

PostExilicProphets 21-04-29a

Welcome to the 29th of April 2021 Thursday night Bible class at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're continuing our study of the post-exilic prophets in the book of Haggai and we're going to ensure that we are receptive, prepared, knit together by the active ministry of God's Holy Spirit. We'll do a quick review of what has gotten us to this point and then stride manfully onward.

Yes, manfully. Dark passions subdued. Look ever to Jesus.

He will carry you through. Ask the Savior to help you, comfort, strengthen, and keep you. He is willing to aid you.

He will carry you through. Song I learned as a child, only half my current height, but good words to remember. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and our study and we'll get started.

Father, it is such a blessing to gather with believers of like mind, whether personally or in spirit over our linked technology to share together this time of instruction and learning from your word, benefiting from the ministry of your Holy Spirit, giving us guidance and insight for understanding, for interpretation, and for application of what your word has to teach us. We pray that as we look at these passages tonight, the principles and the doctrines that we see will encourage us, motivate us, and thoroughly equip us for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. You will remember looking at Haggai chapter 1 and any sort of heading that might be in your Bible. My New King James subtitles this portion, the first 11 verses, the command to build God's house.

You think, well, that's great. The Jews are returning from exile. They're sitting in their panel houses.

God's house is in ruins. God says, hey, what about my house? Is it time for you to sit there in luxury while my place of glory is in tatters? And that all makes sense at a surface level, but what have we observed over the past few weeks? In terms of interpretation and application for us, we don't need to build a material temple as an earthly dwelling place or location for the glory of God. We live in the reality.

It's such an irony, isn't it, that the invisible is the reality and the visible earthly shadows are just that, shadows. So this shadow, the example of national Israel, the earthly people of God being exhorted and encouraged to build the house of God and a for his presence after a time of judgment and after a time of trial and hardship speaks to us of higher and more real things. And that is to cultivate the presence of God.

When you talk about the house of God and the glory of God, you're talking about his presence.

And we've seen we've seen that this message came through Haggai just a month before the Feast of Trumpets, the new year, time for a fresh start, the end of the time of judgment and period of captivity and the beginning of a life of relative freedom in returning to the land, having their own possessions and being out from under the kind of abject captivity that they experienced over the preceding seven plus decades. So for us, again, when we read this, it's an interesting historical footnote in the life of the nation of Israel and in its post-monarchy days, because there will not be another occupant of the throne of David until the Lord Jesus reestablishes that throne in the millennial kingdom.

So what does it mean to us? Well, we don't need to build a material temple. We are the temple, our fellowship as a collective, as a group of believers and individually. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? It is a resting place, a place of residence, a place of function, a place where God's glory can shine forth and God's power can be made known.

Right. So as we looked at this, what is required to get this temple built? It isn't simply an exhortation. Well, look, your house is built.

Now take those same tools, get some more materials and go down and finish my house. What does Haggai tell the people they need to do? What does God charge them with? And we saw this in the last part of this first section. Consider your ways in verse five.

Consider your ways in verse seven. Look at the difference between the way things are and the way things ought to be. And God is unable to bless the labor of your hands, the fruit of your fields and vineyards and flocks and herds.

God cannot bless you because you need to change your mind about your ways. So it is difficult to turn the application corner if we want God's presence in our midst. We need to consider our ways and any place there is change needed, any place we need change of mind, we need change of priority.

We need to reevaluate our goals and our values and set new and better priorities on how we spend our time, what we do with our attention, with our energy, with our prayer life, with our life of fellowship. To what extent do we nod to God instead of centering our lives on God? If you think about the new Jerusalem, this is a relatively new thought for me that just comes to so often since we looked at the end times, the end of our end time study when we were looking at the new Jerusalem and the kingdom of the father. What is the defining feature of the new Jerusalem? What sets it apart? And I'm not talking about the gates of Pearl.

I'm not talking about the foundations and the angels and the walls and the streets. What is the thing that defines the new Jerusalem? God's throne is there. The lamb of God's throne is right next to that throne.

And the river of life flows out from those thrones through the trees of life on each side of the river, providing fruit and leaves for nourishment, for the healing of the nations. This is probably

somewhat metaphorical in the sense that we're not built. It's like trying to explain business building construction to cockroaches where we're just not, we don't have the mental elevation to understand what the new Jerusalem is going to be like.

We know it's a city built four square. It's already got one extra dimension than what we're used to in a city. But the defining feature is the presence of God.

The defining feature in a habitation, a place of God's glory is his presence. So if we are going to be that habitation, if we are going to be his dwelling, his tabernacle, his temple individually and collectively, we need to be sanctified and qualified and prepared for his presence. This all sounds great.

We've talked about it. That's review. My question is, how do you do that? If we just close our Bibles, shut off the equipment, go back to what we were doing and say, all right, I need to be a dwelling place for God.

Sure. Hope it happens. What practical steps can I take? What course should I pursue? What thoughts should I think? What priorities and goals and values should I establish and emphasize in my life? What can I do different than what I'm doing right now? Thankfully, the word of God has a lot to say about this.

And as we continue after this exhortation, which is given in on the first day of the month, gives them one whole month to get ready for the for the Feast of Trumpets, Rosh Hashanah, and 10 days later, the Day of Atonement, right? So if you add up the 30 days of the month of Elul and the 10 days of the next month that it's going to start the new year, how many days total do they have before the Day of Atonement? 40 days. Interesting biblical number, which we do not have time to review, but 40 is the number of testing, 40 days in the desert for the Lord Jesus, 40 years in the desert for the people of Israel, not exactly desert, but wilderness. 40 days and 40 nights, rain on the earth, judgment, testing, who floats, who sinks, right? So 40, 40 days.

What are you going to do with those 40 days between the delivery of Haggai's message and the Day of Atonement where it's the biggest feast of the year? High priest is going to go into the Holy of Holies with sacrificial blood, right? It's a big deal. It's the biggest deal. There is no bigger deal in the feasts and sacrifices of Israel than going in and the high priest once a year, looking upon the mercy seat atop the Ark of the Covenant where the glory of God is supposed to reside, right? And we've talked about the Lord Jesus coming in on the Sunday before he was crucified with so much celebration, so much adulation, so many hosannas and blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord and the rest of it.

He came, looked at this temple, greatly modified and magnified by Herod, but it's this essential building and left. God is going to look at this building in the next few weeks and he is going to evaluate it. It gets an evaluation in Haggai's day.

It gets an evaluation in Jesus' day and 70 years, 40 years actually after the Lord Jesus, almost

exactly 40 years, whole thing's going to be laid waste, made into rubble and will disappear off the face of the earth. They can't even find the stones. They can't find a scrap of the gold.

They can't find an inscription. They can't find a shovel or a pan or a fork or a piece of the altar or a piece of the candlestick or a piece of any of the stuff that was in the temple. This magnificent, huge, glowing central definitional structure in Jerusalem has vanished.

Just as Jesus said, there will not be one stone left upon another and you can't even find those stones. The best they can do is show you some rocks of the retaining wall under part of where the thing generally used to be. It is almost like the top of Mount Carmel.

Even the that it sat on is gone. It's that completely gone. That's what I call judgment.

Now, what did we just do in terms of comparison of the shadow and the reality? Where is the house of God now? Look in the mirror. How exciting is it to contemplate our fate being the same as this temple in the eternal future? Nothing, no dirt, no inheritance, no place of residence in the New Jerusalem. Even the place where your house was supposed to sit is just a crater filled with air.

It can happen. It can happen to believers. It is happening and it will happen to believers.

You and I do not want to be these people. So this is an important subject. How can we be sure that not only do we build this house, but we build it right and it becomes a habitation for God? We're going to see tonight the problem with this building because it tells us in verse 12, Haggai chapter 1 verse 12.

So Haggai delivers this message, right? Consider your ways, get her done. So Zerubbabel and Joshua, you've got civil government leadership, you've got religious government leadership, you've got the governor and the priest, right? They with the remnant of the people, doesn't say all the people with a whole heart, there's a remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet as the Lord their God had sent him and the people feared what? Circle it. The presence.

The people respected it. They were awestruck by it. It impressed them.

So Haggai spoke the Lord's message to the people. And what is God's message? They are awestruck by his presence. And he says, I am with you.

I am with you. The presence of God is so important. We looked at this some last time.

We looked at Deuteronomy chapter 20, verse one. We looked at Deuteronomy 31, verse six, God promising Israel, I will be with you. Isaiah 41, 10, fear thou not.

Why? I am with you. And innumerable passages. When you start looking at everywhere, the word of God emphasizes his presence.

The promise I am with you. I will be with you. Whether it is the name of the Lord Jesus himself, isn't it interesting that he's called Yeshua from that day to this, or Jesus.

But what did the angel say to call him? Emmanuel, which means God with us. John chapter one, the word became flesh and dwelt with us, among us. And we beheld his glory.

With the presence comes the glory. With the glory, you find the presence. Matthew 28, 20.

I don't think I had time to give this one to you last time. Last verse in the gospel of Matthew. Everybody remembers Matthew 28, 19.

As you go into all the world, make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the father, son, and spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you. And then what's the next verse? And lo, I am with you. Matthew 28, 20.

The final thing Jesus says in the gospel of Matthew, the last propositional truth. I am with you to the end. I'm with you.

This is potential. This is conditioned upon fulfilling 19. I am with you.

You can put Matthew 18, 20. You can put Isaiah 43, 2, 5. You can put any number of other verses with it. I don't know what's happening here.

I'm getting some noises out of my phone. So let me just give you a couple more. In fact, hang on a second.

Let me get this. There. Okay.

Must not be a good thing for this information to get out because you can't believe the stuff that's been happening to me trying to talk about this. But just in the book of Genesis, how important was the presence of God to the patriarchs? And when you look at the life of Jacob and God tells him sojourn in this land in Genesis 26, verse three, you can just write these down and look at them later. Genesis 26, three sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, you and your descendants.

I'll give all these lands. I'll establish the oath, which I swore to your father, Abraham. Genesis 28, 20.

Jacob made a vow saying, if God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take and will give me food to eat and garments to wear. Genesis 31, three, the Lord said to Jacob, return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives. And I will be with you.

Uh, 48, 21. Jacob Israel says to Joseph, I'm about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers. Exodus chapter three, verse 12.

God said to Moses, certainly I will be with you. And this is the sign that it is. I who have sent you

when I, when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.

This is God talking to Moses at the burning bush at Sinai, Exodus chapter four, verse 12, go. And I, even I will be with you. I will be with your mouth.

I will teach you what you will say. You're about to speak to him and put the words in his mouth. I will be with your mouth.

I will teach you what you are to do. So here's my question. And we could go on that.

It's just amazing how much there is in the Bible about the presence of God. If we're going to be the temple, we need to be equipped for the presence. So how can we ensure that God is with us? Is it just a matter of, Oh God be with me.

Um, is there a magic formula? What should we do? Turn with me to second Corinthians chapter 13. This is the answer. Second Corinthians chapter 13, and we're heading for verse 11, second Corinthians 13, 11, which says, finally, brethren rejoice.

And, and it's easy because in the King James, I really would love to read this to you in the King James. It says, uh, finally, brethren, farewell be perfect. All you have to do for the presence of God is be perfect.

Reminds me of Steve Martin's advice on how to be a millionaire first, get a million dollars. Well, finally, brethren become complete. It says in your new King James, which is a good translation, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace.

And the God of love and peace will what will be with you here is how to ensure that God is with us. It works both ways. If God is with us, then we are his temple.

We are his dwelling place. And if we are that temple, if we follow the exhortation of Haggai and Zachariah to build this temple, God will be with us. So how do we build it? This is how take a look at it.

The first one says, become complete. This is the passive form from Katartizo. Katartizo.

And this is an easier, uh, uh, word to understand when you break it into its component parts. First of all, this is a, an imperative, but it's middle or passive in its meaning. You remember, I've told you the middle voice is kind of reflexive.

This is something you do to or for yourself. So if I said bucket be filled with water, well, the bucket can't fill itself. Now they've probably got some kind of Alexa thing where you could say, you know, lamp come on and the lamp will turn itself on, so to speak.

But, uh, we are able to do for ourselves because of grace and the resources that God has given us. So this is a present middle or passive imperative. And it means keep on doing this present

means this is an ongoing process.

This is kind of like keep marching or be marching, be marching along. Kata means according to, and artizo is where we get the word artisan or artist art. And this, this is be a product of an artisan.

And it comes to me, be completed, be finished. When an artisan or an artist is working on something and it's half formed, it's not ready when it's ready. When it's finished, then it is displayed.

Then it is put to use. And an artisan might be a blacksmith and he makes a plow. And then when you go out and use the plow, that plow is fitted for its use.

It is complete. It's got all of its parts. It's got connections so that you can attach it to your ox or your a beast that is going to pull it or whatever.

Artisans fashion a thing and perfect a thing and suit it for a purpose. All of these shades of meaning are used with kata artizo. And when it's in the passive, it means become these things.

So not only should we be a workman that does not need to be ashamed, but we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for these good works. So this requires a measure of, uh, understanding of how being shaped works. How do I become the product of artistry or the artisanship of the Holy Spirit? How do I do that? Well, I've got to change my mind where it needs changing.

I've got to purge out Levin where it needs purging out. I've got to exchange works of darkness and works of death for works of light and works of eternal life. So not laying again, the foundation of change of mind away from dead works and faith toward God, as it tells us in Hebrews, this is foundational.

And we shouldn't ever stop this process. If I consider my ways, this is the first step. Can't change your ways if you don't consider them.

Aren't there some people you see on the news and you say, I wish these people would stop and consider their ways and consider the outcome of their ways. How this is, you know, do they not look up? Can they not see past the moment and past the immediate and past the political and past the short-term goal and understand that you can win a battle and lose the war? You can polish brass while the Titanic is sinking. You can have improper priorities and short-term goals and your picture straightening and your house is burning down around your ears.

So consider our ways. So how can we cut our Tido? How can we be prepared? This by the way, in the active voice is used of the disciples when Jesus finds them and they are mending their nets. This is cut our teaser.

They're restoring them to function, ensuring that there's no holes and no missing weights and

so on, that they are perfectly suited rather than be perfect. The King James could have said, be perfectly fitted, be perfectly suited, be thoroughly equipped or thoroughly furnished for every good work. Keep your finger at a second Corinthians 13 and turn back to first Corinthians chapter one.

Paul brackets his words to the Corinthians here in first Corinthians chapter one, verse 10. He uses this very same word. I plead with you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

First Corinthians one 10 Paul pleads with us in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together. Cut our Tidzo present passive made complete. This is actually cut our Tidzo.

It's a, it's a participle that you be fitted and joined together ones in a harmonious union, a well oiled sewing machine. Don't have a part falling off. Don't have things coming loose.

Don't have belts slipping and snapping. Don't have hoses cracking and leaking. Don't have tires going flat.

Every part, every piece fitted together, working in harmony. Cut our T's minnow. I think I said it was passive, but it's a, it's a participle.

And it means this is, that's where you take a verb and turn it into a noun. You are fitted together ones. How do you do that? You are saying the same thing.

You share a common view, common goals, common values, common priorities. This is why there are multiple local churches, because it is better for believers to be in harmony and yet maybe differ from another group of believers that have a different emphasis or a different understanding or a different feeling of what their purpose is. It is better to be harmonious than to be right.

If you're really committed and you think that, that some of these beliefs are central and critical and cannot be compromised, do not stick around with believers that don't have that understanding because the disunity is worse than the error. God is going to bless unified flaky edge believers more than he's going to bless correct, disharmonious and contentious believers. Being right is not the most important thing in the body of Christ being knitted together.

And if you have any questions about that, look up your unity passages, get a, get a knaves topical Bible or something, get a Thompson chain and look up unity, harmony, that there'd be no divisions. Read first Corinthians again. We just finished it a year or two back, right? God says, I would rather you stuck together and weren't exactly right on every minor detail, not compromising essentials, deity of Christ, salvation by faith, grace, believe in your heart.

God has raised him from the dead and so on. But when is the rapture going to happen? Pre, mid or post? Um, how many spiritual gifts are there? And which one have I got? Um, is it wrong to, you know, get happy in the Lord and wave your hands in the air? Non-essentials do not

break fellowship. Do not be disunited over non-essential things, harmony, unity, speaking the same things.

This is the first thing Paul exhorts the Corinthians with here in chapter one of his first letter. You should speak the same thing in order that there be no divisions among you. No divisions.

Don't split over what color the paint on the wall is. Don't split over what kind of music you sing. Find a happy compromise.

Live with it. Don't break fellowship over it. Be united.

So point one of how to be the temple, how to be the sanctified, qualified dwelling place of God. Don't be cracked. Don't be falling apart.

Don't be coming unglued with fellow believers. Unity. Speaking the same thing.

No divisions. Perfectly joined together. Perfectly joined.

Not almost joined. Not kind of joined. Not I smile in your face and all the time I'm backstabbing you and saying bad things about you to others.

Perfectly. Katartizo. This is the kind of joining that only the Holy Spirit can do.

If I feel like I'm coming unraveled, that I'm getting separated from believers that I know in my heart I ought to be unified with, I need power beyond myself. This is a supernatural temple. It is held together with supernatural mortar.

It is the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. Unity of the spirit, bond of peace. Go to Ephesians chapter four.

One Lord, one faith. Remember the seven single things? One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of us all. There's two more.

I just looked at them this morning. Look them up. There's seven.

One hope of your calling. That's six out of the seven. I'd get like a, what, 87 on my test.

Center focus on the things that unify. God is not going to inhabit a temple that's got daylight showing through the ceiling and air blowing through the walls. That's not perfect.

It's not complete and it's not unified. So back to second Corinthians chapter 13 verse 11. Finally, brethren, as I tell you goodbye, Paul says, become complete, unified.

This word is used over and over again in Galatians chapter six verse one. When it talks about those who are weak in the faith, you can flip over just a few pages from where we are. Galatians chapter six, verse one.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. You know what the word restore is there? Be the artisan that puts that back together, restores it to full function, unity, no cracks, no leaks, no runs, no hits, no errors. You who are spiritual, not only do this for yourself, but when we figure out how to do this ourselves, we will be able to restore others and mend the breaches.

Blessed are the peacemakers, right? This is part of being the temple. If you want a wonderful exercise, find something that gives you Strong's numbers and everywhere you can find that word used. The Strong's number for Cotartizo is 2675, 2675.

Follow it through the New Testament. Look at how it's used. This is what you and I need to be.

Do you want to be God's dwelling place? Do you want to have God's glory? In us, among us, and shining out from us? Cotartizo is the first step. Be complete. Well, we've got a lot more to say about this.

We've got plenty of guidance here from the Apostle Paul on how to be the temple of God, and we'll see it when we come back from our break.