

Haggai 2:1-9
Take Courage

This building is the Centro Financiero Confinanzas. It is an unfinished sky scraper located in the financial district of Venezuela's capital, Caracas. It is the eighth tallest building in Latin America at 45 stories. Its glass façade glimmers in the sun, a projection of wealth and economic prowess that was intended to house national and international businesses. Construction started on the tower in 1990, yet the death of the main investor David Brillembourg in 1993 as well as the Venezuelan banking crisis one year later meant that construction ground to a halt. To this day, the unfinished structure remains in the nation's capital.

During the mid-1980's, North Korea wanted to change its image by building something massive, something that would be world renown. The project would symbolize progress for North Korea and introduce new, western investors. The decision was made to build a hotel that was taller than any in the world, and in 1987 construction on the Ryugyong Hotel began. It was intended to be completed in 1989 just in time for the thirteenth World Festival of Youth and Students, but developers would face nearly every conceivable hurdle, and by 1992, the project was abandoned. This 105 floor hotel was estimated to cost 230 million dollars and would have stood as the tallest hotel and seventh tallest building in the world.

In Chenzhuang Village, China, about twenty miles northwest of central Beijing, the ruins of a partially built amusement park called Wonderland sit near a highway surrounded by houses and fields of corn. Construction work at the park, which developers had promised would be the largest amusement park in Asia, stopped around 1998 after disagreements with the local government and farmers over property prices. Developers briefly tried to restart construction in 2008 but without success. The abandon structures are now a draw for local children and a few photographers who encounter signs telling them to proceed at their own risks.

So these three buildings, these three projects, stand as examples of work that began only to be left incomplete and abandoned. And this is exactly what some of us here today, as believers, face, this potential to abandon the work that God has set before us. We know in Ephesians 2:10, God has stated very clearly that there are good works that He's laid beforehand for us to walk in.

There's work for us to do, but nonetheless, we are wise enough to know that discouragement comes. Distractions are bound to happen, and there is a temptation to abandon the work that God has set before us. And really, this idea, this imagery, is pretty much exactly what's happening in the book of Haggai. That's exactly where we find ourselves this morning in Haggai chapter 2.

Just to remind you a little bit about Haggai and the setting of all of it and how we got to where we are. Haggai is a prophet that came to minister to the people of God in a time known as the post-exile, after their exile, after their punishment from God. The nation of Israel was in the land of Judah; they were with the temple worshipping God but falling into more and more idolatry, until eventually, God punished them just as He said He would and kicked them out of the land, destroyed the temple - and they were in exile in Babylon. After about seventy years of being in exile in Babylon, God raised up a new nation, the Persians, and the Persians allowed Israel to go back to the land; and so, Haggai was among these people that had got to go back to the land, the land of Judah, to Jerusalem, God's city, God's capital. And it was only within two years that they returned to the land, that they started to rebuild the temple. They rebuilt the alter that was at the temple. They laid the foundation, and they began the work.

Unfortunately, there were agitators around them. They were not the only people living in the land. Besides Israel, there were other people that came to persecute and to halt the building and the reconstruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. So, for sixteen years there was nothing; sixteen years the people of God and Israel stopped their work on the temple. And then we had our man, the prophet Haggai, enter onto the scene in Haggai chapter 1 as we saw last time. So after sixteen years of silence and the people turning to their own houses, turning to their own ways, serving themselves, Haggai comes onto the scene with a powerful message telling the people of God to consider their ways. He pleads with them. He urges them to consider what they're doing; they're building up their own personal houses while the house of God lies there in ruins. The rubble from the destruction of the temple in 586 BC sits there, and the people are content to live in their houses and to upgrade their houses with paneled walls. So, this is what we saw in Haggai 1. And how did it end? We saw a great response from the people. They listened. They listened to Haggai. They listened to God's message from the prophet, and they obeyed. They got back to work on the temple. After

sixteen years of nothing, they resumed the work of the temple that God would have them to do.

Well, today, we find ourselves in Haggai chapter 2, about a month later, and there is this temptation that is already settled in, a temptation to abandon the work yet again, a temptation to halt, a temptation to stop, again, building the temple of God. So, this is where we will find ourselves in Haggai chapter 2. And today, I hope that we will see two very clear reasons why we, too, ourselves, cannot abandon God's work. We cannot, and there are two forceful reasons that come out in our passage today. The first reason that we'll see is the Lord's presence, the Lord's presence very clearly declared in verses 1 through 5. We'll begin by reading verses 1 through 3 from Haggai chapter 2; "On the twenty-first of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet saying, "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people saying, 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison?'" So, the first thing we see in the first three verses here is the discouragement of the people laid out very clearly; this temptation here, because of discouragement, for the people to abandon once again the work of God, to pull back and no longer continue their work in rebuilding the temple. This is a fitting day for such a message to come. We saw it's the twenty-first day of the seventh month. The significance of that day is that it was during and at the very conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles, the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was one of the three major festivals for the people of God. They had three major feasts annually that they needed to come to the temple to celebrate and worship their God. And so, the Feast of Tabernacles was this third festival that took place during the year. And so, it's fitting that as they're here, as they're building the temple, as they're trying and working at this and maybe starting to lose heart, lose energy, that God speaks to them in a time where they know they should be celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, the feast unto God in all of its glory.

Only one month is gone by, and we note that it's only been about sixty-six years since the last temple was destroyed. So, are there people here that saw the previous temple? Are there people here that remember what it was like, that went themselves to Solomon's temple? And the answer is probably, probably more than one, a good amount of elderly people there as they're

working on this temple and there's mixed emotions. Young people are excited to rebuild the temple of God, and the elderly people are there looking at each other and realizing it's not the same. They remember Solomon's temple. They remember the glory that came with Solomon's temple and the joy that it was to be a part of that and the luxury that came with that. And here they are rebuilding from the ruins and scraping together this building, and they're looking at each other saying this is not the same. It's just not.

Solomon's temple was no doubt an amazing feat, and it was perfect because Solomon had all the resources available to him. If you remember the description in Kings about Solomon's reign, you had gold and silver as plentiful as stone in the nation of Israel. He had the resources. And more than that, Solomon even had the laborers. He recruited people to come and build. And he was recruiting and getting cedar from all over, from specialized places, and bringing it in to this one site in Jerusalem to construct what would be the temple for the Lord. As you can see in this little cutaway (maybe you can't see) there's gold inside. It's filled up with complete luxury fitting for the God of the universe, the God of Israel.

So, people remember this temple, and here they are in Haggai's day attempting to rebuild this temple and realizing this does not compare at all. And God admits that. That's exactly what He says in verse 3, "Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory [under Solomon]? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison?" It doesn't compare. God says so clearly, I know what you're thinking. I know you're trying to rebuild this, and I commend you for that, and I know what you're thinking. It doesn't compare. It's not the same. You're discouraged. You're so discouraged, you're probably tempted to just abandon this altogether. If we can't rebuild it and make it like Solomon's temple, what's the point? Why go through this hardship? We don't have the resources. We don't have the manpower that he did. Why do this? This isn't fitting for the Lord. Why try this? So discouragement is settling in on the people of Israel, discouragement as they recognize that this almost seems like a worthless feat. Why even try? And this discouragement is what is leading them to potentially abandon once again, after only a month, the work of God.

And the same way, discouragement is something that all of us face. I wonder how you might be facing discouragement even today. It's possible. You might be thinking man, I know I'm supposed to be about the work of the Lord and part of that is sharing the gospel with people that don't know Him; and so, I'm out and I'm working my best to communicate Christ to my neighbors and to my family members that don't know Him, and yet I see nothing. It is crickets. I get no response from these people. It seems like it's worthless. My efforts to share Christ are falling flat. Or maybe you're saying man I am just putting my hand to the plow, and I just keep working at serving in this church. I'm going to growth group. I'm serving in children's' Sunday school; the kids don't like me, right? I'm not getting any good response. There's no reward. I see nothing coming of it. It's discouraging. Why even do this? Someone else will do it. They're probably better at it than I am.

Discouragement sets in and you're tempted to abandon the work of the Lord, or maybe you're thinking I'm not even there. That sounds great what you're describing, sharing the gospel with people, serving, going to growth group, and actively involved in all these ways; but I am just struggling to get out the front door of my house on a morning without feeling like I left a war zone. I'm feeling the stress of just being in the same household of my family, and it feels like it's a battle twenty-four seven. Or you're saying you don't even understand my job, the work and the pressure that gets laid upon me; I feel like my body's stuck in this vice that just keeps tightening as deadlines come crashing down upon me. Or you're saying you should try and write my paper for school. You should try and take my tests. I feel like I'm lost in this tunnel when I'm pitch black with all these papers, all these assignments, and when I see a light at the end of the tunnel, it's really just a train to run me over called finals. You try being there. It's discouraging. It's discouraging.

Maybe your reason for discouragement's even greater; you walked in this morning and you're saying to be honest with you, I'm just feeling bullied by sin. I'm just beat down, and I'm not even in the fight. I'm just getting beat up by sin, and I'd love to call time out. I'm feeling completely lonely. When I come to church, I feel like no one recognizes me. I pray to God, but I feel like I see no answer, at least not the answers that I want to see. And I know I should read my bible, so when I do finally crack it open and read, I feel like it has absolutely no connection to what I'm going through. And you're just ready to tell me I'm done. I'm just going to abandon this; not this time, not

now, maybe when things are better, maybe when things are more convenient, maybe when God opens this clear door for me to come back to Him and serving Him. Say, give me one reason why I should continue in God's work, this is so disheartening.

Well, let me encourage you, and give you two reasons, actually, more than one. Let me give you two reasons. The first reason we see very clearly in verses 4 and 5. This declaration that the Lord gives to the people of Haggai's day, I hope and pray is a comforting declaration that can be spoken to you as well and to myself. So, this declaration of the Lord to His people, verses 4 and 5; "But now take courage, Zerubbabel," declares the Lord, "take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage," declares the Lord, "and work; for I am with you," declares the Lord of hosts. "As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!" So first notice this very clear command that comes three times in a row, "...take courage..." Be strong. Be courageous. Be strong, Zerubbabel, leader of the people. Be strong Joshua, the spiritual leader of the people. Be strong all people that are engaged in this work. Do not pull back.

I mean, this is really the same type of encouragement that God has had to offer to other people throughout the history of Israel. You might recall Joshua, the daunting task that he had to slip in behind Moses and fill his shoes and lead the people of Israel. Not an easy task at all as Joshua was now supposed to take the entire nation of Israel into the land of Canaan where there are several people groups, all massive, bigger than Israel, and he's supposed to somehow kill them all off and take the land. What does God tell Joshua? Be strong and courageous. Be strong and courageous. How about David when he talks to his son Solomon. David was the one who wanted to build the temple for God. He had that vision. He had that desire, and God said that is a great desire; your son's going to do it. I'm going to have Solomon build that temple. So David on his deathbed, speaking to his son Solomon, said be strong and courageous and act. Do not fear nor be dismayed. Don't abandon this work. Don't turn your back on it. Don't give up. Why? Why should Joshua be strong and courageous? Why should've Solomon continued in this work? Why should the people in this day, why should they continue building this meager temple? Don't we get it? Very clearly at the end of verse 4, could not be any more plain; "...work; for I am with you," declares the Lord of hosts." ... "...for I am with you," declares

the Lord of hosts.” This is exactly what David told his son Solomon. He says be strong, be courageous for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished. And it’s really a repeat of what we’ve already seen in 1:13; Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people saying, ‘I am with you,’ declares the Lord.” God has already said this.

And so, I ask you today as you might sit there tempted to abandon various service tasks in the work of the Lord, is there anything more encouraging or comforting than the very presence of God Himself? Consider the child that is in the middle of a dark house during a power outage. What could be more comforting for that child than to feel the hand of their parent upon their back saying it's okay? I’m right here. I’m right with you. I got you, no problem. When I studied in Israel for three months around foreign people speaking languages I did not understand, I felt very comfortable when I had my teachers that were fluent in Hebrew with me. When they weren’t there, I was lost. I was terrified. When I go down to Mexico, if Mauricio is by my side, I feel good. I know that I’m not going to step into some awkward trap and commit some social faux pas that’s going to completely offend the Mexican culture. So it’s like I can actually communicate with the people. Thank you. Woman, what is more comforting than to know that another gal will go with you to the restroom, the presence of someone else to accompany with you?

God says do not abandon this work. It’s only been a month. Don’t turn your back on this. I am with you. I am with you. Take courage. Be strong. Do the work. I’m right here. I’m right here with you. Don’t pretend I don’t see. Don’t act like, as if, I don’t know what you’re going through. And how does God hammer that home? It comes just out in verse 5 to really make this point clear, verse 5, God said, “As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!”

In not so glorious times for the nation of Israel as they look around at this temple they’re trying to build that looks pathetic in comparison to Solomon’s temple. God recalls the glory days. God says let me remind you, let me remind you of how I made you My own people; how I unleashed these ten amazing, awesome plagues upon Egypt, the greatest nation at that time; how I did something unprecedented in splitting the Red Sea and delivering your entire people group, children and all, only for you to get to

the other side, turn around and watch me drown Pharaoh and his army. Remember how I went before you and I guided you through the wilderness, as a cloud by day and fire by night. Remember when My presence, My glorious presence, descended from Sinai and filled the Tent of Meeting as I met with Moses. God says that was very visual. You remember all of that. Those were the glory days. I was in your midst and nothing's changed; here I am now in your midst, as you build this temple. In the same way that I was with Moses, that I was with the people and bringing them out of Egypt, I am with you now; and you are distinguished from all other peoples on earth because I am your God; you are My people.

How does this encourage us? You're still sitting there feeling discouraged this morning potentially tempted to abandon the work of God. How can God's presence be encouraging to you? Well, as believers in Christ, we know one thing for sure; when you placed your faith in Christ, there is an immediate result of the Spirit indwelling you, God's very presence coming upon you and remaining in you. I hope you believe that. I hope you believe that God's presence is in you if you have by faith received Christ as your Lord and Savior. And let me make sure you understand this. I'm not just saying a mystical feeling. I'm saying the very Spirit of God, His presence, the Spirit of God, that enabled Christ to defeat Satan and sin in the wilderness when He was tempted; the Spirit of God that enabled Christ to proclaim good news even when people wanted to throw Him off a cliff; the Spirit of God that actually brought Christ back from the dead and His resurrection, the most amazing miracle; that same Spirit is within you. And so, you feel discouraged, maybe. You want to abandon this work that God has set before you, but let me encourage you; keep at the work. God is with you. In the same way He was with Moses, in the same way that He's with the nation of Israel, and the way He was with Christ His son, He's with you now. Romans 8:31 is beautiful; "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who [can be] against us? So, God is with us. We must not abandon this work that He's set before us, but that's not the only reason. That's not the only reason why we need to continue in the work.

We must also continue in this work that God has set before us because of God's very own promises, the Lord's promises. And so we find in verses 6-9 just a rapid succession of promises that God gives to the people on the day and time of Haggai. So verses 6-9; "For thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea

also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord of hosts. 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the Lord of hosts. 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the Lord of hosts." These promises - notice how God says I will, I will, I will, over and over and over again to His people. So what are these promises? First, we see that God will shake all nature. God will shake all nature in verse 6. Notice the kind of comprehensive aspect of this; "Once more in a little, while I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land." There is nothing that'll be unaffected by God's movements. The same God that spoke and brought these things into existence will simply move and these things will be shaken. When He chooses to act, these things, His creation, has no choice but to be shaken and disrupted. God will shake these things in an amazing display of His omnipotence once again.

Notice how He says once more, indicating He's done this before. He has to remind His people again, just like I was with you in Egypt, once more I'm going to shake everything. Well, how did God shake nature before? How did that take place? Well, when we look back and see God's dealings with Israel, we've already recalled Him splitting open the Red Sea, or maybe with Joshua and the nation when he stopped up the Jordan River and allowed the whole nation to cross into Canaan, or maybe when He did meet with Moses on Sanai and the mountain itself was quaking like an earthquake and there was fire and smoke billowing from Mt Sanai, or maybe when Joshua and the people were conquering the southern Canaan and hail stones were falling from the sky and God was sniping the Canaanites for Joshua and Israel, or maybe in that same battle when God took the sun and it stood still right in the sky so that Joshua can continue to rout his enemy. God has done this. He's displayed this in awesome majesty, and He says once more, once more I will do this. The glory days are not gone and done. I will do this again.

And notice how He says "...in a little while." There's this eminent expectation of it. It will happen, and we even get a sense of how it will happen when you flip to the book of Revelation. You go to Revelation and you read of these things called the seal judgments and the trumpet judgments and the bowl judgments; and it's God in the same way shaking all of nature almost in an effortless fashion as the judgments become more and more and more severe. Oceans turn to blood. Rivers are made bitter. Trees and all

vegetation burns up. The sun itself scorches people on the earth. God causes darkness upon the Antichrist and his kingdom. Comets crash to the earth. Once again, hundred pound hailstones come down, and there are earthquakes again, yet this time, were described that they are unprecedented earthquakes as if there has never been one on the earth. God will shake all nature once again when He acts on behalf of His people. This is not the only time God promises to His people that He will do this - is all throughout the prophets and it's confirmed for us again in Revelation as we've seen.

Not just nature, though, God promises that He will also shake all nations. His movement, His working, His dealings on behalf of His people, will go beyond just nature itself. It will affect even the nations. And once again, we have a perfect parallel in Egypt in God's working and pouring out the plagues in constant miraculous fashion. It got to the point that Pharaoh and the Egyptians said get out of here. We don't want you anymore. Take our gold, in fact. Take our stuff and leave. As the Israelites plundered the Egyptians and left, God called them out. We see the future nations will suffer great agony, and they will curse God, much like Egypt experienced when God called Israel out. Notice that it says very clearly in verse 7, "I will shake all the nations, and they will come with the wealth of all nations." So, they will come with wealth. There is this reference once again to not just the people being in uproar but the wealth of the nation's coming.

If you have a New King James Bible, there's a kind of interesting translation issue that happens here. The New King James states, "and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations," and the word "Desire" is capitalized like it's in reference to a person; and so it's clear that from the New King James version, they view "...the Desire of All Nations..." as Christ Himself, the Messiah, Jesus, will come. Jesus who is desired of all nations will come to the temple. The NIV might even hint at this, and it says, [and the] "...desired by all nations..." will come. Christmas time even reminds us of it. You know the song; "Oh, come, oh, come. Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!" And then the last verse, "Oh, come, Desire of nations bind..." ... "Oh come, Desire of nations bind In one the hearts of all mankind; Oh, bid our sad divisions cease, and be yourself our King of Peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!"

It's an interesting thought, but when we really look back down at the text, is this a specific reference to Jesus Himself the Messiah? And just give the very context of our passage, it doesn't seem to fit because the disappointment, the discouragement, is already coming because of a lack of luxury in the temple, a lack of display of Solomon's temple and the gold that accompanied with it. And even more so, what follows after this when God says, "...and I will fill this house with glory..." In verse 8, "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine..." The context is of the material possessions, the wealth of the nations. They will come in, and we see this even more as we do contemplate the rest of verse 7 and verse 8 and this is what we really see happening; God will stock the temple. God will luxuriously stock the temple, and this is not just taught here in our text, it's taught all throughout the prophets. It says, "...they will come with the wealth of nations, and I will fill this house with glory..." As a parallel, Zachariah 14:14 states, "Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance." Isaiah 60 verse 5; "Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of nations will come to you." And again in Isaiah 60:13, "The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the box tree and the cypress together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I shall make the place of My feet glorious." The temple, the place for God's feet, will be glorious in terms of the wealth coming from the nations. Much like the Israelites looted the Egyptians and left Egypt, so also the nation's wealth will come in to this temple again.

God says don't you worry. I know you're building this temple right now, and it does not look good. It doesn't even compare to Solomon's temple. I get that, but a time will come where the nations will come and just give you the gold. The nations are going to bring it to you. They're going to bring you the luxury, and this temple will be amazing. It will be marvelous - reaffirmed in verse 8 when God says, "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine..." And you think, wow, that sounds a little greedy. Interesting, God. But can it be greedy if it belongs to God already? It's not really possible, right? If you already own that, how can you be greedy for it? As Psalm 50 states, "I shall take no young bull out of your house nor male goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine,

and all that it contains.” God says all I’m doing is reallocating the resources to where they need to be, back to Me. They’re Mine and I’m bringing them back to Jerusalem, back to the place where I cause My name, My glory, to dwell.

So God will stock the temple once again with the glory, and as we see in verse 9, it’ll be greater, greater than the glory of Solomon’s temple. The temple will shine with glory. The temple will shine with glory. The beginning of verse 9 clearly stating this; “ ‘The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says the Lord of hosts.” Might be hard for them to believe at this moment as they think this temple looks wimpy, and by comparison it’s a joke. And God says, actually, it’s going to be greater than Solomon’s. It’ll be greater than Solomon’s temple. We get a little help once again from other prophets; for example, in Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48, we get a description of this millennial temple that will come, that Revelation 20 refers to. And so, I know you can’t really see all the details up here, but suffice it to say you got a couple different temples. On the right side of your screen, kind of the display of Herod’s temple that was built after this, you have the display of Solomon’s temple, really not that big, a football field on the bottom there, and then to the left, you have the millennial temple that Ezekiel describes, very detailed, to come. Not only will it be just massive and bigger than this temple and the previous temples, but it will contain the luxury, the proper display fitting for the King of kings when He rules there. And what will be the ultimate result as we see in the end a verse nine? “ ‘...and in this place I will give peace,’ declares the Lord of hosts.” God Himself will give peace from the temple.

Despite all of man’s promises of world peace and at least their desires for it, they’re all false. There’s no man that can claim and actually deliver on the promise of world peace, but when Christ the true King comes and reigns from His temple, there will be peace. Peace not just for His people, but peace for the nations as Isaiah 9:6-7 states, “...His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace...” And as Zachariah 9:10 states, “And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea...” This is the ultimate result when God comes and stocks His temple once again and causes His glory to dwell there.

So the Lord's promises urge us. They plead with you to not abandon this work, the work of God. What promises has God given to us? And can those be trusted? Can He be trusted? God might clearly state, and we reiterate and repeat to one another, that He is working all things for good. Can He be trusted for that promise? Is He truly working all things for good in the life of the believer? Maybe you're having a hard time, doubting that even now. You go through trials of several kinds, multifaceted trials, various kinds of trials, that you feel like no one else can relate to, and yet God's word says that it's for your good, and it actually develops your perseverance. It matures you, makes you complete. Can God be trusted with that promise? Is that actually happening? Do we know that for certain?

Well, in the same way, God is telling His people here, I'm going to do this. He says it very explicitly; I will bring a glorious temple once again. And can God be trusted? Well, God says look at My track record. What did I do to Egypt? How did I bring you out in magnificent display? And God calls to us once again, today, and says what did I do through Christ? What did I do in magnificent display in sending My Son on your behalf when He suffered the death that you deserved to die on the cross, when He lived the life of righteousness that you could never live, when He rose again and conquered death and made the clear display that He has opened the door for you to have access to God. God has a good track record. I think we can trust Him with that. So, if God not only delivered your soul from His own wrath, can we not also trust Him that He is currently working in the very details of whatever you're going through, whatever hardship, whatever difficulty, whatever disappointment, whatever discouragement you're facing?

So, the people of Israel here facing discouragement and they're thinking I wish it was like the old times, the old times of Solomon's temple. And we might even think that in this church. I miss the old days I miss the old people that used to be here. Now we have annoying people; I don't like them anymore. I miss the old songs we used to sing. What's up with this new stuff? I miss the way we used to do things, the way we used to do ministries, the way we used to do potlucks. I miss the old things. And all of a sudden we lose complete sight of the work that God set before us. It's not about how you feel about it. It's not about if you're up to it or not. It's simply about: is God's presence with you? Yes, through the Holy Spirit dwelling within you. And can you bank on God's promises? Yes! He has a good track record. You can trust Him completely in what He promises. So, if He states that

through you, working in you, that He will bring about a maturity in you and a glory for Himself, that should be enough. That should be sufficient. You can rest in that. Hebrews 13:5 states, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.” That promise is good still to this day, so whatever discouragement you’re going through, whatever temptation you might feel right now to abandon the work of the Lord, may we be committed and reassess and reevaluate our ability to contribute to God’s work, to His work, to His plan, to serving the King, because of His presence with us and His promises to us that we can trust.