less than 60 pounds, your condition would be worse than the previous year! You would either have to suffer for the next year by eating less than you really needed, or go backward in how much you planted for the next year and risk being in a worse condition the next year than the current one!
- E.** At best, the Jewish people had not advanced their financial condition at all, but many had likely been going backwards and were now on the brink of total disaster. But, since they repented, they've not only worked six days a week to provide for their families but they were also likely doing something everyday to

contribute in some way to the work of the temple without any more resources for their family or to build the temple! Here's where the reality of the law of the harvest started getting real.

- F.** For fourteen years their obedience in certain matters of the Old Testament Law was choked out by their refusal to surrender their time, talent, and money to the Lord and, as such, do what He sent them back to do—rebuild the temple! Haggai made sure they remembered that the “choking out” of the blessings of God, the reality they were living in, was a judgment of God for their disobedience. It was a reality of their own making! God did what He said He would do if they disobeyed Him. He made sure their crops didn't produce anywhere near what they were capable of doing. He made sure their efforts to save money and accumulate wealth failed. He even made sure that no matter how much they acquired, they were never satisfied! This went on for fourteen years, including the harvest that they would have been reaping when they finally repented a few months prior, a harvest their renewed obedience didn't have seasons to effect.
- G.** What could have been a fall of filling their storehouses with enough produce to supply their needs and establish prosperous trade relationships with other nations ended in another year of financial disaster. Because of the laws of this harvest, this self-inflicted reality had no means of even starting to change until the next harvest season. There was no shortcut to getting crops to produce faster than the seasons that governed them. The grapevine only produces grapes in its season, the fig tree only produces figs in its season, and a healthy harvest of wheat and other grains can only come after it's properly sown and matured. It's AWESOME that the people repented, but the reality of the laws of the harvest was still unavoidable. The poverty they were in couldn't be changed overnight! They had to walk by faith that living surrendered to God was the right thing no matter what, but also that God was doing and would continue doing all He said He would do even if they couldn't see it!
- H.** The fact is, God was already at work to massively accelerate them beyond what they themselves could produce in their obedience! Unbeknownst to the Jews, a letter was already on the way to King Darius from a pagan governor that was intended to get Darius to issue another order to get the Jews to stop, or worse, send an army to punish the Jews for disobeying Darius' previous order to stop. Ezra 5 contains that letter. But in Ezra 6 we find out the letter totally backfired! After receiving it, Darius investigated the Jewish claim. He found out that his predecessor, Cyrus the Great, had indeed ordered the reconstruction of the temple and even helped facilitate it. Darius then issued a decree that the pagan governors who surrounded the Jews were not only to do nothing to inhibit its reconstruction, but were to fully support it with the money needed to build it and then resource it with everything it needed for its daily operation!
- I.** BUT, the Jews weren't privy to any of this information yet! The letter of protest by the pagan governor likely hadn't even reached Darius at this point.

Everything happens in its season, and there is no shortcut! The Jews were having to obey in faith! They had to keep working with what they had out of their belief that God is who He said He is, and that He has done, was doing, and will do everything He said even if there was no tangible evidence in front of them yet.

J. The following is some helpful commentary on this from other scholars:

1. "In paraphrase Haggai was saying: Look back on the time before you began to rebuild the temple. What was their condition like in the time "before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of Yahweh?" (2:15). Prior to the resumption of the temple work the situation of the remnant was desperate. "Through all that time" one would come to "a heap" of sheaves which should have yielded twenty measures of grain. That heap, however, only yielded about half what would normally be expected. The same was true of the vintage. They came to the wine vat expecting to find fifty vessels, but found only twenty. The wine vat was the receptacle into which flowed the juice forced from the grapes when trodden out by feet in the wine press (2:16). To explain these disappointing harvests, Haggai repeated what he said in his first oracle some four months earlier (cf. 1:10–11). Yahweh declared: "I smote you with blasting, and with mildew and with hail." The "blasting" (*shiddaphon*) was the blight caused by the blasting of the east wind coming in from the hot desert. In a dream Pharaoh saw the grain of Egypt blasted by this wind (Gen 41:6). These divine judgments affected "all the work of your hands," i.e., God was frustrating everything they tried to do. These disciplinary disasters had not moved the people to repent. "Yet you turned not to me" (2:17)."⁸
2. "Haggai called on the people to remember their previous economic disaster which came because they disobeyed by not rebuilding the **temple**. For the third of five times (1:5, 7; 2:15, 18 [twice]) the people were challenged to **give careful thought to** (lit., "set their hearts on") their disobedience (**before** they started rebuilding) and the consequences of their sins. As stated in 1:6, their harvests were again (2:16) said to be short in quantity. Grain had decreased 50 percent (from **20 measures to 10**) and the grape harvest had decreased 60 percent (from **50 to 20** measures of juice in the **wine vat**; cf. 1:10–11; 2:19). Again God claimed responsibility for this condition: **I struck ... the work of your hands** (cf. 1:9, "I blew [it] away"). **Blight** (crop disease) and **mildew** are linked in several passages that deal with divine judgment for disobedience (cf. Deut. 28:22; 1 Kings 8:37; 2 Chron. 6:28; Amos 4:9). **Hail** also occurs in many judgment passages (Ex. 9:25; Isa. 28:2; 30:30). For an agricultural society such punishments were catastrophic to the economy and to survival. **The Lord** reminded the nation

⁸ Smith, J. E. (1994). [*The Minor Prophets*](#) (p. 510). College Press.

of its failure to respond to His chastening hand (**you did not turn to Me**) just like the failure of an earlier generation (Amos 4:9)."⁹

3. "Haggai now seems to be talking to the people. Although they have started work, there is little progress. Perhaps the three months have been spent mainly preparing the site. During that time, the effects of the curse have still been present. Blight, mildew and lack of fruit are all aspects of God's curses (Dt. 28:22, 38-42; Am. 4:9)."¹⁰

The third truth they needed to remember was that,

(3) God assured them TANGIBLE blessings in response to their repentance. (2:18-19)

- A. **18 Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider: 19 Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you." (2:18-19)**
- B. It's doubtful the edict of Ezra 6 that unlocked massive blessings on Israel could have reached them at this point, but nonetheless, the blessings started coming on that day, and they did so in a way that could only be attributed to God. Even though they were WAY behind on where they should have been in rebuilding the temple (the seed was yet in the barn) and even though there was no grain, fruit, or vegetables to harvest at this point, God was going to start blessing them! God was going to supply for them in a way that only HE could get the credit.
- C. They were likely tiny streams of blessing at this point, but their appearance would have assured them that God was indeed at work and that soon those tiny streams would be rivers of abundance! Pretty soon the pagan nations around them would start bringing everything they needed to build the temple, and with the replacement of God's wrath with His hand of blessing, instead of their harvest being just enough to survive, it would provide an abundance beyond anything they could ever imagine!
- D. From a New Testament perspective, it's referred to as the "already, not yet" reality of the Kingdom of God. As followers of Christ, we can experience the blessings of the Kingdom now, but what we experience now is but a trickle of a spring that will turn into a river at Christ's return!

⁹ Lindsey, F. D. (1985). [Haggai](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1543). Victor Books.

¹⁰ Pennant, D. F. (1994). [Haggai](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 861). Inter-Varsity Press.

E. The following is some great commentary from other scholars to help you go deeper.

1. "Haggai calls upon the builders to "consider" (lit., set your heart) "from this day and backward." "This day" refers to the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month," the day on which he was delivering this third oracle. They should reflect on the period from the day Haggai was speaking back to the day "that the foundations of Yahweh's house were laid." Does he mean the time when the foundation of the temple was originally laid back in 537 B.C.? Or does he mean the more recent renewal of the work on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month? Probably the latter (2:18). In the three months since the temple work had been resumed, no improvement in the circumstances of the remnant had been experienced. "Is yet the seed in the barn?" It is not clear whether he anticipates a positive or a negative answer to his question. If negative, the seed already had been used for sowing or consumed and used up. The vines and fruit trees had not produced. Thus even while they were building the temple the builders had to worry about the adequacy of the food supplies. If the situation was desperate back in August, it was even worse in December (2:19a). Yahweh promises that the blessing would begin immediately. "From this day I will bless." The reference must be to December 18, 520 B.C., the date of this third oracle. Thus the workers needed to be patient. Their previous defilement due to indifference had affected all their previous work. Now, however, all that would change (2:19b)."¹¹
2. "After citing God's present chastening on Israel for her past disobedience, Haggai urged the people to remember the renewed temple construction as the beginning of present blessing. They were to **give careful thought to** (lit., "set your hearts on"; cf. 1:5, 7; 2:15) **the day when** they laid the temple's **foundation**. From the day of this third message (in **the ninth month**) they were to look back three months ("the sixth month," 1:14–15). The drought of divine judgment had already affected the year's harvest so that their barns were already emptied of the sparse harvest. They had neither staples (**seed**, or grapes, or olives) nor luxuries (figs and pomegranates). To this too they were to **give careful thought**. But things would now be different, for the Lord promised, **From this day on I will bless you**. Their faithful obedience in continuing to rebuild would enable them to experience God's blessing."¹²
3. "Is the seed yet in the barn?—implying, It is *not*. It has been already sown this month, and there are no more signs of its bearing a good crop, much less of its being safely stored *in the barn*, than there were in the past season, when there was such a failure; yet I promise to you *from this day* (emphatically marking by the repetition the connection of the blessing with

¹¹ Smith, J. E. (1994). *The Minor Prophets* (p. 511). College Press.

¹² Lindsey, F. D. (1985). *Haggai*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1543). Victor Books.

*the day of their obedience) a blessing in an abundant harvest. So also the vine, &c., which heretofore have borne little or nothing, shall be blessed with productiveness. Thus it will be made evident that the blessing is due to me, not to nature. We may trust God's promise to bless us, though we see no visible sign of its fulfilment (Hab. 2:3)."*¹³

- F. But for now, I want to make sure we understand that Haggai wasn't preaching this at them to feel guilty about their condition, but to remind them that the laws of the harvest are always true and, as such, just as disobedience harvested the reality they are currently in, their renewed true obedience to God would reap the harvest He promised for it as well, but in its season. To help assure them their labors of obedience were not in vain, God started providing for them in some ways that may not have been in abundance but were clearly enough to assure them God was with them doing what He promised! So, this sermon was meant to encourage them to keep pressing forward in confidence and to remember that God was indeed with them, as Haggai had previously preached.

Now, I want us to jump right into the challenge of Haggai because we need to talk about how what we just learned applies to the covenant God made with us in Christ.

Challenge: What does the USE of your time, talent, and money say about how much you prioritize God and His work to prosper HIS eternal life in your family, community, and the rest of the world in and through your local church?

Some of you have been hearing these sermons and saying, "Austin, I repented of not prioritizing God with my time, talent, and money, but nothing seems to be changing in my life!" So let me encourage you the same way Haggai encouraged the Jews standing in the rubble of their sin. You have to remember the laws of the harvest are universal, and that means they still apply in the New Testament!

The blood of Jesus establishes our standing with God, but the fruit of sin has real effects on our lives and others, and sometimes those effects are irreversible this side of Christ's return! Practical holiness, or the lack of it, creates practical results! Praise the Lord that He promises to wipe away every tear at His return, but the pain created by our sin may not be wiped away in this life.

We are living by faith in this life, and like the people Haggai preached to, we will not see the promised abundance today, but He has promised us a spring! So, as you move forward with a life surrendered to God, with a life that prioritizes your time, talent, and money for whatever God wants to do with it, you need to know for sure that your obedience to the leadership of the Holy Spirit will begin to bring the fruits of HIS life into your life. We read about this promise at the beginning of our time together today. As we live in surrender to

¹³ Fausset, A. R. (n.d.). [*A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: Jeremiah-Malachi*](#); Vol. IV (p. 658). William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited.

God, in due season we will see the fruit of His life being harvested in our life and through our life to others. Paul wrote,

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

But let me also say that Christ promised us that if we live surrendered to Him, we will have every tangible thing we need to accomplish what He made each of us to do in the time He has designed for us to accomplish it in this life. Jesus said,

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:25-33)

There is NO promise of Jesus anywhere for earthly prosperity or success by the world’s standards. It’s not that He won’t entrust it to some; He absolutely does. Some get lots of time in this world, others lots of talent and influence, and others lots of earthly treasure and material possessions; some get a lot of two of them; and some get a lot of all three! But there is NO promise ANYWHERE in the New Testament for any measure of those things being given to us in the way it’s measured in this world.

There is absolutely no PROMISE of ease of life! In fact, Jesus promised that if we followed Him, we would face trials, tribulations, persecutions, hatred, and even death! As a matter of fact, in John 15 we find out that God, in our fruitful faithfulness, will prune our lives (a painful process of loss) so we can experience even more fruitfulness of life in the next season!

So, there is no doubt that your financial house could be a disaster because you’ve been living in submission to the almighty dollar instead of the almighty God, and as such, you’ve reaped the fruit of the god you worshiped. For most people, the worship of money leads to broken relationships, anxiety, depression, and in many cases the eventual loss of all their money!

But ironically, for those who live prioritizing God with their money, seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness FIRST, who don't view tithing as a box to check but a starting point of opportunity to invest into God's Kingdom, also end up being the people who are content with what they have, have the discipline to delay gratification and invest wisely, and eventually, even without ever making a lot of money, end up with more money than they need!

Ironically, the people who prioritize their time and talent to God and HIS work end up as the people who at the end of their life look back and see that their life truly mattered! They see the lives all around them that were influenced and changed by the love of Christ in and through their life; people who may not have the earthly success and influence others attained, but they do see the people God placed in their life who were impacted by something bigger than this world, something not of this world, something that accomplishes what nothing in this world can accomplish—HIS LIFE!!! They may never hear the applause of man, but they will one day hear God say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," and receive eternal rewards they get to enjoy forever! (Matthew 25:14-30)

So, listen, PRESS ON! Don't quit! The harvest of obedience is bountiful and beautiful and wealthier than anything this world has to offer, and it abounds beyond this life. It may seem like a trickle coming out of the side of a mountain right now, but be sure it will eventually be a river of life! That trickle is the beginning of what God has promised for us for all eternity. The water in that trickle is water that cures your thirst forever (John 4:13-14; 7:37-39)!