

Consider Your Ways

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[0 : 00] I want to take a moment to give an extra hand to Carissa. Thank you so much Carissa. Thank you. I just wanted to say real quick that I grew up singing from the time I was like six years old in bars.

And this is the first time I've ever led worship. So I just wanted to say that God is amazing, right? And thank you so much. Thank you.

Thank you for having me. Of course. Amen. Thank you Carissa. If you didn't do that, you guys would have been hearing me sing acapella. Great shot. All right.

Well, let me quick pray. Well, Father, we know my need for you right now. I feel my own inadequacies.

I see the glory of the text that is before us and the good things that you have to say. And I look at what I'm prepared to say and it feels so much smaller.

[1 : 05] So Father, I pray that you would make much. These little fish and loaves that I can offer and that you would be at work in the hearts of every hearer. No matter what planting, no matter what watering any human being does, it is only you who can give the growth.

So Father, I ask that you would send your spirit in our midst to lift our eyes up to you, Lord Jesus. And as our text today is a little bit more of a heavy one, you know my heart's burden all week has been that it would not be a crushing burden.

But Lord, that it would be a, if anything, a godly grief that leads to, in the end, or repentance and in the end, eternal life without regret. May there be life through this message.

May there be life through your word. And may you bring each one of us in any corrections that we may need back onto the path. And we pray all of this in your great and holy name. We love you and trust you, Lord Jesus.

Amen. Amen. In terms of audiovisual stuff, Zach, are we good with the... We are about to find out. Alright. This will be exciting.

[2 : 13] Well, I invite you all to open up your Bibles with me to the book of Haggai. Minor Prophet. It's a very small book at the end of the Old Testament. So the way I like to find it is if you open up your Bible to the book of Matthew and go backwards.

And you go backwards past Malachi, backwards past Zechariah, and you should hit Haggai. And if you hit Zephaniah, you've gone a little too far. Or alternatively, there's also a pew Bible in front of you.

Haggai should be on page 791. So while it takes a little time to get there, I do want to take just a quick moment to express how grateful I am to be here.

Many of you may not know this, but this is my childhood church. This is where I grew up. I believe I came to know the Lord at some point in my childhood under the ministry of Pastor Bill.

He baptized me back when the stage was over there. I did my Eagle Scout project on the retaining wall back behind the building. And so it's very sweet for me to have the honor and privilege of standing in for Pastor Bill.

[3 : 18] Very big shoes to fill, but it is a great honor and privilege. And I appreciate your prayers because I very much need them. If you're like me, you may be wondering, why Haggai?

Of all the things I could have chosen to go through over the summer, why choose a somewhat random Old Testament minor prophet to go through? And I want to share, before we read the text, to share a little bit of my heart and what I'm hoping and praying that the Lord will share, that we will get to share together through this summer.

So back when I met with Pastor Bill to talk about the possibility of doing this internship and in preaching through this summer, Carolyn and I were in a season of pretty intense discouragement.

That was earlier this year.

Some of you know our church background. We have been going to a church plant for seven years or so. And there had been about a year and a half long process, beginning with the elder being disqualified and then resigning from ministry, followed by a long season of slow and painful decay, a lot of dysfunction, and it was really painful.

And then eventually the church closed its doors. And many of you in this room were part of that. You know that it was a painful, long process. And so when I met with Pastor Bill, the church had just closed its doors.

[4 : 33] We were in the church search process. And for the first time in our married lives, we were churchless, which had a bigger impact on us than we thought. And on top of that, right when all the church stuff started to fall apart, I also started a new job.

Like the exact same week that things started to go south at the church. And it was a hard, hard transition. It was a job where I was wildly underqualified and a job where the role and my design just didn't quite fit.

And so we were in a season of great discouragement. And it was in that season that the Lord sent Haggai to us in our marriage, in our nighttime time in the Word. And I was encouraged because I was in a season of responding to this discouragement.

My response was to drift, to withdraw from hard things, to withdraw from relationships, to withdraw from church's youth group, to withdraw even from work and working hard at work.

And so I was drifting into a life of seeking my own comfort and self-preservation rather than seeking first and foremost God and His glory. And that's where the Lord brought Haggai in.

[5 : 42] And what we will, Lord willing, see over these next six weeks in the message of this book is how God graciously calls His people back from their drifting, back to faithfulness, and then encourages them in their discouragements.

That's what we're going to see. Our text today is more so on that first side, so I'll warn you, this is the rebuke passage. Prepare your hearts. And I even appreciate that passage that you brought up, James, in terms of the book of Haggai.

I really do think that's an apt description of it. Admonish the idol, encourage the faint-hearted, and help the weak. I think that's a good summary of the book of Haggai, but today is very much the admonish the idol.

So I invite you, hopefully you've found Haggai by now, and I invite you to stand with me as I read from the book of Haggai. I don't know if we have it up on the screen, maybe not. Which, by the way, I just want to say thank you, Raj, for all the work that he had been doing.

Thank you. Because he had to work through a lot of issues to get all this working, sound and audio-visual stuff. So thank you, Raj. Haggai, chapter one. Read along with me as, or well, I'll read.

[6 : 49] Follow along. That's right, follow along. Thank you, thank you. In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak the high priest.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord. Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet.

Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses? All this house lies in ruins. Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.

You have so much and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough. You drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord.

[8 : 08] You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house.

Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain and the new wine, the oil and what the ground brings forth on man and beast and on all their labors.

Let me pray real fast. Father, as we read from your word this heavy passage, I pray that it would not be, again, crushing to any heart.

That your spirit would apply. If there is any room for correction or correction, of course, for as each one of us probably need to some degree or another, that it would be done in the spirit of gentleness and lowliness, which marks you, Lord Jesus.

Be with us. Encourage us. Teach us from your word. Cause me to decrease, that you may increase. I pray in your great and holy name. Amen. You may be seated. So, as we walk through this passage, here's kind of the road map of what I hope to walk us through.

[9 : 35] For those of you who are note takers, this is your outline. I want to start with giving a little bit of, spend a little bit of extra time setting the stage, giving a lot of background.

Cause there's a lot of stuff that we read in Haggai that we might not be super familiar with right off the bat. So I want to spend a little time setting the stage for the passage and then we're just going to walk through the text verse by verse and make some observations as we go.

So starting with that, setting the stage. So many of you may be familiar with your Old Testament. You may know that Israel is God's covenant people.

It means that they are the people who God chose and said, I will be your God and you will be my people. And for the Israelites, they were under what's called the Mosaic Covenant.

And part of that, so if you read your Old Testament, you read Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, that's all giving this Mosaic Covenant is God's agreement with the nation of Israel and how they were to operate.

[10 : 34] It has instructions for how the Israelites are to live, things like the Ten Commandments. It has prescriptions for sacrifices and how to, atonement for sin.

It has just how to, how they should work together because they were a geopolitical nation and laws for how they were to govern themselves. And then, the reason I bring all this background in is because at the end of the Mosaic Covenant, what pertains to Haggai, is there's this long list of blessings and curses.

So the blessings were if you obey God, God will bless you with all these things. He'll be with you and He'll give you a lot of these physical blessings. The land, prosperity, physical, numerical population growth, lots of children, those kinds of things.

But, if they don't obey, there's a list of curses about six times as long as the list of blessings. And one of those curses was a warning about captivity.

That if the Israelites were not careful to obey God and they did not walk in His statutes, in His way, then He would send them and their king into a foreign nation.

[11 : 44] A nation that they did not know and they would be enslaved. They would have children, but the children wouldn't even be their own children. They would be slaves in captivity. So, this is from the very beginning God is setting the stage.

If you obey me, things will go well. If you don't obey me, things will be really tough. So, how does Israel do throughout the Old Testament? None. The spiritual rock star?

Yeah, that's right. Big thumbs down. There's a few bright spots like King Josiah. But, for the most part though, it is a lot of idolatry and a lot of rebellion, a lot of turning away from God and a lot of running away from God.

God could have just immediately in the first generation fulfilled His word and sent them into exile, right? Anybody want to guess how long He waited before He sent them into exile? 400.

200 years. 200? 700. From the time that the Mosaic Covenant was given until they went into exile. 700 years of patience. Sending judge after judge and then prophet after prophet, calling the people back to faithfulness.

[12 : 52] But eventually, He did fulfill His word. And this is where we're inching closer to Haggai. Bear with me. But, but God eventually does fulfill His word that He warned about.

And He brings this nation called Babylon. They come, they siege Jerusalem, they destroy the city, they take the people captive and enslave them, bring them into a foreign land away from their homeland.

And most devastating of all, they destroy the temple of God. The temple was everything to the old covenant system. That's where sacrifices were made.

That's where, when you prayed, you would pray toward the temple. And that's where God's presence was. In the Holy of Holies, in the Ark of the Covenant, that's where God's presence was

manifested. And so for God to allow the temple to be destroyed was the ultimate sign. His glory has left. And I'm giving you in to judgment. And this is the low, low point in Israel's history. Total judgment, destruction, no temple.

[13:57] Enslaved in a foreign land yet again. But, God starts to bring redemption. And here's where we get into the book of Ezra, where we're going to see the exact and explicit background for Haggai in the book of Ezra.

So after 70 years of being in captivity, Israel's gone for 70 years, God brings a new nation called Persia, modern day Iran, if anybody's curious.

And the Persian Empire comes and they conquer the conquerors. They conquer Babylon and they, yeah, they get rid of the Babylonians and they actually let the Israelites go back.

So here, at the beginning of Ezra, I don't know if we have, thanks Zach, appreciate you being back there. In Ezra chapter 1, we read, Cyrus the king of Persia takes over Babylon and he says, the Lord, the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him and let him go to Jerusalem, which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord. Notice how central the temple is.

[15:07] Immediately, as soon as Cyrus comes in, even he acknowledges, you guys got to go back and rebuild your temple. This is central to their way of life and so he sends them back and they get going on it.

In the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month of Zerubbabel, that name rings a bell from our passage in Haggai, son of Shealtiel and Jeshua, which is another form of spelling, Joshua, the son of Josedach, made a beginning together with the rest of their kinsmen, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity.

They appointed the Levites from 20 years old and upward to supervise the work of the house of the Lord. So this is great, right? Things are going great. They hit their low point down in captivity.

Now they're on the up and up. Cyrus has blessed them and said, yeah, go rebuild your temple.

They get going. Things are going good, right? For a little bit. But then, the music starts to shift from major key into minor key.

A few verses later, we read this. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the father's houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid.

[16:25] They're sad. You wonder why. This is a great thing. But it's because these are the older folk among them who actually remembered the first temple. They were old enough to remember seeing Solomon's temple in all of its glory.

And then they look at the city in rubble and they look at this tiny foundation that they've just laid and they go, this is nothing. We're going to see that in Haggai.

That's the exact words that they use. This is as nothing in our eyes. This feels so small. We thought that this would be this great glorious thing and it feels so small and they were discouraged.

So that's the first note of minor key that comes in is this internal discouragement in the older generation weeping over how far they've fallen and how little the work seems now.

Add on to that a second minor key note that enters the song a few verses later says the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build.

[17:26] And the math of the Old Testament add internal external discouragement plus external opposition and the result is they stop working on the house of the Lord.

They stop building the temple. They're discouraged. They're weary. And it is into this exact context that we see in Ezra Haggai comes into the picture.

That's why I'm going through this whole background. We see exactly where Haggai fits in. Now the prophets Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God who was over them.

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Josedach arose and began to rebuild the house of God that is in Jerusalem and the prophets of God were with them supporting them.

That's what Haggai is really about. Haggai is sent into these people who are discouraged and they are facing opposition and persecution and he is sent to them to encourage them to start rebuilding the temple.

[18 : 33] And that brings us back then to verse 1 of Haggai chapter 1. The second year of Darius the king he is the king of Persia now and you see the word of the Lord coming by Haggai to Zerubbabel he is the governor he is the political ruler of this colony at Jerusalem that is trying to rebuild and Joshua is the high priest the religious ruler.

So hopefully that sets the stage gives us the biblical and historical background to understand the rest of this passage. So the question is what does God say through Haggai to these people? It comes in in verse 2 thus says the Lord of hosts these people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord. Which by the way this isn't like they stopped rebuilding and then God sent Haggai like a week later like hey what's up with you guys?

They had stopped building for over a decade and this was what they were saying time has not yet come so I like to call this the people's excuse.

this was their reasoning they were not obeying what God had told them to do what he had and following through with what should be their highest priority of rebuilding the temple of God and we can understand why because of that I think we've all gone through seasons of that internal discouragement or external barriers hardships and stuff and we know it's hard to obey sometimes but and so we can do the same thing and say now is just not a good time.

[20 : 09] Right? It's not a good time for me to obey God. I'm not really feeling up to it. God might put some conviction on our heart whether it be through reading the word we go to church talking with a friend God puts some conviction on our heart and for whatever reason or another we say now is not a good time.

Now is not really a good time for me to be caring for my parents my aging parents life's really busy and hard with my career and stuff so I don't really have time to to honor my father and mother like God says or I know that abiding in Christ is my utmost priority and the thing that I need but now is just a really busy season I'll figure that out later I'll figure out my walk with God when life's not so busy and we can do that we can say some clear way that God is putting on our hearts to obey him and we can say now is not a good time so I just want us to be wary of that impulse in our hearts be wary of that whenever even if it's in this sermon or whatever be wary of the impulse which says I'll obey later which actually means I don't want to obey right now and so that's the the Lord is addressing this excuse now is not a good time and what's the Lord's response to that excuse we read that in verses 3 and 4 and the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in paneled houses while this house lies in ruins and so the Lord is addressing their reasoning by pointing out two different ironies there's two different ironic things that God is pointing out the first one is his use of that word time the people are saying oh now is not a good time for me to be obeying God

I don't really have time to do that obedience stuff and God is saying what do you have time for and inevitably the answer is I have time for whatever I want and so that's the first irony and the Lord is pointing that out the second irony is this contrast between paneled houses and a house that lies in ruins people debate left right and center and what exactly a paneled house would look like in like 500 BC I'll spare you that all that you need to know is that a paneled house took time this isn't just a quick little tent that they put together so they could survive or whatever they're building houses and they're doing if any of you have ever done a roofing project you know even just that process takes forever of like paneling your roof panels and getting them all lined up and stuff and so they were they had all the time in the world to work on paneling their house well in the meantime God's house lies in ruins completely neglected with no time being given to it this is where

I warned you guys this is the convicting message in Haggai it'll get more encouraging upbeat later but but we have to that's right I heard a pastor say recently I'm not the chef I'm just the waiter and what these two ironies are pointing at and the Lord's answer to their excuse is getting at the simple idea that the Israelites had their priorities backwards we're told in the New Testament what right what did Jesus say seek first my kingdom or like well like seek first your own kingdom and your own righteousness and then after that seek my kingdom he says the same thing to seek first there's always a prioritization in the Christian life of God and his kingdom first and our stuff is important God wants us and he knows what we need he knows we need job he knows we need career he knows we need rest all these different things he knows that we need all of them but there ought to always be that prioritization and the Israelites got it backwards they were seeking and building their own house first and getting it pristine getting it paneled before even touching the work of the house of the Lord this is where

I've been sweating bullets all week as I ask myself what are my priorities and I mentioned at the beginning part of why Haggai was so encouraging and helpful to me was because in that season that we were out of discouragement I had been again drifting and withdrawing out of all of my stuff I had been intentionally not engaging in some of the church things that I probably should have been because I was in this mode of seeking my own comfort my own self preservation and it was part partially the Lord used this passage to help wake me up and say for lack of better term you got this backwards and so I want to ask you guys the very same question that the Lord asks the people now therefore thus says the Lord of hosts consider your ways are there and and again

[25 : 41] I've really really wrestled with this and I want you to know Father I ask you even now as I say this for me to say this the way that I intend this to I don't want each one of us to leave crushed feeling like we're just complete failures because I need to be spent let me give sorry this is off script here but I literally at our last church I did a residency program where I was like being trained up for a pastor and I literally had to make a spreadsheet with every and I had to have every single half hour booked minus seven hours for sleeping every half hour had to be booked exactly so I could make the best use of my time and stuff and I'm not at all saying that please do not hear me say that and even let me go one step further than that there are some people in this room I know them I've seen them I've walked with them who do this who genuinely not perfectly but genuinely prioritize well there are people in this room who have learned how to walk through seasons of discouragement and seasons of opposition like the

Israelites without flipping the priority they've learned how to keep God first and foremost they've learned how to continue seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and so part of when I even ask consider your ways might even be you know Lord there's little ways here or there that I've gotten off track but thank you for keeping as I look over the general pattern of my life for keeping enabling me to keep you at the center and for those people who have learned to do that two encouragements for you number one protect that please protect that because it's very easy to get those priorities backwards again protect that and then number two spread that I need that in the example I was using at the beginning of the season of discouragement that I was in and I was drifting and going off clearly I'm not there I was that person who responded to the discouragement with flipping my priorities so those of you who know how to keep

God first and foremost teach me spread that to everybody else through encouragement through intentional discipleship whatever that looks like live that out that's a beautiful thing and I know there are people in this church I see them live it out so keep going on but for those like me who do not have it figured out in that way and find yourself in a season or maybe even just in certain areas of your life find that my priorities are backwards I want to take you to where the Lord takes the text next which is basically to ask the question how does that go how does it go for us how do we fare when we start prioritizing ourselves and our own house and our own kingdom above God does that tend to go well for us let's see how it went for the Israelites you've sown much and harvested little you eat but you never have enough you drink but you never have your fill you clothe yourselves but no one is warm and he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes amen amen for me jump down to verse nine you looked for much and behold it came to little you brought it home and when you brought it home

I blew it away why declares the Lord of hosts because of my house that lies in ruins while each of you busies himself with his own house you see that prioritization issue again the Lord bringing that up therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew and the earth has withheld its produce and I have called for a drought on the land and on the hills on the grain the new wine the oil and on what the ground brings forth on man and beast and on all their labors and the Lord is painting a holistic picture here in every way obedience or disobedience does not pay off in every way seeking our own kingdom doesn't even go well for us in the end and I find that to be a helpful reminder for me when I'm when I'm fighting that impulse in me just give this a little bit of a practical flavor even as I was entering in and starting to study Haggai in preparation for this message the Lord convicted me that I had two different idols in my life that he was calling me to kind of put back underneath two different things that I was seeking above God and it was my work and my relaxation my work ceased being purely a mode of worship

I'd stop viewing my work as my goal is to go in and whatever God puts before me in my work to do so heartily and if I've worked hard and been faithful then that's a good day that stopped being my mindset and my mindset started to become I really want work that feels really good I want work

that's really fulfilling and I want to get my kudos from the people around me and so what defined a good day was if people said oh Josiah that was great or whatever and so my focus had shifted no longer am I focusing on God and his kingdom and his priorities in my work I'm focusing on me myself and my own priorities in my work and I want to ask consider my ways what was the result of that was I happier for doing that and the answer is maybe some of you if you've ever done this the answer is no enslavement to needing to be good at work is a harsh master then any mistake that you make is crushing and that used to happen to me

[31 : 36] I would make him that was happening to me in that season I'd make him fun story I broke a worldwide system through a mistake that I made that put like everybody backwards and stuff that was tough but but that's the thing is if in that even in that mistake or whatever it wasn't malicious it wasn't because of sloth or anything but if my focus had been well Lord was I striving to be faithful was I striving to please you yes did I make a mistake yes who cares we'll fix it and move on or whatever and it wouldn't have bothered me but when I'm in that place of idolizing my work then a mistake like that crushes me and I am I'm flat for the rest of the week it doesn't it's not even worth it pursuing that's pursuing my work and idolizing my work isn't even worth it it doesn't even pay off for me never mind for the Lord the same can be said for my relaxation when I start to idolize my relaxation instead then I'm not even happy when

I'm resting and anything that gets in the way of my me time or whatever becomes a horrible nuisance people become annoyances amen that's right that's right amen to that so again all this is just trying to flesh out what does it look like in our lives to seek my own house and build my own house and lose sight of building God's house and does it go well for me and the answer is clearly no anyway and so I want to make this one one step a little bit further and I want to say this very carefully so if you find yourself in a season of being unfulfilled and dissatisfied sometimes and I really want to emphasize that word sometimes it might be because your focus is too much on yourself and not enough on Jesus

I want to say that word sometimes because that's not true every time biblically there are times the apostles the psalmist talk about seasons of life we see the apostle Paul said that he despaired of life itself while he was in his apostolic ministry Jesus sweat blood in the garden just because you are going through a low season whether it be whatever you want to call it it's not necessarily because of disordered priorities but this text is saying sometimes it is and so my question to you is simply this consider your ways if that is the season that you're in unfulfilled discouraged dissatisfied consider your ways might there be any ways that the Lord is convicting you that you are seeking your own kingdom and neglecting his that might not be yes for that won't probably be yes for everybody who's in that season in this room there's a lot of hardships there's a lot of suffering there's a lot of tough stuff in this life but again

I just ask you consider your ways might that be true for you in this season so finally we get to the call to obedience so the Lord says to the Israelites he's addressed their reasoning he's kind of nullified their excuse and now he's saying giving them the straightforward remedy thus says the Lord of hosts consider your ways go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified says the Lord what I find really just amazingly wise wise of the Lord in this correction is he doesn't just say go up to the hills bring wood and build the house he doesn't leave it there because it's not just about the external actions he drives it to the heart that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified

I believe what the Lord is doing here is he's putting their focus back where it needs to be he's addressing the heart he's saying that excuse that you guys have given where you're putting your own house and your own kingdom above mine the real issue is that you're not prioritizing my pleasure and my glory and so the Lord in his correction to them he tells them yes go and obey do the thing or whatever but more than that have your heart orientation be shifted back on to pleasing God and glorifying God and that's going to be the thing that will protect our hearts from all these different ways that we can go off into idolatry if I focus simply on my goal today my goal in preaching right now as I was praying this morning is not that people would like it my goal is that God would be pleased and that he would be glorified that's enough so that will be the thing that will protect our hearts in a lot of these ways and so there's a lot that we could talk about and I want to talk to the person who's feeling deeply convicted right now feeling ways either you know my whole life orientation is aimed at my own comfort or just even in a few small ways but the people who are feeling conviction

[37 : 14] I wish we could finish the chapter but that's going to be next week Lord willing next week Lord willing is when we'll talk about how the Israelites responded to God's conviction and how they did change and they did repent and we'll look at it as an MRI of repentance and stuff and we'll talk about all that next week but we don't have time to talk about it right now but I don't want to end you where I just ended because it feels a little too close to do better and I don't like that so I want to ask the question of the text as we draw towards a close where is where is the gospel in this text where is mercy in this text this is a hard text no doubt about it this is a rebuke passage where do we see good news in this text and there's a few answers to that that I think are good but the one that stood out to me is this one that we can easily miss over the word of the Lord came by the hand of

Haggai God initiated God saw his people drifting and he didn't just send them right back into exile he could have done that could have given up and said you literally lived through the entire exile and didn't learn your lesson your entire life has been spent in judgment you didn't learn your lesson yet get back or whatever he didn't do that in his mercy and in his kindness he sought his drifting people he sent Haggai and his word to his drifting disobedient people to bring them back on track and I want to tie this in to Jesus because he's the one that I love and I couldn't not bring it to Jesus and Jesus displays that same exact heart of God of seeking his drifting people and seeking lost sheep in Luke chapter 15 now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to Jesus and the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled saying this man receives sinners and eats with them so he told them this parable what man of you having a hundred sheep if he has lost one of them does not leave the 99 in the open country and go after the one that is lost until he finds it and when he has found it he lays it on his shoulders key word rejoicing and when he comes home he calls together his friends and his neighbors saying to them rejoice with me for I have found my sheep that was lost just so I tell you there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance so for the person who's feeling conviction this morning because it's a convicting text I just found this so encouraging there is so much hope in that phrase this man receives sinners Pharisees meant it as a slur

I take it as the greatest comfort of my life Jesus receives sinners like me so in closing summarize all that we've said I ask you to consider your ways are there ways that you are prioritizing your own kingdom your own house above God's kingdom your own paneling in your house while God's house lies in ruins and if so how might God be graciously calling you back from your drifting don't wait till tomorrow don't say now is not a good time for me to obey today go to Jesus who receives drifting lost sheep and sinners with rejoicing and know that he will rejoicingly receive you and teach you as we will talk about next week he will train you to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all else may follow after let me pray father I thank you for your faithfulness you are a good good good good good merciful

God so lord I thank you for your mercy and your kindness towards us in this word again I pray for any who are feeling conviction cause it to be not a worldly grief which just leads to death and shame but a godly grief which is full of life and leads to repentance and change and in the end that we may see that obedience is better in the end God receive all of us all of us drifting sinners and wandering sheep we pray in your great and holy name amen so that I think I think I asked you to stand again I don't know should I ask them to stand again do you want to stand stand rock of ages have for me let me hide myself in thee let the water and for love from that moon it shall be