Still

Phil EuBank · Hope for Everyone · Haggai 2:1-3; Haggai 2:4-5; Haggai 2:6-9

AT A GLANCE

At the Hope for Everyone weekend, in year three, which he calls Menlo's Haggai year, Phil EuBank preaches Haggai 2:1-9 with one charge: stay faithful when the fruit doesn't fit your forecast. Nostalgia and anticipation both project dated data onto God's work. Against them he sets God's presence, an unshakable purpose, and a church that gathers in order to be sent, closing with a call to pray, serve, and give.

- Both nostalgia and anticipation are forecasts built on dated data; honestly confessing what you see is where faithfulness begins, not a failure of it.
- God's command to work rests on his presence: 'I am with you' comes first, so the most important work is already done.
- A campus does not hold God's presence; it hosts God's people, gathered so they can be sent as hubs of hope.

> *"God is responsible for the fruit. We are responsible for just staying faithful."*

EXPOSITION

Scripture engaged

Haggai 2:1-3 — 1On the 21st day of the seventh month, this message from the Lord came to Haggai: 2"Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the people. Say this: 3'How many of you people look at this Temple and try to compare it to the beautiful Temple that was destroyed? What do you think? Does this Temple seem like nothing when you compare it with the first Temple?" (ERV)

Haggai 2:4-5 — 4But the Lord says, "Zerubbabel, don't be discouraged!" And the Lord says, "Joshua son of Jehozadak, you are the high priest. Don't be discouraged! And all you people who live in the land, don't be discouraged! Continue this work, because I am with you." This is what the Lord All-Powerful said. 5"'I made an agreement with you when you left Egypt, and I have kept my promise. My Spirit is with you, so don't be afraid!'" (ERV)

Haggai 2:6-9 — 6This is what the Lord All-Powerful said, 'In just a little while, I will once again shake things up. I will shake heaven and earth, and I will shake the sea and the dry land. 7I will shake up the nations, and they will come to you with wealth from every nation. And then I will fill this Temple

> with glory.' That is what the Lord All-Powerful said! [8]"All their silver really belongs to me! And all the gold is mine!' This is what the Lord All-Powerful said. [9]And the Lord All-Powerful said, 'This last Temple will be more beautiful than the first one, and I will bring peace to this place.' Remember, this is what the Lord All-Powerful said. (ERV)

The argument

Nostalgia and Anticipation Are Both Forecasts Built on Dated Data — God asks the question so his people will say aloud what they actually see

Everyone walks into a room carrying a forecast, Phil EuBank says, and it shapes how today is experienced. He names his own: before coming to Menlo four years ago, he expected the elders to be the hardest part and the staff the most eager. 'I got it almost exactly backwards.' Haggai's question about who remembers the house in its former glory falls on the last day of the Feast of Booths, the festival of Solomon's dedication. The old grieve a memory and the young grieve a promise. God is not gaslighting them; he invites them to confess what is real. 'The problem wasn't what they saw. The problem was how they saw it and what they believed God could do with it.'

> **Insight —** *Grief over what was, or what has not yet come, is honest and allowed; letting it set the forecast is the mistake, because God owns the fruit.*

The Command to Work Rests on the Promise of Presence — 'Be strong' is said to everyone, and 'fear not' is grounded in work already finished

Phil EuBank hears a turn in the two words 'Yet, now': the disappointment is real, and still, be strong. God says it three times, to Zerubbabel of David's line, to Joshua of Aaron's line, and to all the people: 'Nobody gets to sit this one out.' The work is done 'for, as a result of, because of, I am with you.' The Feast of Booths recalls tents in the wilderness, when God was with his people long before he had a temple. Under the new covenant, Jesus gives a promise, not a pep talk. 'He's not saying it because the work is easy. He's saying it because the most important work is already done.' The call is 'impossible without him but inevitable with him.'

> **Insight —** *Obedience is sustainable only when it is a response to a presence already given, never an attempt to summon one.*

A Campus Hosts God's People Rather Than Holding God's Presence — Gathered to be sent, and freed to give because everything already belongs to God

Phil EuBank is careful: the church has parallels with the temple but is not the temple. God's presence now lives in his people, and Jesus made the last sacrifice, so nothing in a local church makes anyone more acceptable, the error Israel made in Jeremiah 7. Yet places still matter. 'It doesn't hold God's presence, it hosts God's people.' Haggai's 'treasures of all nations' shows the temple was built for outsiders to come in. 'Our campuses are not the destination. They are hubs

of hope.' 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine' is no arm-twisting giving verse but David's prayer: 'God doesn't need our money. And that's exactly what frees you and me to live and give without anxiety.'

> **Insight —** *A church's buildings and budgets are instruments of mission, valued rightly only when they send people out rather than collect them in.*

Faith Grows Where the Details Are Hidden, and Identity Survives the Shaking — God's 'little while' and unshakable purposes make small faithfulness the safest investment

God's 'little while' does not run on our timeline, and Phil EuBank says that is by design: 'God grows our faith in the places where we can't see the details. That's what faith actually is.' The ground moves under everyone, and he names AI disruption in particular: it may come for your industry, but 'it doesn't have to come for your identity.' Babel's builders needed no God, and God shook it. So he points to treasure in the kingdom, to Zechariah's 'don't despise the day of small things,' and to the response card: Pray, Serve, Give. Simeon is the pattern: he stayed faithful for years until he held the promise, and the peace Haggai promised was given there.

> **Insight —** *When the future is unreadable, anchor identity in what cannot be shaken and spend your life on what disruption cannot touch.*

Cross-references

- 1 Kings 8 — Solomon's dedication of the first temple, the festival anniversary on which Haggai speaks
- Ezra 3:10-13 — elders weeping and the young shouting at the foundation, with no one able to tell the difference
- 1 Chronicles 28:20 — David charging Solomon to be strong because God is with him, the same charge Haggai echoes
- 1 Chronicles 29:14 — David's prayer that all things come from God, read as the key to 'the silver is mine'
- Jeremiah 7 — Israel treating the temple as a guarantee of God's favor, a warning against equating the church with the temple
- 2 Peter 3:8 — God's 'little while' does not match our timeline
- Genesis 11:1-9 — Babel as people building to need no God, and God shaking it
- Matthew 6:19-20 — storing treasure where moth, rust, and thieves cannot reach
- Zechariah 4:10 — 'don't despise the day of small things' spoken to Haggai's people
- Luke 2:25-32 — Simeon, faithful for years, holding the fulfilled promise of peace in the same temple

DEVOTIONAL

A foundation laid, then left to the weeds. That is where the story stands when Haggai opens his mouth: stones in the ground, a house unfinished, and a crowd divided by what each person carries in. The old remember a glory that was. The young hold a promise that has not arrived. At the foundation, nobody could tell the weeping from the shouting. It was all just loud. Into that noise God does not offer a better forecast. He asks an honest question, lets them say it is as nothing in their eyes, and then speaks a small, enormous word: yet. Yet now, be strong. Work, because I am with you. What steadies the hands is not a clearer view of the future. It is the memory of tents, a generation under canvas in the wilderness, God dwelling among them long before any roof. His presence never waited for the building to be finished. It does not wait on your timeline either. The most tender figure in all this may be the one who never sees the finished thing. Simeon grows old in the temple while the fruit refuses to fit the forecast, and then one day a young couple walks in. His arms are full of the promise at last. So the ground may keep moving. The forecast may prove wrong in both directions. Still, the work is ours only as a seed is the sower's: we put it in, we stay, we keep our hands open. The fruit belongs to the One who was in the room before the foundation was laid.

Reflection

- Which forecast are you carrying into this season, a picture of how things were or of where you thought you would be by now, and how is it shaping your experience of today?
- Where has God's 'I am with you' been true in your work while the fruit looked absent, and what would it mean to work 'because of' that presence?
- Who in your life seems too far gone for the hope of heaven, and what is one small way you could be sent toward them this week?

Closing prayer

God, I don't know the circumstances each of us is carrying, but I know how many distractions we have and how easily you become secondary. Who we are in you is central; it is the only thing that will not be shaken. Give us such a deep rootedness in you that, in a world that is shaking, we are anchored to something greater. Make us people who offer hope and help to the hurts of our world, not because we have figured it out or are so strong, but because we have a God who is. Thank you for your love and your hope. Might we live worthy of it today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FORMATION

One thing to remember

Disruption may reach what you have built, but it need not reach who you are when your identity rests on the one who cannot be shaken.

This week

This week, choose one of the three words on the response card: Pray, Serve, or Give. Start it if you haven't, or take a deeper step if you have. Write it down, drop it in the box, and read Haggai 2:4-5 as you pray over it.

Return to **Haggai 2:4-5**