

September 9, 2020

Words of encouragement for you.

Have you ever wondered about the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit something that only came after Jesus ascended into heaven? Or has the Spirit of God been around from the beginning? What does the Holy Spirit do for us? How can I know that the Spirit of God lives in me? I believe that all of us have questions regarding the Holy Spirit. These are only a few of them. Let us read together from Haggai 2:1-9.

*1 On the twenty-first of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet saying, 2 "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people saying, 3 '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? 4 But now take courage, Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD, 'take courage also, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all you people of the land take courage,' declares the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' declares the LORD of hosts. 5 'As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!' 6 For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. 7 I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. 8 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the LORD of hosts. 9 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the LORD of hosts."*

Haggai was contemporary with Ezra, Daniel, Zechariah. He was born in Babylon during the exile. He returned to Jerusalem with the first group

of returnees. Haggai's ministry occurred during the reign of Darius the Mede, king of Persia.

Haggai was sent to encourage the people in rebuilding the Temple. The work was difficult. The people became discouraged when progress was slow. They needed to be reenergized and they could not do the work alone.

We have a similar problem today in that the temple of our hearts needs to be repaired or rebuilt. It is difficult work. You may be easily discouraged when progress is slow. You will find you need to be re-energized and you cannot do it alone. Fortunately for us, as it was for God's people at the time of Haggai, God gives us His Holy Spirit. There are at least four functions of God's Spirit. Encouragement (vs. 4) is first. God promises to help us in times of difficulty. "I am the Lord your God, who upholds your right hand, who says to you 'Do not fear, I will help you'" (Isaiah 41:13). He encourages us with His divine presence. David writes in the 23d Psalm he fears no evil because God is with him.

Second the Holy Spirit abides among us (vs. 5). The Spirit of God is always present. The problem is that we try to contain or box up the Spirit of God. This, in part, fulfills God's promise of Immanuel, God with us.

Third the Holy Spirit is a source of courage (vs. 5). God speaking through Moses declares, "When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, ..., is with you" (Deuteronomy 20:1). We also read from Isaiah the prophet, "Thus says the Lord your Creator, ..., And He who formed you, ..., Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by My name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the

rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you” (Isaiah 43:1-2).

Finally God’s Spirit gives us peace (vs. 9). God promises peace to His people. The Psalmist writes, “The Lord will give strength to His people; The Lord will bless His people with peace” (Psalm 29:11). Moreover, we receive this promise through Isaiah, “The steadfast of mind Thou will keep in perfect peace, because he trust in Thee”(Isaiah 26:3). Jesus personally promises peace to those who believe in Him. John records Jesus words, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 14:27; & 16:33). Finally, Paul instructs, “The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

The temple in our hearts needs constant care and maintenance. If the temple is neglected it will need to be rebuilt. Embrace the presence of God in your heart through the Holy Spirit and know the perfect peace of God in your life. May God be the source of your encouragement and courage. Feel the constant presence of the Holy Spirit in your life. Let the Holy Spirit have absolute sway over your life, right now as we pray.

*Gracious Lord, thank You for all that You do in our lives. We especially thank You for Your Spirit that affirms Your love and care for use every day. Help each of us Lord God to be more like Your Son Jesus. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.*

The promise of Immanuel is among the greatest promises ever made. Know that God is with you always.

Until the nets are full