

Fri., Dec. 9, 2011

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Scripture

Haggai 1:1-15

¹In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest: ²Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord's house. ³Then the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying: ⁴Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? ⁵Now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. ⁶You have 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 you that earn wages earn wages to put them into a bag with holes.

⁷Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. ⁸Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored, says the LORD. ⁹You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because my house lies in ruins, while all of you hurry off to your own houses. ¹⁰Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. ¹¹And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the soil produces, on human beings and animals, and on all their labors.

¹²Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of the prophet Haggai, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the LORD. ¹³Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, saying, I am with you, says the LORD. ¹⁴And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, ¹⁵on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month.

Devotional

We don't often read Haggai, especially during Advent. During Advent, we often spend our energy on things that are familiar. We read passages from the Gospels and Isaiah. We focus on traditions, family, and things that feel like "home." We spend the entire season trying to capture this sense of "home." That's where Haggai comes in. Haggai speaks to a people trying to recreate "home." They're trying, but not always successful. In the midst of that confusion, Haggai tells the people that the word of the Lord is "I am with you."

That's the message of Christmas. God with us. Immanuel. The traditions, the familiarity, the sense of "home" are all wonderful parts of the season, but Haggai reminds us that the word of the Lord is much more simple. "I am with you."

Prayer

Lord, in the midst of this season filled with tradition, remind us that regardless of the confusion, the traditions, or the chaos, You are with us. Please remind us of Your love and presence this very day. Amen.