

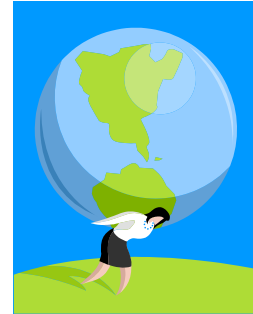
SCRIPTURE: Haggai 2:3-5

HYMN: How Firm a Foundation

*“Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed;
For I am your God, and will still give you aid;
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.”*

ON DISCOURAGEMENT

Have you ever faced things in life that were so hard that you felt like you just couldn’t go on anymore? Do you feel that way, even now? It happens to all of us from time to time in life - we come up against difficulties that we know, without any doubt, that we cannot get through on our own. It’s just too hard, too overwhelming, too painful, too impossible. The good news is, the Lord understands and He has help for us!



In the book of Haggai, the Lord speaks through the prophet Haggai to those in Judah who listened to His voice and obeyed, and began working on rebuilding the temple. He spoke to them about a month after they got started: “Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison?” In other words, are you feeling discouraged because the work you have done looks like nothing, in comparison to what the temple used to look like? Do you feel like it will never get done? Do you feel like what you’re doing makes no difference at all, like it isn’t even worth it? What love the Lord shows here, as He speaks these words of understanding of how they feel. Yet He does not leave them there, nor does He leave us, when we’re feeling discouraged.

As our Good Teacher, the Lord always repeats Himself when He wants us to “get” something. Here in Haggai 2:4, He says, “take courage” 3 times. In other words, “Don’t let yourself be discouraged.” He goes on to say, “and work”. We all have a decision to make in times like these: will we move forward and go on, or will we let our feelings get the best of us, and give up trying? When discouragement sets in, we might feel like we have no choice, but to give up. That is true, if it were not for the Lord. We simply do not have the strength in ourselves to get through impossible situations like these.

But four words from God change everything: “I am with you.”

These four words say so much - it’s like the Lord is saying, “Yes, you cannot make it on your own. I understand that you want to quit. But I am here, right next to you. I’ll tell you what to do. I’ll give you the strength you need. I’m not going anywhere. You’re not alone. You can do this, because I am going to help you.”

The Lord says the same to all of us. Jesus said, before He rose up to heaven, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

We *can* get through any and every situation that we are called to face in this life when we remember this simple Truth. When we remember the Lord is near, and depend on his strength and power, He will “do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20). He promised the tired men of Judah that the temple would be even more glorious than it was ever before, because He would help. It is the same for us- not only will we get through it with His strength; we will be amazed at all He does beyond! Amen!

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