

## Sermon 06-11-2022

### Remembering

#### Haggai 2:1-2:9 (Message translation)

1-3 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the Word of GOD came through the prophet Haggai: "Tell Governor Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and High Priest Joshua son of Jehozadak and all the people: 'Is there anyone here who saw the Temple the way it used to be, all glorious? And what do you see now? Not much, right?' 4-5 "So get to work, Zerubbabel!—GOD is speaking. "Get to work, Joshua son of Jehozadak—high priest!" "Get to work, all you people!—GOD is speaking. "Yes, get to work! For I am with you.' The GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies is speaking! 'Put into action the word I covenanted with you when you left Egypt. I'm living and breathing among you right now. Don't be timid. Don't hold back.' 6-7 "This is what GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies said: 'Before you know it, I will shake up sky and earth, ocean and fields. And I'll shake down all the godless nations. They'll bring bushels of wealth and I will fill this Temple with splendour.' GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies says so. 8 'I own the silver, I own the gold.' Decree of GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies. 9 "This Temple is going to end up far better than it started out, a glorious beginning but an even more glorious finish: a place in which I will hand out wholeness and holiness.' Decree of GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies."

- What is it like -coming home after a long absence?
- What is it like after an enforced absence?
- How does one start again?

Haggai asked this when he, and others, returned to Jerusalem after their exile in Babylon. The Persians had defeated the Babylonians. A new king (Darius) was on the throne. And Darius had a really good idea. Let the Jews go home - or as many as would like to go. And let them re-establish themselves in their land of origin. And he even gave them some resources for that huge task. And Haggai was amongst them

They got back - and the place was a mess. Homes destroyed. Temple knocked down. And the Samaritans causing trouble. So, they did what they needed to do. They re-established their homes. They renovated them. Made them shipshape. But then Haggai gets a bee (or a God) in his bonnet. You-all have got your priorities wrong. You-all have forgotten what makes you-all unique. What makes you-all unique is your special allegiance to the one true God. The God who chose you to be an example

to all people. You lot need to recognise this. It's your responsibility to display your uniqueness by re-building the temple. Making it even better than the original. When you've built the House of God, you can get on with your own lives.

Is there an echo here of our own situation? In a very real sense we have been out in the cold. For a decade or more we have been anticipating our return. Many of us have struggled against a feeling of loss. These buildings - a depository of so many happy memories have lost their grip on our minds and souls.

- "How does it look to you now?"
- "Is it not in your sight as nothing?"
- "... work, for I am with you."
- "The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former."

- " I will give prosperity (Shalom) says the Lord"

*You can't step into the same river (Heraclitus)*

## **ISSUES**

- Not putting things off
  - Putting God first.
  - Not letting disappointment get the better of you.
  - Build better
  - Embracing Shalom (not prosperity)
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- We are about to rebuild
  - Disappointments a-plenty lie ahead
  - Know this! The house of shalom will be re-built in Ormond – but it will not be the same. It will be better. Better not because of its bright shining exterior. Not because it is an act of defiance in the face of the common wisdom that The Church is dying. Not because it will suck up our energies like a sponge and leave us dried up and disillusioned. It will be better because we have grasped the opportunity to announce that we, the people of the God of Hosts, have something to offer that the world needs – that us Jesus People are not a defeated people – that we hold to a Gospel of hope, and redemption – that we follow the Prince of Peace.