

Consider Your Ways

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[0 : 00] Haggai 1.

1-11. 2-11.

2-11. 3-11. Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. You 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 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.

[1 : 41] You look 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 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, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors.

Often, churches do a quick overview of Haggai when they want to persuade their membership to contribute to a building program. However, we'll find out that Haggai has much more to tell us than that.

Haggai's prophecies happened during a four-month span more than 2,500 years ago, but we can learn from those prophecies today. We'll see over the next few weeks that Haggai ties with both the New Testament and with our modern times.

In tonight's passage, we'll see that priorities matter. God disciplines his people when their priorities fail to match his. That's the main idea you have on your handout.

[2 : 57] God disciplines his people when their priorities fail to match his. So we'll break tonight's verses into four sections.

And in the first part of verse 1, we see the period. So the period is your first section. Listen to the beginning of verse 1 again.

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.

We see a very specific date here. The first day of the sixth month of Darius' second year as king. Because of that, we can be very precise about when this prophecy occurred.

The date actually was August 29, 520 B.C. So more than 2,500 years ago yesterday. I had no idea when I picked this study that our first study would be just one day after the anniversary.

[4 : 08] But somebody obviously did. And so we are in the time of year when the prophecy actually occurred. So let's set the context. Willard just finished taking us through the Exodus.

And the Exodus happened in 1446 B.C. So from then until Haggai's prophecies, 926 years have passed.

A lot happened during those years. The Israelites finally made it to the Promised Land, and they set up the kingdom in Jerusalem. Because of the people's disobedience, Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

The original temple was destroyed during that fall. And all except the poorest people in Israel were taken into exile in Babylon.

27 years after that, in 559 B.C., Cyrus, of whom the prophet Isaiah had spoken, ascended to the Persian throne. He's described by Herodotus as a great military genius, changing as his empire changed into the kind and friendly paternal monarch.

[5 : 18] He says he was witty, polite, and familiar with his people. In 538 B.C., Cyrus issued a decree allowing exiled people to return to their native lands.

And the Israelites were part of that. Some people surmised that Daniel helped Cyrus write that decree. Cyrus was very specific in what he told the Israelites.

And here's one of our cross-references in Ezra. Listen to Ezra chapter 6, verses 3 through 5. In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem.

Let the house be rebuilt, the place where sacrifices were offered, and let its foundations be retained. Its height shall be 60 cubits, and its breadth 60 cubits.

With three layers of great stones and one layer of timber. Let the cost be paid from the royal treasury. Can you imagine a ruler today wanting to pay for a church rebuild out of the royal treasury?

[6 : 26] The decree continues then in verse 5 of Ezra 6. It says, Few Jews responded positively to Cyrus' decree.

Ezra chapter 2 gives details about the people who return. We're just going to read the summary. Listen to Ezra chapter 2, verses 64 and 65.

They say, The whole assembly together was 42,360, besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337, and they had 200 male and female singers.

So once again, the choir people had to be singled out and treated specially there. If you add those all together, that's a little less than 50,000 people who returned to Jerusalem.

And in 536 BC, they began to rebuild the temple. As the foundation was being laid, the people's reaction was mixed. We hear about that reaction in Ezra chapter 3, verses 12 and 13.

[7 : 52] They say, But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping.

For the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away. Then Ezra chapter 4 records what happens next.

And these verses are the first five verses of Ezra chapter 4. They say, Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the Lord, the God of Israel, they approached Derubbabel and the heads of fathers' houses and said to them, Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esherhaddon, king of Assyria, who brought us here.

But Derubbabel, Yeshua, and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses in Israel said to them, You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God, but we alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel, as king Cyrus, the king of Persia, has commanded us.

Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus, king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius, king of Persia.

[9 : 27] So that brings us to the start of the book of Haggai in 520 B.C. Sixteen years after beginning to rebuild the temple, the temple has yet to be finished.

Even before God gave Haggai the first prophecy, August 29, 520 B.C. was a significant day. Haggai 1.1 tells us that it was the first day of the Jewish calendar's sixth month.

The first day was the day of the new moon in the lunar calendar, and it was observed as a holy day of worship. On it, a burnt offering was presented to the Lord, a ram's horn was sounded, and festivals were celebrated.

2 Kings 4.23 implies that it was a special day for consulting God's prophets. That makes it particularly appropriate for Haggai to utter his first prophecy on that day because many people would have been in Jerusalem for the celebrations.

The sixth month, according to the sacred order of the Hebrew year, was Elul, and that was the time when grapes, figs, and pomegranates were harvested. So the details about the period boil down to this summary.

[10 : 45] The people who return from exile are gathered in Jerusalem at harvest time. 18 years have passed since Cyrus allowed them to go home. 16 years have passed since they started rebuilding the temple, but no meaningful work has been done on the temple since the foundation

was laid.

On top of that, the harvest, which should have been plentiful, was paltry instead. So now that we've looked at the period, let's move to the second section of the passage.

Primarily in the second half of verse 1, we see the people. So the people is your second section.

Here's the end of verse 1 again.

It says, You see three main characters listed here.

You have Haggai, Zerubbabel, and Joshua. Joshua is the same person referenced as Joshua in Ezra 4.3. It's just an alternate spelling of the name.

[11:57] Before we introduce ourselves to these three guys, let's back up to the first part of the verse and talk about Darius. The Old Testament mentions two rulers named Darius.

One ruled over Babylon. The other, mentioned here in Haggai, ruled over Persia from 521 to 486 BC. Our introduction to Haggai will be short.

The Bible tells us very little about him. All we know is that he was the first documented prophet after the exile. We have no record of any prophetic voice in the Promised Land since the time of Jeremiah.

Daniel and Ezekiel had been prophets in Babylon, but now through Haggai's prophecies, the long silence is broken. The restored community hears the Lord's voice again.

Haggai's prophecies omitted any details about his family, his age, or his hometown. What we do know is that he gave his prophecies over a 15-week period, a little less than four months.

[13:07] Then he disappeared from the scene. The most important thing about Haggai was that he was a prophet. The ESV says that the word of the Lord came by him.

Other versions say that the word came through him. Both tell us the same thing. He was simply the channel for God's message. The word of the Lord initially is addressed to the two leaders of the community, and those are Zerubbabel and Joshua.

Zerubbabel was the grandson of King Jehoiachin who had been exiled to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C. His name actually means seed of Babylon or one born in Babylon. He was an heir to the Davidic throne and he's called the son of Shealtiel. According to 1 Chronicles 3 verses 17 through 19, Padaiah was his father and Shealtiel his uncle.

The most obvious explanation for that is that when his father died, he was adopted by Shealtiel and became known as the son of his adopted father rather than his natural father.

[14:18] Cyrus appointed Zerubbabel governor of Judah. At that time, Judah was one of the many Persian provinces. The word governor or deputy occurs only in the second half of the Old Testament and it's usually applied to civil and military rulers.

It first occurs during the reign of Solomon and you can read about that in 1 Kings 10.15.

Zerubbabel's name is designed to remind Zerubbabel that his appointment and authority came from the king of Persia.

We need to meet Joshua next and as we said, Joshua is a variant of Jeshua or Yeshua which means the Lord is salvation. its New Testament equivalent is Jesus.

Joshua was the son of Jehoshadak who had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C. and he was the grandson of Sariah, the chief priest who had been killed by the king of Babylon at Riblah.

He was a direct descendant of Aaron and yes, that's the same Aaron we've been reading about in Exodus. So Joshua came to Jerusalem as high priest. Apart from some of the references to him in Zechariah, the only information we have about him is that some of his descendants married foreign wives in the time of Ezra.

[15:41] Think about the significance of Haggai addressing his first words to Zerubbabel and Joshua. In talking to the two of them, God was speaking to both the governmental leader of the people and the spiritual leader of the people.

We'll move now to the next section of the lesson. Verses 2-11 document the first prophecy and we've studied the period and the people. In verses 2-6, God uses Haggai to summarize the problem.

So the problem is your next blank. Listen to verses 2-6 again. They say, Thus says the Lord of hosts.

These people say that 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 while this house lies in ruins?

Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. You have sown much and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough.

[16:55] 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.

Verse 2 has the words that God specifically addressed to Zerubbabel and Joshua. God's first two words give us a sense of how frustrated God is.

Notice just those first two words. God says, these people. How does God normally refer to Israel when he's pleased with them? You're exactly right.

When God is pleased with his people, he normally refers to them as my people. Good things rarely follow a comment that starts with these people. And we do the same thing too.

Think about when you were kids and you did something that one of your parents disliked. One parent may have said to the other, look at what your son or your daughter did.

[17:55] You might even have used a similar line with your kids. When someone uses those words, the relationship is still there, but the relationship has been strained.

And we see evidence of such strain in God's words here. These people say that the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord. These people are procrastinating and making excuses to avoid rebuilding the temple, and that's the problem.

God through Haggai is highlighting how far the people have drifted from God. God says one thing, these people say another. Because the words in verse 2 specifically are addressed to Zerubbabel and Joshua, God seems to be calling them out for failing to lead the people better.

Then in verse 3, God begins addressing all the people. He asks a question in verse 4. Look at Haggai 1, 3, and 4 again.

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 while this house lies in ruins? Instead of working on rebuilding the temple, the people had focused on building nice houses for themselves.

[19:14] At that time, paneled houses often were associated with lavishness. So think about it this way. The people had pampered themselves while ignoring God.

We still see the same things happen today. God's people often spend more time on their own comfort than they do on God's work. And of course, we've likely all been guilty of that.

Let's consider the evidence for wise Ezechiel, Joshua, and the people should have known that God was ready for them to rebuild the temple. We read in Ezra how Cyrus did more than let the people go.

Cyrus told them to rebuild the temple. He even gave money from the royal treasury to pay for it. And he even provided specifics of how the temple should be rebuilt. Cyrus' actions clearly were orchestrated by God.

Isaiah had told the Israelites that these events would happen. Isaiah even listed Cyrus' name. Flip over to Isaiah chapter 45 for proof of that.

[20:19] We're going to look at a couple different places in Isaiah. The first one is Isaiah 45 verses 1 through 4. Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed.

I will go before you and level the exalted places. I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hordes in secret places that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who called you by name.

For the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name. I name you though you do not know me. Skip down now a few verses to verse 13 of Isaiah 45.

Still speaking of Cyrus, God says in Isaiah 45, 13, I have stirred him up in righteousness and I will make all his ways level.

He shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward, says the Lord of hosts. Put these verses in perspective.

[21:42] Isaiah prophesied about 740 to 700 B.C. Some people think he may have even prophesied all the way to 680 or so.

But even with the latest possible date in the 680s, Isaiah wrote about Cyrus at least 160 years before the date of Haggai 1.1.

You would think that some of the Israelites would have made the connection. And that could be one of the reasons why God was upset with Joshua, the high priest. Obviously, the high priest should have been telling the people that things were happening just as God said they would.

The accuracy of Isaiah's prophecy should have been enough to convince the people to rebuild the temple on its own, but they have even more evidence of God working in their lives.

Think about all the stuff that Cyrus sent back with them. He sent back money from the treasury and he sent back the things that Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the original temple.

[22 : 42] So just the simple fact that God protected the Israelites as they carried from Babylon to Judah all the loot that they had was a sign that God was with them. They would have been a prime target for any robbers and other things along the way.

So looking back at these people of Haggai's day, we self-righteously can shake our heads and act surprised that they failed to see God working in their lives.

Before we do that, though, here's an application question for you in the middle of the lesson. How often do we fail to see God working in our own lives to enable us to do what he expects us to do?

So once again, how often do we fail to see God working in our own lives to enable us to do what he expects us to do? If you are like I am, you need to admit that we are very much like these people.

Verses 5 and 6 could apply easily to us. Look at those verses again. Now therefore, says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways.

[23 : 45] You 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 he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

God reminds the people that their choices and actions have consequences. They've been working hard, but they have very little to show for all of that work. The covenant that God made with Moses when they were in the wilderness still applied to the people of Israel in Haggai's day.

Listen to Leviticus chapter 26 verses 14 through 20. These are God's words to the Israelites back when they were in the wilderness. But if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments, if you spurn my statutes and if your soul abhors my rules so that you will not do all my commandments but break my covenant, then I will do this to you.

I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consumes the eyes and makes the heart act. And you shall sow your seed in vain for your enemies shall eat it.

I will set my face against you and you shall be struck down before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you and you shall flee when none pursues you. And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins and I will break the pride of your power and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze and your strength shall be spent in vain for your land shall not yield its increase and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

[25 : 31] God reiterated this concept in Deuteronomy chapter 28. And here are just three verses from Deuteronomy chapter 28. These verses are Deuteronomy 28 38 through 40.

Deuteronomy 28 38 through 40 say you shall carry much seed into the field and you shall gather in little for the locusts shall consume it.

You shall plant vineyards and dress them that you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes for the worm shall eat them. You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil for your olives shall drop off.

Sounds a lot like the situation Haggai is describing in Haggai chapter 1 doesn't it? We have to be careful here with the application of the Leviticus and Deuteronomy verses.

The blessings and curses listed in Leviticus and Deuteronomy were specific to Israel and God's covenant with those people. We would be wrong to assume that everything that goes wrong in our lives is because of discipline from God.

[26 : 43] Here's a quote from Warren Wearsby. It reminds us that even the strongest Christians sometimes suffer. Warren Wearsby said millions of Christians have been allowed to fall into the hands of their enemies and be martyred for their faith.

This covenant restated in Haggai related only to Israel in their land and was God's way of teaching them faithfulness and obedience. On the flip side we also would be wrong to assume that every bad thing in our lives is not discipline from God.

Whenever we face difficult circumstances we should always ask ourselves what God wants us to learn. We also should consider whether those difficult circumstances could be a result of something we did.

In other words we like the Israelites should consider our ways. Here's another quote from Warren Wearsby on the difference between God's covenant with Israel and his dealings with the church today.

He said the Lord never made a prosperity covenant with the church as he did with Israel. In fact our Lord's first statement in the Sermon on the Mount is blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[27 : 58] God has seen fit to bless some Christians with wealth but it isn't a guarantee for every believer in spite of what the contemporary prosperity preachers claim. If we help to meet the needs of others God does promise to meet our needs but this isn't a pledge of material prosperity.

So far we have seen the period the people and the problem. In our final five verses tonight we see the pronouncement.

The pronouncement is your last blank. If the Israelites had yet to make the connection between their present circumstances and their disobedience God spells it out for them.

Check out verses 7-11 of Haggai chapter 1 again. Thus says the Lord of hosts Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build a house that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified says the Lord.

You look 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.

[29 : 16] 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 on what the ground brings forth on man and beast and on all their labors.

That's pretty comprehensive there isn't it? And notice how many times God says that he's the one who has done it. He wants to make sure they get the point. He also tells them a second time to consider their ways.

Then he tells them exactly what to do. He gives them a direct command in the first part of verse 8 when he says go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house.

Why do you think God would be so insistent on wanting the temple rebuilt? Exactly. The temple was a symbol of God's manifest presence among his people.

Its roots can be traced to the building of the tabernacle in the desert and exercise essential to experience the manifest presence of God in the community of Israel. God's abandonment of the original temple is documented in Ezekiel and it's seen as the utmost judgment from God and it's a precursor of the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians.

[30 : 44] The writings of the period reveal the people's incredible shock at the destruction of the place for God's manifest presence. Yet there still remained a hope among the exiles that the temple would one day be rebuilt.

And that rebuilding became synonymous during this period of restoration of the people and it became synonymous with God saying that he still had a purpose for his people and that he would dwell among his people still.

When the Babylonian army set fire to the temple this destroyed the great timbers that helped to hold the stonework together. The stones probably were still usable but the interior woodwork had been demolished and burned and it had to be replaced.

According to Ezra 3.7 the Jews of Haggai's day purchased wood from Tyre and Sidon just as Solomon had done when he built the original temple. Now Haggai commanded the men to go into the forest on the mountains and cut down the timber to be used for repairing and rebuilding the temple.

Haggai never says what happened to the wood purchased with the money that Cyrus had given the returning exiles. He had no need to mention what happened to it because the people originally hearing his prophecy would have known what they did with the money.

[32 : 03] We obviously can wonder how the Jews had wood to panel their houses though and that seemed like a pretty good conclusion that perhaps the wood they originally purchased for the temple had made the way into their houses instead and if so that would have given God even more reason to be upset with these people as he called them.

At the end of verse 8 God says why he wants the people to rebuild the temple the end of verse 8 says that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified says the Lord.

That part of the verse may remind you of 1 Corinthians 10 31 1 Corinthians 10 31 says so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do do all to the glory of God.

Of course 1 Corinthians 10 31 had yet to be written in Haggai's day but the Israelites knew the principle behind that. If you want proof of that here's one Old Testament example and it's 1 Chronicles 16 verses 23 through 29.

Listen to 1 Chronicles 16 23 29 Sing to the Lord all the earth tell of his salvation from day to day declare his glory among the nations his marvelous works among all the peoples for great is the Lord and greatly to be praised and he is to be feared above all gods for all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols but the Lord made the heavens splendor and majesty are before him strength and joy are in his place ascribe to the Lord oh families of the people ascribe to the Lord glory and strength the rebuilt temple was used later on to glorify God in many ways think about how the rebuilt temple was used later on as we get through the rest of the Old Testament and into the New Testament the temple sustained the Israelites through the dark days of oppression under the [34 : 14] Persians the Greeks and eventually the Romans if you look at the early chapters of Luke those chapters highlight members of the faithful community as they gathered around the temple there was Zechariah and of course Joseph and Mary Simeon and Anna are a few and obviously we know Jesus spent time at the temple as well so from this temple community came the Messiah in an entire new covenant community God's people here in Haggai were being prepared for the next phase in redemptive history when the kingdom would be extended to the whole world the principle of glorifying God highlighted here in Haggai 1.8 still applies today Jesus taught the same thing remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount these verses are Matthew chapter 6 verses 31 through 33 in Matthew chapter 6 verses 31 through 33 you have

Jesus speaking and he said therefore do not be anxious saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear for the Gentiles seek after all these things and your heavenly father knows that you need them all but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you a believer's priority should be to seek first the kingdom of God when we fail to do that and start worrying about material things instead we actually are doubting God's promise we're doubting the word that he put down in the Bible planning ahead obviously is important but we never should become so concerned about our circumstances that worry about those circumstances takes us what God wants us to do when we studied the Sermon on the Mount a few months ago we heard this quote from John Stott and I couldn't resist using it again John Stott said to become preoccupied with material things in such a way that they engross our attention absorb our energy and burden us with anxiety is incompatible both with the Christian faith and common sense it is distrustful of our heavenly father and it is frankly stupid so if the people of Haggai's day had any doubt that their wrong priorities were the source of their troubles God made it crystal clear in verses 9 through 11 of Haggai chapter 1 here are Haggai 1 9 through 11 again God says you look 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 grain the new wine the oil on what the ground brings forth on man and beast and on all their labors so the people sowed abundantly but reaped a meager harvest when they ate and drank they weren't filled or satisfied their clothing didn't keep them warm and their income didn't cover their expenses as supplies became scarcer prices got higher and because of that inflation the people might as carry their money in a wallet filled with holes the sermon on the mountain verses we read earlier came well after Haggai's day but the people of Haggai would have known about Proverbs chapter 3 verses 9 and 10 listen to what Proverbs 3 9 and 10 say honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce then your barns will be filled with!

We can fall into the trap of looking at Haggai 1 through 11 as punishment on the Israelites we get the proper perspective when we remember the main idea that main idea is again God disciplines his people when their priorities fail to match his these verses remind us that our priorities should be to glorify God we just read Proverbs chapter 3 verses 9 and 10 the two verses immediately after that are ones that Haggai's people also would have known listen to Proverbs 3 11 and 12 they support the main idea of tonight's passage here are Proverbs chapter 3 verses 11 and 12 my son

do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary!

[39 : 08] his reproof for the Lord reproves him loves as a father the son in whom he delights so listen to those again my son do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof for the Lord reproves him whom he loves as a father the son in whom he delights!

when God disciplines a true believer that discipline provides evidence of God's love for the believer if those proverbs verses remind you of the book of Hebrews you're a step ahead listen to what the writer of Hebrews said in Hebrews 1 or actually Hebrews 12 verses 5 through 11 again these are Hebrews 12 5 through 11 12 and have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons my son do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord nor be weary when reproved by him for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives it is for discipline that you have to endure God is treating you as sons for what son is there whom his father does not discipline if you are left without discipline in which all have participated then you are illegitimate children and not sons besides this we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them shall we not much more be subject to the father of spirits and live for they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them that he disciplines!

us for our good that we may share his holiness for the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it these verses should give us comfort that even when believers do sin God still loves us we should never use God's love as an excuse for sin but the Bible repeatedly offers us hope when we do sin 2 Timothy 2 13 says if we are faithless he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself so that leads us to one last question what should we do when we realize that our priorities fail to line up with God's priorities what should we do when we fail to realize that our priorities fail to line up with God's priorities right repent and turn back to

God's grace and ultimately tonight's Haggai passage reminds us that we are incapable of providing the obedience that God requires God is perfectly holy and as such he requires perfect holiness from us when we are unable to comply we must either face God's wrath or appeal to a mediator to escape the wrath of God we need someone who is able to redeem us and of course this is and it points us back to what we have been studying in 1 John on Sunday mornings the promise of forgiveness in 1 John 1 9 is certainly a wonderful encouragement to God's people when they've sinned because God's word never changes and because God's character never changes we have encouragement to come to him and to make a new beginning 1 John 1 9 says!

If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness the Israelites wouldn't have known 1 John it hadn't been written yet but they did have that same principle available to them listen to Psalm 130 verses 1 through 4 again these verses are Psalm 130 verses 1 through 4 out of the depths I cry to you O Lord O Lord hear my voice let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy if you O Lord should mark iniquities O Lord who could stand but here's the key verse but with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared but with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared!

[43 : 35] to match his but believers ultimately will be able to agree with the writer to the Hebrews when he said for the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it let's pray father we thank you again for your word and the opportunity to study it as we've done here in Haggai tonight and Lord as we think about these people that are mentioned in Haggai even though they lived more than 2500 years ago we realize how much these people are like us people help us to be more and more like the people you desire help us to align our priorities with yours and give us the grace to do that more and more every day in Jesus name we pray!