Sermon Series: Haggai: What's Your Focus?
Sermon Title: Great Expectations
Date: 11/8/2026

Big Idea: Allow God to drastically change your expectations.

We all have a picture of how life should go. Sometimes the outcome is completely different, and that leads to disappointment. That is where the Israelites are in Haggai 2:1-9. They have returned from 70 years of exile and started building the second temple, but they are discouraged by the result. God speaks through the prophet Haggai to remind them who is in control.

I. Don't Live in the Past (Haggai 2:1-3)

Haggai speaks to two leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua, and asks who remembers the house in its former glory (Haggai 2:3). Solomon's temple, built in 1 Kings 6, was overlaid with gold, carved with cherubim, and took seven years to build. This one looked like a shadow of it. Ezra 3:12-13 describes the mixed reaction: some shouted for joy, while the older people who remembered the first temple wept, and the two sounds blended together.

We do the same thing, longing for the good old days when we had more money, a better job, or simpler seasons with our kids. But comparison is deadly. Looking back too long turns the past into an idol and makes us miss the present. Learning from the past is good, but God is the great "I AM," not the great "I WAS."

II. Focus on What He's Currently Doing (Haggai 2:4-5)

God moves His people from nostalgia to His presence. He tells everyone to be strong, to work, and not to fear, because He is with them (Haggai 2:4-5). Still, God does not stay silent in their disappointment. He gives commands that call them to action, because He does great things in partnership with His people.

His deepest promise is that His Spirit remains among them, tied to the covenant made when they left Egypt (Exodus 29:45-46). If any nation gave God reason to walk away, it was Israel, through slavery, wilderness wandering, and exile. Yet He stays.

Some of us assume God was active once but is quiet now. We don't feel like praying, reading the Bible, or going to church the way we did as new believers. But if His Spirit stayed with a rebellious people, why think He has left you? God can do far more than we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21), so don't limit Him to what He has done before.

III. Look to the Future with Continued Hope (Haggai 2:6-9)

God promises to shake the nations, fill the house with glory, and make the latter glory greater than the former (Haggai 2:6-9). He is called the "Lord of hosts" five times in these verses, a reminder of His authority. The message is simple: you build it, I will fill it, and you leave the outcome to me.

How could this modest temple outshine Solomon's? Its glory would come from God's presence, not its looks. Roughly 500 years later, Herod expanded the temple for his own gain and glory, but he underestimated God's sovereignty. Soon after, a baby was brought there to be presented to the Lord (Luke 2:22). Jesus, the Savior of the world, entered that temple. He grew in wisdom there (Luke 2:52) and later taught there (John 18:20). The Israelites only had a promise, yet God's plan exceeded anything they could have designed.

The future can feel uncertain, and many people fear it most. We cannot predict outcomes, but we can trust the One whose presence always exceeds our expectations. That begins by entrusting our lives to Jesus, who offers water that satisfies for good (John 4:13-14). Everyone has a God-shaped hole, and only He can fill it.

God has worked in the past, is working now, and will keep working. We don't have to dwell on what was. We can focus on what He is doing today and look ahead with hope. So this week, allow God to drastically change your expectations. Name one expectation you are holding onto, about your life or about God, and hand it over to Him.

Discussion Questions

1. **Is there a season of your life you sometimes wish you could go back to? How can longing for it keep us from seeing what God is doing now?**

2. **The older Israelites wept while others shouted for joy at the same foundation. Why do people react so differently to the same situation, and which group do you tend to be in?**

3. **God's commands to the people were to be strong, work, and not fear. What is one step of obedience He may be asking of you right now?**

4. **If you have felt distant from God lately, what does His promise to remain among His people say to you?**

5. **Jesus entered a temple that looked like a disappointment. Where do you need to trust that God's plan is bigger than what you can see?**