

**God With Us**

**Living the Liturgical Year**

**Haggai 1:15b-2:9**

**EXPLORING THE SERMON**

- \* What did you hear?
- \* What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- \* What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

**KEY VERSES**

*<sup>4</sup>Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts, <sup>5</sup>according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit abides among you; do not fear. <sup>9</sup> The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts, and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts."*

**REFLECTION**

Review this background information, which helps set the context for our Haggai passage:

- 1) The cornerstone events of God's people are the Exodus out of Egypt, and the Exile from Jerusalem
- 2) Haggai was written in 520 BC, 20 years after the exiles had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon
- 3) Joint Persian and Jewish leadership in Jerusalem, local areas have a lot of autonomy
- 4) Rebuild has focused on homes and businesses of the people and less on the temple

God is asking the Israelites through Haggai, "how has the rebuild gone?" (v.3) Primarily focused on themselves and their work, the temple is not a priority anymore, indicating that God is not important to them. Now they are facing the consequences of too much self-focus - the rising tide of fear. **When does your own self-sufficiency lead to fear? What kinds of fear are most common for you (fear of others, an uncertain future, etc.)?**

Sociologists today point to our extreme individuality as the root of rising anxiety, depression, and fear. Haggai reminds us that we can be different and live encouraged, because we have the opportunity to remember to we are not alone. **As we pay better attention to the choices we make, let us consider: 1) Am I too preoccupied with myself? 2) Am I ignoring the temple? 3) How can I encourage others to remember that God is with us?**

How is God speaking to you through the following verses?

**V 4: "yet now take courage, all you people of the land, for I am with you, says the Lord"**

**V 5: "my spirit abides among you; do not fear"**

**V 9: "the latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, in this place I will give prosperity"**