

Sermon of Haggai 2:1-9
Week 3
Series: God First
Theme: Consider God's Glory

Consider God's Glory

Introduction:

Today we are talking about God's glory and I want you to know that we witnessed a miracle on Monday night as your PCC men's softball team won their championship game and brought the church a little hardware. Article – PCC newsletter.

I think a pertinent illustration for a fall Sunday is the Buffalo Bills – There was definitely a high point in Bills history. Those who have been around long enough remember “the glory days” – 5 of those Bills enshrined in the HOF. 6 more have potential to be this year. 4 superbows in a row – the greatest comeback in NFL history. And if you talk to any Bills fan for more than 5 minutes chances are one might find themselves returning to the past, when things were better.

Problem: it's not reality anymore. And dwelling in the past is not helpful in accomplishing the work today. Can you imagine what would happen if for all the film sessions Sean McDermott said, “Ok instead of watching game footage from yesterday we are going to watch tape from the glory days and remember how awesome things used to be.”

How is that helpful? It's not.

Today in Haggai we are going to see that the people had a misplaced glory problem. You see they were focusing on the glory of the past, rather than on the work God had for them today. But people of God listen:

God wants us to know this morning that he wasn't just glorious then, but he is still glorious today.

The title of the message this morning is: Consider God's Glory

Recap:

The first week we saw God challenge our priorities, he commands us to build the temple, to put time into our spiritual lives, to put him and his mission at the center of our lives and the church.

Last week God challenged our obedience to that call as it is very easy for us to hear God's Word, even agree with God's Word, but then to do nothing in response to God's Word. God calls that sin. And it is his Spirit which motivates our in response to the awesome power of his presence with us.

So the people in Haggai repented, they began again to build the temple, they responded in obedience, and they were assured of God's presence with them. But today we will see that sometimes the work of God can be difficult for us because it looks different than we perhaps think it should look.

So let's jump into the text this morning:

In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet: "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, 'Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?'

At the beginning of chapter two we see that some time has passed since the end of chapter 1: approximately 4 weeks. And during this time of faithfully rebuilding the temple some things begin to happen. As they rebuild they begin to see, especially the older people – the people who had seen the first temple – that the structure they are building is nothing compared to that temple. There's no ark of the covenant, no eternal flame, no objects in the holy of holies, no royal palace next to it. It was just...lacking. So they begin to become nostalgic and remember the glory of times past.

If you are taking notes this morning, write this down:

1) Living in the past does not bring God glory.

God calls his people to remember the past, not to live in it.

Because when we do, we often become discouraged and deflated. Tell me if this has ever happened to you: Where you start off toward an objective and as you are moving toward it, it just doesn't quite look like what you had in your mind's eye. It doesn't live up to the expectation. Reality sets in a bit. Maybe it's a project or goal, maybe its just life. It's just not going to be how you wanted it to be. I think we can all relate to that. And we get discouraged. And discouragement is especially dangerous if it is accompanied by nostalgia – the sentimental recollection and longing for things past.

This type of thinking can be dangerous because it's self-defeating. Not only does it halt the progress of today, but it distorts the reality of the past. How often do we say things like this:

- Remember when we were kids? Those were the days – no responsibilities, no bills, played all the time. – Incorrect – being a kid sucked: never old enough, never tall enough, couldn't drive, had no money, had to go to school.
 - o It wasn't better. It was just different.
- It's apparent to me that we often view our spiritual experience the same way. Remember when churches were full every week? Remember when Christians acted like Christians and no one ever struggled in their faith? Remember when we sang hymns every week? Remember when the church was at the center of society? Man those were better days! Those were the glory days!
 - o No they weren't. They were filled with trial and tribulation and discouragement and angst all their own. They were just different.

Sometimes we have a problem when we begin to compare Former Glory/Current Circumstance

I'm not saying that remembering isn't important. It is. The Bible tells us to do it.

- “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the Lord brought you out from this place. - Ex. 13
- And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. - Deut. 8

The Bible tells us to remember, but it warns against us living in the past:

- “Do not dwell on the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Is. 43:18-19
- Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” Luke. 9:62
- Say not, “Why were the former days better than these?” For it is not from wisdom that you ask this. Ecc. 7:10

Remember the past, don't live in it.

Application:

What is God saying when he says remember? He is saying do not forget the wonders you saw and the work I have done. Hold on to those things lest you forget who I am and who I should be in your life today. But why does he say that? Because there's more work to be done today. We put on an addition 13 years ago. Super. We planted a church 10 years ago. Great. What are we doing today? What is God calling us to today? Part of this refresh campaign is the mindset that- We are moving forward, we are looking to tomorrow, there's still work to be done, we're not going to dwell in the past - things that worked 25 years ago don't work any more, things that were awesome 25 years ago not awesome anymore.

Ecc 3 tells us that there is a time and season for everything, and you remember it and you count it with your many blessings but then you move forward. Because God has another season for you, another chapter for your life, and guess what? He is still at work and he doesn't want us to miss out.

Living in the past does not bring God glory, why?

2) God is glorified when his people acknowledge and participate in the work he is doing today. (4-5)

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the Lord. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work, for I am with you, declares the Lord of hosts, ⁵ according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

Today's actions should not be defined by the past, but by the work the Lord wants to do today.

Is it hard to look forward? Is it difficult to lead change? Does it make people uncomfortable? Yes - it's new. The future is unknown. It's easier and more comfortable to stay where we are.

That is why God repeats the same phrase 3 times to both the leaders and to the people. He's saying, “Trust me, let me lead you beyond yourself into what you can't

yet see. I am doing something and it is part of my plan and my glory. So be strong Zerubbabel, be strong Joshua, be strong people of God and go after it...work. For "I am with you" – there's that covenant promise once again. The quelling of the fear. The strengthening in the midst of uncertainty. We are not doing the work alone, God tells us, I AM WITH YOU. "If God is for us who can be against us?" "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." "Forgetting what is behind I press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." But it gets even better, look what he says! "My Spirit *remains* in your midst." I am with you, and I'm not going anywhere. So fear not. Perfect love, faithful, unabandoning love drives out all fear. (refresh, missional, changing something in my life) God says, "Trust me with the unknown. Trust me with the future. Trust me with your troubled hearts and minds. Because I'm with you, and I know your issues, and I'm not leaving you. Who is this? That we should receive that sort of consideration from such a glorious being?"

Living in the past does not bring God glory. Instead, God is glorified when his people acknowledge, and participate in, and look forward to the work he is doing today. And what does that look like? Where is God's glory seen in the church? Don't miss this it's the central point of Haggai

3) God's glory is seen when God's house is restored

v.6 - For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. ⁷ And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, 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 shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts."

Let's talk about this title of God: the Lord of Hosts – Yahweh Sabaoth – appears 5 times in these 4 verses. And disclaimer: it does not mean Lord of the Sabbath, but something very different.

Also, NOT El Shaddai - "God Almighty" – and I bring that up because that's how it's translated in the NIV. While they are very similar there are also distinct differences. God Almighty, El Shaddai, is a reference to the power of God – but mainly to his power to sustain, supply, and nourish. He is El Shaddai, and I run to him because I know he has the power to cover me, to fight for and protect me, to keep my life.

Lord of Hosts, Yahweh Sabaoth, this name expresses something of the grandeur of God.

Significance: As the power of a human king is manifested by the extension of His property, by the people under his government, and by the number and quality of his army, so also God's kingship and His very dignity can be manifested and glorified by his property, His people, and His army.

Of course, God has no need of an army as a human king stands in need of one. His kingdom is based on His omnipotence; His voice has a creative power as the

psalmist declares, "when He raises His voice the earth crumbles away" (v. 6). No creature, neither the highest nor the least, nor even the greatest multitude can add anything to Him. Rather, they represent in some way His immense richness and His proper dignity.

He is Lord of the host of heaven and of the inhabitants of the earth, of Jews and Gentiles, of rich and poor, master and slave. The name is expressive of the majesty, power, and authority of God and shows that He is able to accomplish what He determines to do.

And it's this God who says "I will shake the heavens and the earth and the nations."

I will shake: we have seen this elsewhere in scripture

- Ex. 19:18 – When God gives his law to his people at Mount Sinai, the mountain shakes when the Lord descends on it
- Joel 2:10 – Talking about the day and coming of the Lord: The earth shakes when the Lord appears
- Heb 12:26-27 – Tells us that when God speaks his voice shakes the earth

When the Lord shows up things shake. From the tallest to the smallest, from the greatest to the least, there is nothing in all of creation that can stand up to the glory of Yahweh Sabaoth and not be shaken.

I am the God who can and will shake – he shakes creation, he shakes the nations, he shakes us. We all know that circumstances occasionally happen in life that leave us shaken, vulnerable, unsure – why?

- "So that the treasures of all nations come in and my house is filled with glory." (7)

What is God's Word saying to us? – There is some discrepancy among commentaries about how to best translate this phrase "treasures of all nations will come." You can actually see the discrepancy in front of you if you are using the NIV, I'm preaching out of the ESV, where it's translated "the treasures of all nations shall come in." The NIV translates the phrase "what is desired by all nations will come." In this case I think that's better.

See in the Hebrew text there is a singular subject with plural verb. Now I'm not a Hebrew expert but my understanding is, like we see in English, that's generally a no-no. We just don't do that.

Now people have tried to change the text by "fixing" it so there is subject/verb agreement. But I believe that because this is the inspired word of God, it has been written just the way the Lord intended it to be and we shouldn't go messing with the text to make it easier to understand. In fact I am a big proponent that, in many cases if there is a problem with translation, the most difficult one is most often the best one. Because I believe that there is a depth and richness to the text that comes from a source of wisdom and knowledge higher than our own and if we mess with that we can actually lose some of that richness.

So what's going on here? Let's look at the variances in meaning: The word "treasure" can also be translated "desire" or "the object of desire."

- If text is changed so both are singular: “The desired one of the nations, he will come” – Messianic – and it is scriptural, that God shakes us in order to reveal our need and the world’s need for the Desired One – for he is the center of all things, nothing else can fully satisfy the desires in our lives because our desires are really for him, our creator, our healer.
- If the text is changed so both are plural: “The treasures of the nations, they will come” - who are the treasures of the nations? That’s God’s people– Redemption – It is creation giving up that which is God’s – God’s redeemed people – those people purchased with his blood, filling his house to his glory - that’s good, that’s Rev 21 stuff.
- But here’s the thing, I think it’s both - and God has left the difficulty, God has left it ambiguous because as you dig into it you see the richness of all it means.
- But there’s a third way to translate it – how the text is originally written: “What is desired by the nations, they will come.”
- Jesus says, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” That singular thing at the center of your life. It drives all that you do, all that you say, how you live – the thing that all your life revolves around, that defines you, that motivates your choices and decisions, and your convictions – that is your treasure, that is the object of your desire.
- And all people, in all nations, in all the world have that singular thing, that thing at the center, and God’s desire is that we would each give that thing to him and to let him be glorified in his house, which is our bodies.
- “What is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory.” Who’s glorious? God! And because of that his place is at the center – filling your life, your house, you with his glory.
- Do you know that God shakes us in order to expose the insufficiency of our treasure?

V. 8 - God says, “The silver is mine, the gold is mine” all the treasured things, the desired things of the earth – the fulfillment of those desires are *found* in me. Yahweh Sabaoth. And to attain them your house needs to be restored. That which separates you and me that needs to be resolved, so fear not the Desired One will come.

And he has come in the person of Jesus Christ, God with us.

Will you let him into your life? It’s his temple. It’s his house.

For his desire is not just to save but to restore. To take that which is old and replace it with something new. To take that which is broken and to replace it with something whole: Will you let him do that? Giving to him our broken attitudes, broken love, broken selfish motivations, actions, words all to his continued and ever increasing glory here on this earth. And that glory is greater than the first!

Listen: As we bring the desires of our lives before God and lay them at his feet we open the door and allow him to meet and fulfill those desires because we rest in the care of Yahweh Sabaoth. That’s God’s message to the people of Haggai, that’s his message to us this morning. It is he alone who can bring restoration to our lives. And

when we are restored we are made whole. Too often, even as Christians, we settle for living lives filled with dysfunction and brokenness. And we make excuses for it, all the while saying, "I'd love for God to come in and fix it." That's not a God problem, that's a glory problem. And he calls you to see him as glorious once again in your eyes. Because it is only in that place, of proper priority, obedience, and recognition of his glory that we find his peace. "In this place," in your house, "I will give peace." Do you want his peace this morning church? Ascribe to him the glory due his name.