

All right. If you want to get out your Bibles this morning, we're going to be in the book of Haggai as we continue our study through the Old Testament. If you're not familiar with where Haggai is located, you can find Matthew, the first book in the New Testament. Backtrack three books and you'll be there. Haggai chapter 1, verse 1 reads like this. And the second year of King Darius in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying. Well, let's stop there before we get to what he said. And as a way of introduction, let me just inform you that Haggai, his name means festive or festival, but his calling is no picnic. He is Haggai, what is known as a Post-exilic prophet, in that as I have here for you, he prophesies after the 70 year captivity in Babylon. So the last Pre-exilic prophets are. The major prophet is Jeremiah, the minor prophet Habakkuk the last two prophets to prophesy before the nation of Israel went into captivity. Pre-exilic Then Daniel and Ezekiel are known as Exilic prophets. They prophesied during the 70 year captivity. Then comes Haggai, the first of three prophets that are post-exilic that close out. What we know is our Old Testament Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Now in 539 BC, Cyrus the Great decreed, and we have this recorded for us in Ezra chapter 1, verse two, that the Israelites could return from captivity in Babylon. And truly at this point it was Persia. The Babylonian Empire had given away to the Persian Empire. Cyrus the Great was a Persian. He decreed that the Jews could go back home, just as the Lord had said. In fact, we are told that Cyrus was moved to do this because he was shown that his name was in scriptures. Isaiah specifically, 100 years or so before he was ever born. And so moved by his name being in a holy book, even though he wasn't a believer, he was just, as God prophesied, moved to let the Jews go back home. And so, after two and a half years or so of preparation and travel over 900 miles from Persia to Jerusalem in 536 BC, led by Zerubbabel, which is the governor, although we'll find out next week as we get more into his life. He should have been the king. But Zerubbabel, their political leader, a governor, and Joshua their high priest. So their spiritual leader. These two men led 42,000 Jews to return from captivity and to go to the land specifically to Jerusalem, the capital city, and rebuild the temple. And this story is covered in Ezra chapters one through six. Now, just let me mention to you that while 42,000 people may seem like a lot of people, there were over a million people deported into captivity. So once they were allowed to go back, just a small group actually had the faith to go tackle such an uphill battle. So they arrived in the land to rebuild the temple. And yet the building project barely got off the ground before opposition arose. We know from Ezra that their neighbors, the Samaritans, who lived just to the north of Jerusalem, who were kind of half Jew and half Gentile, and kind of had political motivation for this opposition, and they also had some religious motivation for this opposition. They

sent a letter to King Ahasuerus, and they indicted the Jews. They said, look, in history, every time the Jews get a temple, the next thing that happens is insurrection. So if you want a problem on your hands, just let them finish this temple as is covered in Ezra chapter four, verses 23 and 24. The King then in that same year that they began the building and were opposed by the Samaritans, sent a cease and desist order, along with troops, and effectively stopped the building project in its tracks. So when we arrive at the time of Haggai writing, 16 years has passed for 16 years. The people do not work on the temple. And then in 520. BC, which is the second year of King Darius, God raises up Haggai to speak to the leaders and the people about getting to work, build the Lord's house. Now Haggai is brought on to the scene and his message is brief. The second shortest book in the Old Testament, only 38 verses. And it has been said that the strength of a message is not necessarily found in the length of a message. I know you guys are thinking, we know that. Do you know that? Do you know that? But Haggai prophesies for only four months, and we know it's only four months because each of his prophecies are dated. And it's a very powerful book. Haggai is used by God to stir the people up, to do a monumental work. And so how it works is like this. The book of Haggai in two chapters, 38 verses, has four prophecies over the span of four months, and he speaks in this first prophecy. You might say to the hands. That's chapter 1. We'll cover that today. He speaks to them, and they came out to work. They put their hands to work. When we get to chapter 2, he'll be speaking to the heart, more or less. Where they're fearful and a little overwhelmed. And in chapter two, verses 1 through nine, he tells them multiple times to be strong. Then the third prophecy speaks more to the head. In chapter 2, verses 10 through 19, three times we have the word consider. He makes a case for why they should continue to do what they've been called to do. And then finally, as the book wraps up, we have this glimpse into the future. Chapter two, verses 20 through 23, where he really is speaking hope into their lives and encouraging them that they're a part of something bigger than themselves. And we as Christians are always part of something bigger than ourselves. What we're doing now, has implications later. So he'll mention that at the end of the book. Well, that leads us then, to verse 2. What he was about to say before I started the introduction. Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying, this, people, says the time is not come the time that the Lord's house should be built. And then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses and this temple to lie in ruins? And now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. These people have misplaced priorities, and God speaks through the prophet. And God says, here's what I know you're saying. You people are saying it's not time for the Lord's house to be rebuilt. Now notice they don't say the house shouldn't be rebuilt. They know it should be rebuilt. That's why they left Persia,

traveled 900 miles. But what they do is instead they say, look, the house of the Lord shouldn't be rebuilt just yet. Not now. Maybe later in our lives. Maybe our kids will do it. Maybe a future generation. And so, while they had returned specifically to build the House of the Lord, as we mentioned, they were halted by hardship and they just stayed halted. And it appears that they assess the situation and said, God called us here. But the door was slammed shut by the King 16 years ago, so we must have heard from the Lord wrong. It must not be our doing. Maybe our part was just to pioneer the work, to get here and kind of start the thing. And yet what they missed out is a truth that comes evident to anyone who reads Scripture, and that is that opposition early in a work is not necessarily a sign that you're supposed to stop opposition early in a work that God's called you to is usually a sign that you're on the right track, that you're stirring up some dust in Satan's corner of the universe. Right. And so when God tells you to do a thing, you should expect opposition. If you don't have opposition, there's probably something going on. You're probably on the wrong track. And so here, they've misplaced their priorities instead of continuing. What they've done is they've stopped building the Lord's house, and they've focused on building their own homes. In my Bible, it's paneled homes. Wood was hard to come by. Paneling was made out of wood. They had paneled homes or fancy homes. Now, by the way how do homeowners usually respond to a lousy electrician? Shocked. Why do plumbers never tell a secret? They hate leaking information? Okay, I got one more. Why? Are construction workers slow to ask their fiancées to marry? They're always building up to it. Okay, well, look, it really is no laughing matter because these guys are building their homes over the house of God. And when you read the Bible, you find that there's nothing new under the sun. Truly. I remember the first time someone had attended Parkland Chapel for a couple years and they were just gone. And what typically happens as a pastor if people don't come to church for a few weeks, they assume I know and they assume that I'm wondering. And so when they come back to church, they say, hey, it's great to see you. And then they immediately tell me why they've been gone. So this particular couple had been gone for a while, and then they came back. I think it was after like six months and they popped in. They were like dropping triggers on people like, hey, good to see you. And they see me and they're like, look, sorry we haven't been here. We just got busy remodeling the house. Well, that was the first time that that had ever been told to me the first time, and I was taken aback. I was like, for six months, you're in remodeling every every Sunday for six months. The answer was, yeah. And over the course of 20 years of being a pastor, I've seen people be here and then be gone for months or even years and pop back in and be like, life just got in the way. You know, the kids, the traveling, the family and life can sometimes get in the way. But what I'm saying is, it's not so much about the fact that these guys were building houses. They needed a

place to live, and it wasn't so much about the fact that the houses had paneling, because lots of people in the Bible had even fancy houses. It's the fact that those fancy houses were taking priority over the house of the Lord. They had a priority problem. They'd taken a thing that can be good, and they'd elevated it above the best thing. And I'm reminiscent of a story in the Bible that I have here for you about the difference between David and his son, Solomon. I was just reading or actually listening as I go through the Bible each year. Listening. I was listening to this story the other day, and it always this story. It warns me. It makes me a little bit fearful. It encourages me sometimes. It also challenges me. But here's David. David comes from nothing and he becomes the man after God's own heart. And as the King of Israel, David worshiping God looks around and goes, as many of you know, man, I've got this fancy house as the King, and God lives in a tent. You know, the tabernacle is basically just a tent. So he goes, I want to do something for God. I want to build God a house. And while you'd think that'd be all green lights, what happens is God comes to him through the prophet and says, look, you actually can't build me a house. You're a man of blood. I used you, you established the kingdom, but you shed way too much blood. And so you can't build me a house. God also says, look, I really didn't ever ask for one. But I am thankful that you cared. Yet you can't do it. But what I'm going to do is this. Because you wanted to build me a house. I'm not going to let you build a house, but I'm going to let your son, who will be a man of peace, build my house. And then I'm going to establish you a house. A house that will never perish. You can't build me a house, but I'm going to build you a house. Isn't that just like God? So what David does, instead of crying and whining, David purposes for the rest of his life to garner all of the materials that would be needed in building this house. And when his son Solomon succeeds him on the throne, Solomon gets to work as a man of peace. His name means peace. Building the house that his dad so desired. And Solomon is faithful to build this house. And after he builds this house for God, the temple, there's this beautiful prayer and this elaborate ceremony, and the glory of God comes down and fills this house. But in First Kings chapter 6, verse 38, it says that Solomon spent seven years building the house of the Lord. You think, wow. Seven years. And then in the first verse of the seven chapter it says, but he spent 13 years building his own house. And therein I think you can find the very first glimpse of why Solomon derailed all of his potential and his spiritual life. It wasn't that he wasn't building the Lord's house, it was he put his own house over and above what God had called him to do. He had misplaced priorities. Well. Their prioritization of their own houses over God's house is the tension in this book. I ask you to look for the tension. This is the captain obvious tension in this book and what he tells them in response to this tension, these misplaced priorities, is he says, notice in verse 5, now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Consider your

ways. This is the key phrase in the book. It's used three times, and the word consider is the key word in the book. It's used five times. Consider your ways. Verse six you've sown much and bring in little. You eat but you don't have enough. You drink but you're not filled with drink. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages earns wages to put into a bag with holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts. Here we go again. Consider your ways. Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple that I may take pleasure and it be glorified, says the Lord. And you looked for much, but indeed it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? Says the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that is in ruins. While every one of you runs to his own house, and therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, and on the grain, and the new wine, and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands. And so God says, I have taken away your satisfaction, your hard work is coming to nothing. Why? Because you put God's work on the back burner. And as you read the Old Testament, you understand that the way God interacted with the people on a physical and material level is very similar to the way he interacts with us on a spiritual and eternal level. So in this case, he physically dried up what they were doing there on the hamster wheel, going as fast as they can go, but they're producing nothing. They earn, but it's fallen out the the money bag faster than they can put it in their and their lives are dried up as a sign of their misplaced priorities. He's trying to get their attention. And I would say that when I think about Western Christianity, so many Christians actually live dried up lives because they have misplaced priorities. It's not that they don't engage in the things of the Lord, but their priorities are wrong, that other things are above the Lord. And so while they may have, at least in America, enough in their 401(k) to retire someday, or you might have enough to go out to eat at the new fancy Chick-fil-A's. You know, the Christian Jesus house for chickens. You know you you can do this. So yeah, you may think, well, that's not me, but so many Christians lives are dried up spiritually, emotionally, relationally. There's no content. And then they're building the next thing, putting the next whole slab of paneling up on one side of the basement, as it were. And so they're always seeking, but never truly finding. When the Bible says that seeking God first will always make me fruitful. And I'm thinking about Psalm 37 as I have there for you. I love this verse. I read it early on in my Christian walk. My first read through the Bible. This verse stuck out to me in verse 25 of Psalm 37. David said, I've been young and now I'm old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging for bread. He is ever merciful, and he lends, and his descendants are blessed. I think about what Jesus said in the sermon on the Mount. Many of you know at least one of these verses where Jesus says in chapter six, verse 31 of

Matthew, therefore do not worry, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For after these things all the Gentiles seek. They're always concerned about the natural. For your heavenly father, he says, is different to you. So you don't need what the Gentile needs, because your heavenly father knows that you have need of these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for today is the trouble thereof. Well, they had misplaced priorities, and so they had no satisfaction. They were constantly worn out and without. And then here the appeal right in the middle of all this. Consider your ways as we read build the temple. Why? That I may take pleasure and be glorified. Not so unlike these people. God has prepared for each of us good works that we should accomplish them for his pleasure and his glory. That's what Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 says before we were ever born, God has our best plan in mind. And if we step into that plan, then he's going to create a masterpiece out of us. A poem of beauty and those things that he has prepared for us are for his pleasure and his glory. You might say, well, that seems a little bit narcissistic. Well, if there ever was someone who could, without any regret, be narcissistic, it is truly God. He is not narcissistic, but he is all goodness. And so he in creation creates for his goodness and his pleasure and for his glory. And as we his creation, it's best for us to step into his plans for our life, his purposes, because they're actually best for us. And if we want any pleasure in life, any true pleasure, and to experience any glory, it's in finding his foreordained purposes for our life. So it's a good thing to actually consider our ways. He's also God in calling us, gifted us. See Romans chapter 12, first Corinthians chapter 12. He doesn't call us and not equip us, but he gifts us for the things that he's called us to do in his kingdom. And yet, if that's not enough for us to be doing what God's called us to do, then there's Second Corinthians chapter 5, verse 10, and it tells us this, that we will all give account for whether we fulfill God's purposes in our life or not. And he says, therefore we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each 1st May receive things that are done in the body or things done in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing verse 11, therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men, but we are well known to God. And I also trust we are well known to your own consciences. Well, it leads us to ask the question that pops off the page when you read this first chapter. Like these Israelites do. I know what I'm called to do. That's the first question that calling may change for some people several times over a lifetime. Or you may have one thing that God you know has purposed for you to do. But past the question Who is Jesus to me? That answer needs to be Lord and Savior. Past that monumental question that upon which all eternity hangs. For a Christian, the second question is what is God called me to do? When the apostle

Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus and he was knocked off his horse, he had two questions. He said, who are you, Lord? He already knew, actually. And then when he was told, I'm Jesus, who you've been persecuting, his second question was, what must I do for you, Lord? Once he knew the Lord, what should I do for you? God's called us all for something and for our life to have pleasure and purpose and to give God glory, we have to find it. So what is God called me to do? And then if I have that question answered, am I doing it? And that's upon those two questions where all fulfillment in life hinges. Do I know what God's called me to do, and am I fulfilling it? Well, this question is asked to these people. How do they respond? Verse 12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the 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 Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people feared the presence of the Lord. And then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spoke the Lord's message to the people, saying, I am with you, says the Lord. And so the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the 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. On the 24th day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius. And so here's the response. The leaders and the people they obey. Now it's the leaders. First. They're mentioned first. Why? Well, they are in large part culpable for the lack of work on the temple. They led the people there. And then as they stopped, so did the people. And you got to love this as soon as the word of the Lord comes through. Haggai, they considered their ways, and they course corrected, and I would say admitting and correcting mistakes is a sign of fantastic leadership, great leadership is not always being right, and it's certainly not acting like you're right when you're wrong. The best people in the Bible are great. Repenters these guys repented. They said, you know what? We need to get back to work. And so they obey and they fear the Lord. And as they do, so do the people. The people obeyed. Notice with me, the people they are called a remnant. The Lord says that the people feared the presence of the Lord, and they are the remnant of the people down in verse 14. That's interesting to me because as I have here for you, of the million or so Jews, as I mentioned earlier, that was exiled to to Babylon and Persia, only 42,000 come back. That's a remnant, as we've told you in the Bible, there's always a remnant. But what it says to me more than that is this is the cream of the Jewish crop. So of everybody that has been a Jew deported to Babylon, these guys are the most hardy. They've left established communities. They've left 70 years of life. They've probably some of them left part of their family. They've left comfort. They've left stability. They've traveled here. And even though they haven't continued the work of God, you'd have to think they've done more than 90% of the people that claim to

be Jews. These guys are going harder than any Jews. So you might ask the question, if you're these people like, well, Lord, why aren't you getting on to them? They're still on their duffs in Babylon. They've done exactly zero for the Lord. Here we are as a remnant, the faithful. And yet you're jerking our chain. Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever felt like. Lord, why don't you just leave me alone? I mean, I'm doing more than I used to, I this is good. I'm doing more than that guy. You know? I'm doing way more than them. Why is it always go good for them? Why do they get to sit in Babylon watching their 85 inch television? I'm looking for is a little paneling. I mean, you know, when I was in the 70s, we had paneling in the trailer. I go to somebody else's doublewide. They had the paneling with the little deers jumping over the pond in it. Why can't I have some little deers etched in my paneling? I don't think it's too much. I mean, we're in double wides over here. Lord, maybe you've never felt like that. I could say these people might feel like that. But here's the thing. You find out that this is how God works. When you read the New Testament, the book of Matthew, chapter 25, there's this parable that many of you are familiar with and God gives in this parable the master being God. The master gives these servants these talents, and he gives to one, five, and to one, two, and to one, one and when he goes away and comes back, the guy who's been given five is invested him. The guy who's been given two is invested. Those the guy's been given one. He buries them. How many of you know this? And when the master, it's his stuff. They've been given the privilege of stewarding. Ask them what they've done. He says to the guys who invested the five and invested the two. Look, good job to those who have been faithful and little. They get given more, said man, that's awesome. That's me. That's what I want to be. I want to be that guy. And then to the guy who hid his talent, he's like, why did you hide it all? I feared you, you're an austere man. I thought you, if I bungled it up, would, you know? And so God says, well, guess what? Here's what he says in chapter 25, as the master, verse 29, he says, for everyone who has more will be given, and he will have abundance. But from him who does not have even what he has will be taken. He said, I gave you, and you didn't do anything with it, so you're going to have that taken. But to you who actually I gave, you're going to be given more. Again, we say, oh, that's awesome, but what's that mean? Here you are, the guy in Babylon who never left yours is going to be taken from you. You got nothing. The guys who took yours and invested it, you took the talent. You 900 miles over here. Well, you don't just get to do whatever you want with it. We're not our own. We were bought with a price. And so, since you've been faithful, guess what? I'm not just going to let you sit there. I'm actually going to make you be faithful. Over. The more I've been giving you, more stuff comes more responsibility, not just more privileges, also more responsibility. So it's it's a blessing from the Lord when he doesn't just let us get back in our Christian recliner and continue on in our slumber.



And I always tell my kids when they get caught short in something, like, why do I always get caught doing stuff? And this guy doesn't? Because God loves you. Because you're his. Because you're doing stuff for him. So he's going to make sure that you're faithful. It's required of a steward to be found faithful. And this remnant, they obey. They show that they had some metal, the stuff that got them there in the first place. Now they respond by being obedient. Well, notice when they are obedient, they start talking about doing the work and they purpose in their hearts to do the work. Then the Lord spoke and he said to them, I am with you. I am with you. Verse 13. Now the truth is, God was never not with them. They were the ones that were not with God. That's always how it is. Like God, where are you? Well, he's right there. Who's moved? Not God, you and I. But notice when they obey. Or in this case, obedience is the same as repentance. Then the Lord speaks, and he speaks because their ears can hear now and their eyes have been open. And so what repentance does is it always leads me to restored fellowship with God. I can hear, I can see, and so we often articulate that as blessing. He's always blessing, but we now experience his blessing in a different way. Also, repentance or obedience leads notice to the spirit being stirred. God says, I am with you. And then in verse 14, so the Lord stirred up their spirits to work. Repentance and obedience leads to my spirit being stirred. I'm thinking about Abraham where it says that he believed in God and it was accounted for him for righteousness, or to him for righteousness, that Abraham believed, and that obedience was already embedded in that belief. When when nobody else was leaving earth, the chaldees God spoke to him. He was a pagan. And he got up and got going. Throughout Abraham's life, he believed when no one else believed. And even though his obedience wasn't perfect, he would believe when he was too old to have a kid that he was supposed to have one. And he would believe that if he took his son up on the mountain and he sacrificed him, that God would raise him up. He he believed and obeyed. And when he obeyed, then God stirred his spirit to do the thing he was called to do. And many people believe they need to have their spirit stirred to obey a lot of church services are actually kind of they're built around this idea that we're going to stir you up so that you obey. Sometimes people ask me, why don't we always have altar calls? I'm not against them. I'm not. But you know what? We need more than being stirred up to come down and do something and have some emotional response in order to obey is I need to obey, and then I'll be stirred up. If I'm obedient, then what God will do is he will then stir my spirit to do whatever he wants me to do. So it works like this. We don't get stirred up and then change our mind to go do something. As God is working with me and on me and speaks to me, I change my mind. The Lord then changes my heart, stirs me up, you might say. And then that decision in the heart always concretes are sets in place, the decision in the mind. That's how God works. And so I obey. Go back and do

the first thing. Why isn't God working in my life? Well, I've not done the first thing. He's not going to give me the next thing until I do the first thing, as we've said before. And so there's spirits were stirred up and then they came and worked. It says. Then they worked. Verse 15, they came and worked. 23 days after the Lord spoke through Haggai the prophet, they got to work then, which means that they started the process, this, this huge process of building the temple. They had to get materials together. They had to talk about building plans. They had to have people in place to oversee the project. But 23 days after Haggai speaks, they actually get to work. Which leads me to point you to the question I have. How can you tell if a Christian has been stirred by God? They get to work? If someone has been stirred by God, they get to work. They don't have to be coerced. They don't have to swing the cat. We got.

To do this thing.

You'll find people that get stirred by God doing all kinds of stuff. They don't even know what they're doing. They're just doing stuff for God. And you'll find that if you're not stirred by God, you'll lose the desire to work for God. You'll find other things to take up your time. But as God stirs the person of God, they'll do the work of God. So they worked, which then I'm out of time. So here are three. Concluding considerations. If the key word in the book is consider and the key phrase is consider your ways. And I have three concluding considerations. I'll start in Psalm chapter 8, where the psalmist says. Verse three. When I consider your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the Son of man that you visit him for you made him a little lower than the angels, and you crowned him with glory and honor, and you've made him to have dominion over the works of your hands. And you put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the sea. Verse nine O Lord, our Lord, how excellent! Your name is in all the earth. Consider the heavens. Secondly, consider trials as joy. In James chapter 1, James writes to a people that have been dispersed for their belief. And in verse 2 he says, my brethren, count awe. That word is often translated, consider it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience or maturity. But let patience have its perfect work. It's fully mature work that you may be perfect, completely mature and complete, lacking nothing. So consider the heavens. Consider trials, joy, and then finally consider Jesus. Hebrews chapter 3, verse 1. I'll read down to verse 6. Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus Christ, who was faithful to him. That is, God, who appointed him as Moses also

was faithful in all his house. For this one that is, Jesus has been counted worthy of much more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone. But he who built all things is God and Moses verse 5 indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward. But verse 6, Christ as a son over his own house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. Heavenly father, we thank you for Jesus Christ and the house he has built, his kingdom, and Lord, we thank you that we are of his house as we hold fast to the hope in Christ Jesus. And we pray that you would help us not to waste the time that we have on this earth. Knowing, as the Bible says, we should live Circumspectly for the days are evil, and Lord, we pray that you would allow us to live in such a way that we would give you glory and pleasure. In Jesus name, Amen. Would you guys stand?