

Title: **STRENGTH REQUIRED**
 STRENGTH GIVEN

Text: Haggai 2:1-5

Subject: *The Believer's Source of Strength*

Date: Sunday Evening — February 24, 2008

Tape: Haggai #6

Readings: *David Burge and Ron Wood*

Introduction:

Mark this down as a matter of fact. Don't ever forget it. That which God requires of his people, he always provides for his people.

- Does he require satisfaction? — He made satisfaction for us.
- Does he require righteousness? — He is the Lord our Righteousness.
- Does he demand that we be holy as he is holy? — Christ is our Holiness.
- Does God require faith of us? — We believe according to the working of his mighty power.
- Does the Lord insist that we seek him with all our heart? — He makes us willing in the day of his power.
- Does God demand that we pray? — He graciously brings us to our wits' end, and sweetly constrains us to cry out for his mercy.
- Does the Lord require that we persevere in grace? — He keeps us by his mighty power.
- Does he demand that we walk before him in good works? — *"It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*

Mark it down as a blessed fact of divine revelation. Don't ever forget it. Whatever God requires, God provides!

With that as the background, I want you to turn with me to Haggai 2:1-5. The title of my message tonight is **STRENGTH REQUIRED** — **STRENGTH GIVEN**. This second chapter of Haggai is full of Christ and full of the gospel. May God the Holy Spirit, whose Word this is, show us our Savior and cause us to hear the good news of his grace in this passage.

(Haggai 2:1-2) "In the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, (2) Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor

of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,”

The Prophet carefully marked down the dates in which the Word of the Lord distinctly came to him. In doing so, he teaches us that it is always profitable for us to “*well remember*” the Lord’s wonderful works for us and his gracious visitations to us (Deuteronomy 7:18). — Bethel should never be forgotten!

PREACHING NEEDED

There is never a time when God’s people in this world can prosper without the ministry of the gospel. Gospel preaching is not an optional extra. It is vital to the life of every believer. **Haggai was given a message to deliver to Zerubbabel the governor, to Joshua the high priest, and to the residue of the people.**

- Remember, these are the very people who had just experienced great forgiveness.
- They had just been assured of the Lord’s presence and graciously revived by his Spirit (1:13-14).

(Haggai 1:13-14) “Then spake Haggai the LORD’S messenger in the LORD’S message unto the people, saying, I *am* with you, saith the LORD. (14) And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,”

- They were now zealously devoted to and engaged in the work the Lord had trusted to their hands.

Still, the Lord God sent his prophet to them with a message they must hear. Why? All God’s people in this world need continual quickening; and the means by which he performs it is the preaching of the gospel. — This world is more full of snares for our souls than the heavens are with stars. — Besides the snares without, everything in us by nature, swells with hellish venom to oppose God, his grace and his Word (Hebrew 10:23-25).

(Hebrews 10:23-25) “Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) (24) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: (25) Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

We all need the constant, abiding ministry of the Word, that we may continue in the way, serve the Lord with joy, and grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. It was that reason that Barnabas was sent to Antioch (Acts 11:22-23). While he was there, he saw the grace of God in his people and was glad. Still, he exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they cleave unto the Lord. It was for that same reason that Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:21) returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith. They ordained preachers in every church for the increase of their knowledge, the strengthening of their faith, the help of their memories and the quickening of their affections.

Notice this, too. **Zerubbabel the governor, to Joshua the high priest, the political and the spiritual leaders of Israel needed to hear the same message as the residue of the people.** The gospel of Christ is to be declared to all alike, with simplicity, boldness, and clarity, in all its fulness. We must keep back nothing God has revealed. We all need to have the “Three R’s” repeated in our ears regularly.

- Ruin by the Fall
- Redemption by the Blood
- Regeneration by the Holy Spirit

POOR JUDGES

In verse 3 the prophet shows us that anytime we judge spiritual things by natural appearance, anytime we judge spiritual things by carnal reason, our judgment is wrong.

(Haggai 2:3) “Who *is* left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? *is it* not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?”

How often we discourage ourselves by looking at the outward appearance of things! How often we misjudge God's work, especially his providence, by presuming that there is no more to it than what we see! That was exactly what these Jews were doing.

Some of these Jews were very old. They had seen the original temple. Both Zerubbabel and Joshua were pushing one hundred years old, maybe older. Many others were in their age group. They had seen great things in the past, and remembered them. But rather than inspiring hope, their memory of the past caused them to be discouraged, because they looked at the outward structure of the second temple, as though that smaller temple was all the Lord was doing and would do. Judging by sight, they failed to see that their little temple was only a typical thing, promising something far greater than the two temples together could fully portray.

- The Incarnation of Christ
- The Death of Christ
- The Resurrection of Christ

It is interesting and profitable to remember that the first temple was built by Solomon about 480 years after Israel came out of Egypt. And from the building of the second temple, after Israel was delivered out of Babylon, to the coming of Christ, of whom the temple spoke, was just about 480 years. Perhaps the younger men shouted for joy at the building of the second temple, while the old men wept, because the younger understood that the whole thing spoke of the coming of the Redeemer, while the old men had dim vision (Ezra 3:11-13). By making the second temple much smaller and less significant than the first, the Lord God was drawing their minds away from the ceremonies and services of the law to Christ the Sun of Righteousness who was about to arise upon them, the Dayspring from on high who was about to visit them.

BE STRONG

In the fourth verse the Lord God commands the governor, the priest and all the people to be strong and work, letting nothing discourage them, hinder them, or turn them aside. — *“Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work.”* If we would serve God in this world, we must be strong, resolute and courageous (1 Corinthians 16:13).

(1 Corinthians 16:13) “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

But where shall such weaklings as we are get such strength? “*Who is sufficient for these things?*” “*Our sufficiency is of God!*” Our Lord’s strength is made perfect in our weakness; and his grace is sufficient. Read the rest of verses 4 and 5 and you will see an clear example of what I told you at the beginning of my message. — Whatever God requires of us, he gives to us. Does he here demand that we be strong? Yes, he does; but he gives us the strength he requires.

(Haggai 2:4-5) “Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I *am* with you, saith the LORD of hosts: (5) *According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.”

Look at the promises of grace with which he strengthens our souls! He says, “*be strong for...*”

- “*I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts.*” — To protect you. — To deliver you. — To keep you. — To save you. — To do you good.
- “*According to the word that I covenanted with you.*” — Christ my Covenant Word. — My Word of Promise! — My Eternal Covenant.
- “*My Spirit remaineth among you.*” — To guide you. — To sanctify you. — To revive you. — To sustain you. — To teach you. — To comfort you.

Here, the three persons of the eternal Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit set themselves before us as God our Protector and Redeemer.

- God the Father promises his presence.
- God the Son is the Eternal Word, our Prophet.
- God the Spirit is with us.

FEAR NOT

The last word of our text is the golden nugget to which I have been moving all along. It is this word I want you to carry home with you tonight. The Lord God says to you, and to me — “*Fear not!*” He who has God for his

Father, Christ for his Savior, and the Holy Spirit for his Comforter, may be fearless before any creature! We who have God in Christ by his Spirit standing with us and for us, have nothing to fear. The righteous may be bold as a lion; he has the peace of God within him the power of God about him and the purpose of God for him! Let's look at some of God's "fear nots," and I will wrap my message up.

God's promises are all "*Yea and Amen*" in Christ Jesus. Is Christ yours? Then His promises are yours. Take them directly from his gracious lips.

1. "*Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward*" (Genesis 15:1). — This is the first time these words, "*fear not,*" are found in the Bible. They are spoken to a sinner who simply believed God when he told him of the Promised Seed. These words from the God of Glory are for you who trust that Promised One.
2. "*Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is*" (Genesis 21:17). — This is the second time these words are found in the Book. They were spoken to Hagar, a despised mistress, cast out into the desert, but one to whom Christ had appeared and to whom he had made a covenant promise (Genesis 16:10). Hagar had no reason to fear God's providence, neither do you, for whom Christ has spoken in the covenant.
3. In Genesis 26:24 the God appeared to Isaac at Beersheba, and said, "*Fear not; for I am with thee, and will bless thee.*" — Are you annoyed by the ungodly in this place of strife? If the God of Isaac is yours, his word is yours. "*Fear not; for I am with thee, and will bless thee.*"
4. Joseph said to his trembling brethren, "*Fear not; your God and the God of your father hath given you treasure*" (Genesis 43:23). Our great Joseph, whom we crucified, is in the place of God (Genesis 50:19-20). — He has restored what he took not away. — He has given us his treasure. — His thoughts toward us are only peace. — All because of a covenant!
5. "*Fear not to go down into Egypt*" (Genesis 46:3). — These words were spoken by the Lord God to Jacob in Beersheba to Jacob in his old age. He says the same to you and me. All is well, wherever we go.

6. *“Fear ye not ; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord”* (Exodus 14:13). — That was God’s word to Israel at the Red Sea, and his word to you and me in every extremity.
7. *“Fear not; for God is come to prove you that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not”* (Exodus 20:20). — That was God’s word to his people by the mouth of Moses at Sinai, when the people so felt the law and majesty of God as to cry out for a Mediator, as he drew near to God for them, as their mediator, and showed them how they must come to God (vv. 20-26).

(Exodus 20:20-26) “And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. (21) And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God *was*. (22) And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. (23) Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. (24) An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. (25) And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. (26) Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.”

8. *“Fear not: I am the First and the Last: I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold! I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death”* (Revelation 1:17). — Do you ever think you must tremble as you enter within the veil? Or when the Lord comes again in his glory? *“Fear not!”* He who died for you lives for you, intercedes for you, and has your name on his heart! Soon, he will come for you to carry you home.

Amen.