

The God Who Stirs Us Up

Behold Our God! – Read the Bible for Life Series #40

Haggai 1-2

Pastor David Sunday

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Every part of Scripture gives us new opportunities to see the Risen Christ. This morning we're going to turn to one of the smallest letters in the Old Testament—the book of Haggai, which is at the end of the Old Testament. As we look at this book, it's our hope that we will see more of the Risen Christ.

Here is a little bit about the timeline: Haggai prophesies at a very important point in the history of God's people. In the year 586 B.C., the Babylonians—the world power at that time—sacked Jerusalem, took over, destroyed the temple where God's presence was manifest and took most of the Jews captive to Babylon where they dwelt as exiles in Babylon for 70 years. In 539 B.C., there was a new king in Persia named Cyrus. Isaiah the prophet had prophesied over 100 years earlier that Cyrus would decree that the Israelites could return to Jerusalem, which in fact he did in 538 B.C. He issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple. He even made provision for them to do so out of the Persian money. In 538 B.C., a small band of Jews (about one sixth of those who had been in exile in Babylon—about 50,000 people) began returning to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity. At that time, they began to rebuild and lay the foundations for the temple.

Their governor was Zerubbabel; their high priest was named Joshua, the son of Jehozadak. (He was not the same Joshua who succeeded Moses many hundreds of years earlier). The historical period in the Old Testament is the same time as Ezra and Nehemiah. The prophets were Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai was called by God to stir up the people who had returned from captivity to fully engage in the work of the Lord. These two chapters take place from about August through December of 520 B.C.—a period of four months where God's Word was doing an amazing work in the people through the preaching of Haggai the prophet.

He's preaching in 520 but the Jews returned to Jerusalem in 536, a 16-year gap. (Remember, the dates go in the opposite direction before Christ). There's a 16 year gap. As

they say in London on the subway, “Mind the gap.” Think about the gap, because that gap is the reason for Haggai’s preaching. They started rebuilding the temple in 536 but then they stalled. And it was the stalling of God’s work that prompted Haggai’s preaching. Let’s read Haggai 1:1-8. Let’s stand together for the reading of God’s Holy Word this morning.

“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: ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts...’”

This phrase, “The Lord of Hosts,” is found in Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi in greater proportion than in any of the rest of the Old Testament because at this period of history we need to be reminded that God is the Commander of all of Heaven’s armies. He is the sovereign, almighty God. And so Haggai says,

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say 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; 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.”

This is God’s Word. Let’s pray.

God, we thank You that every Scripture is inspired by You. and that whatever was written in the Old Testament was written for our instruction so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Help us, Lord, to approach this obscure part of the Old Testament with faith that You have a word that You want to speak to us today through it; a word that we desperately need to hear and to heed. And we pray, Lord, that You would move us as a church through this very contemporary message of the prophet Haggai, that we would be a people who seek first Your Kingdom and Your righteousness, as *“a treasure hidden in a field”* worth giving all to possess. So may we esteem Your Kingdom above all else. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

They say summer is a great time to lose some weight—to shed a few pounds. You can get out and exercise more, and this is a great time to move around a bit. But it also

affords us with dangerous opportunities to put on a few pounds like peach pie, blueberry cobbler, strawberry shortcake, homemade whipped cream, corn on the cob smothered with butter—all of the things we love to eat. We always need to be watching our weight, don't we? We always need to be looking for those few encroaching pounds that want to add on to our bodies, because if we don't watch it, we will gain it. I find when I'm running, I can tell even if I've gained a couple of pounds. It feels different and I feel more sluggish.

I want to speak this morning about the need to continually watch our weight as Christians. I'm not speaking so much physically as I am spiritually. The Christian life is a long distance race that is to be run with endurance. The Book of Hebrews urges us on with these words: *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."*

Haggai is called by God to stir up God's people to action. They've been stalled for 16 years and they haven't been making God's priorities their priorities. The reason is they've put on some weight spiritually. They need to lose that weight so that they can run the race with endurance. I want us to look at three snapshots of Haggai's prophetic ministry this morning—three weights that we need to cast off as God's people if we are to engage ourselves first and fully in the work of God—in the building up of God's Kingdom.

1. Throw Off the Weight of Apathy and Indifference

The first is the weight of apathy and indifference. It was apathy and indifference that stalled the people in Haggai's day from fully engaging in the work of the Lord, and it's apathy and indifference that often stalls the church in the 21stth Century—from engaging fully in the work of the Lord, from seeking *"first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."* Sometimes we just get too complacent and apathetic. We let other things crowd in that gain the affection of our hearts and God's priorities go to the wayside.

Back in the 20th Century, A.W. Tozer said, "The complacency of Christians is the scandal of Christianity." That's true. To be apathetic in the face of the Lord of Hosts—the God of Heaven's armies, the God Whose glory covers the earth *"as the waters cover the sea"*—that's a scandal! But we make lots of nice sounding excuses for why we become apathetic and complacent.

Look at Haggai 1:2. *"Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD."* They had a lot of things they had to do when

they got back to Jerusalem: houses to rebuild, agriculture endeavors, land that needed to be cultivated. Things were in ruins; things were a mess. They were busy, so they gave themselves to taking care of those priorities. They kept saying, “It’s not time yet to get busy with God’s priorities. That time will come but it’s not time yet.” And God turns around through the mouth of the prophet, Haggai, and says, “When is it going to be the right time? Sixteen years have elapsed and you have not given yourselves to My priorities.”

Look at verse 3. *“Then the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet.”* This is what God said in verse four. *“Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?”* God is saying, “Let’s get real here and admit your misplaced priorities. You’ve had plenty of time to build your houses and you’ve made them look really nice. They’re paneled and luxurious. You have taken care of your comforts, your ease, your priorities, but My house lies in ruins.”

God is not angry because He doesn’t want the people to live in their own houses. That’s not the problem. The problem is their neglect of the house of the Lord speaks of their neglect of the glory of God. They are diminishing God’s glory in their midst. It was in the temple that God manifested His presence in the midst of His people, that everyone who could see got a visible symbol of God’s glory in the midst. According to Alec Motyer, “The un-built house speaks of the unwanted resident... The heart of their problem was that they acted as if life could be run without God and as if grace would be theirs even if they neglected the means of grace.” That’s the problem.

God says very clearly in verses seven and eight, “This is about Me and My glory.” Look at verse 8. *“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...”* “Get your priorities straight. Deal with the apathy and indifference. Admit the fact that you care more about your comfort and temporal ease in this world than you have been caring about My glory and My Kingdom. Repent! Get to work on My priorities.” That’s what God is saying.

I think it’s a shame that sometimes the only time we hear the prophet Haggai preached is when the church is having a building program. This seems like a great text to use to motivate people to give to the building program. I think that’s missing the deeper application of this text.

It’s not a building or structure today where God dwells, where God’s glory is being manifest. That temple was just a faint shadow of a much greater spiritual reality—the temple that was to come in our Lord Jesus Christ! In Him we beheld the glory of God

tabernacling in a human body. In Jesus Christ God's glory was made manifest and Jesus is now ascended to the right hand of the Father. His glory now, His temple, His dwelling place, is a people who He calls His church—His body.

Ephesians 2 says, we are *"being built together [joined together] into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."* He dwells in the midst of His people. His church is the body of Christ, the dearest thing to Him on the face of the earth! To give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord today means that in my family, in my vocation, with my time, with my resources, I am going to make it my priority to build up the body of Christ, to actively engage in serving God's people—not just those who are here but those who are not yet of this fold. I am going to give my time and priorities to making Jesus Christ known in a world where He is not known, to making His glories seen and to building up His body.

Jesus says this should be the priority of His people today. Matthew 6:33 says, *"seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."* Seek that first! Say to Him,

"Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art...
Thou and thou only, first in my heart..."

(Be Thou My Vision by Dallan Forgaill, 8th Century)

It's a very consequential thing for God's people to put Him first and continually cast off this weight of apathy and indifference. Sometimes we get discouraged in the work of the Lord and we just stall and stop. Or we get busy with other things and they start to crown our lives. Our passion for the things of God dulls and it is very consequential that we repent when that happens and that we keep our passion for the things of the Kingdom of God burning bright. Look at what God says in verses five and seven. *"Consider your ways."* Consider the consequences of your apathy and neglect.

What were the consequences of their apathy and neglect? Perpetual frustration. *"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."* You never have enough!

What God is saying to us is, "When My people don't make Me first in their lives, the result is a constant aftertaste of disappointment and frustration." You will be frustrated as a Christian when God's priorities are not your priorities. You cannot find your satisfaction in anything but Christ and Him alone if you belong to Him.

Walter Kaiser says, “No one cheats God without cheating himself at the same time.” God is saying to His people, “You’re not being satisfied by not putting Me first. Put Me first and you will find that you have everything else that you need.” Ask yourself. Consider your ways. Is there any apathy or indifference starting to crowd into your heart and weigh you down?

My pastor friend, Mike Bullmore, said, “Every day you are spending the precious currency of your life. What are you spending it on?” Every day you are giving yourself to something. What are you giving yourself to? Do the priorities of the Kingdom of God have first place in your life?

Isn’t it a danger in the 21st Century to think of Christianity as something we do on Sunday morning that has very little bearing or relevance to the rest of my life throughout the week? A book like Haggai reminds us that God’s Kingdom is to rule my life every day and every hour of my life. He is to have first place in my heart. Are you giving yourself wholeheartedly to the work of the Lord, seeking His Kingdom first in your family, in your vocation, in your efforts to build up the body of Christ? All this past week you have been giving yourself to something. What has it been? If an independent observer were to look at your life over the last three months—at your time, finances, energies, what you’ve been pouring yourself into—what would he be able to discern is the priority of your life from watching you?

What if every Christian followed your example? And what if every Christian watched you and gave the same priority to the things of Christ as you do? Would the gospel be advancing? Would the church be being build up if you were the standard bearer? Ask yourself, “Is there anything that’s keeping me from giving myself whole-heartedly to the pursuit of Christ’s Kingdom and His righteousness?” If so, what is it? What is it? Turn and make God’s priorities your priorities.

That’s the good news of chapter one. Repentance is possible! When we hear and heed the Word of God, God comes to us with blessing and empowers us to obey Him. That’s what happens at the beginning of verse 12. Let’s read it together.

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 LORD. Then Haggai, the messenger of the LORD, spoke to the people with the LORD's message, “I am with you, declares the LORD.”

“I am with you, declares the Lord. I am with you when you are giving yourself fully to My glory, to My priorities. I am pleased and I will prosper your efforts.” Repent of apathy and indifference. If I am apathetic and indifferent, it’s not just having a neutral effect—it has a negative effect on the advancement of the gospel. We need to shed those pounds of apathy in order for the gospel to advance with rapidity.

2. Throw Off the Weight of Discouragement

The second weight that we need to throw off is the weight of discouragement. Now you are engaged in the work of the Lord. Now they’re building the temple. On our calendar, they started around September 21, 520 B.C. They’re getting to work on the temple again in chapter two but they find some opposition. They find out the work is going to take a lot longer and is a lot harder than they thought. They start thinking, “We’re not going to make any progress or finish this task!” They start getting discouraged and some of the older people who had seen Solomon’s temple—the temple that had been destroyed—start looking at what’s being rebuilt and say, “Oh! This is so little! This is nothing!”

Maybe you can look back at a time in your Christian life and you think, “Those were the glory days. That’s when God was really at work.” You look at your life now and think it’s nothing compared to what once was. That was the case with God’s people. Haggai comes to them again with a message in October of that year, about three and a half weeks after they started the rebuilding. We read this beginning at verse 1.

In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, ‘Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, “Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?”’

God speaks very straight to them. He says, “Look, I know that what you’re doing right now seems paltry to what you once saw.” Sometimes that happens. Sometimes we look at other works of God in other places and see what’s happening here, and we wonder, “Is God really here? Is God really at work in this? Is God really working through my ministry, in my family? What I’m doing seems so small and insignificant compared to what happened there.” Sometimes we look back in history and hear of great works of God in history and we get discouraged.

I remember reading William Grimshaw's diary, a contemporary of John Wesley. One week he preached 14 times and called that his idle week. Another week he says, "This is a busy week. I preached 23 times." He goes on and lists day by day. "Preached four times today. Preached five times this day. Preached four times. Visited two persons. A good day. Glory be to God!" He did this in the north of England where there were potholes in the roads and it was hard to get around. He says, "Busy, busy, busy." Then, I read in his journal what he wrote to his friend, William Romaine. Listen to this. "When I come to die, I shall have my greatest grief and my greatest joy. My greatest grief is that I have done so little for Jesus; and my greatest joy is that Jesus has done so much for me. My last words shall be, 'Here goes an unprofitable servant.'"

Isn't that beautiful? He was laboring in the work of the Lord but it was all about what Jesus had done for him—not what he was doing for Jesus. It's beautiful but it's also frustrating. Sometimes I read things and I wonder, "Why am I reading this tonight right before I go to bed because I'll probably never preach 24 times in one week; I'll never do what William Grimshaw did." Should I get discouraged and stop doing what I'm doing because it doesn't compare to someone else?

That was the temptation in Haggai's day. "Should we even continue with this little work compared to what once was?" God comes to them in verse four with a very stirring word. The first thing He says is, "...*Be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD.*" Be strong and work! Work! Get to work! Don't look at what you're doing in comparison to someone else or what happened in the past. Do what God has put before you now in the strength of the Lord. Get to work. Don't wallow in self-pity.

How do you do that work? You do it by faith. "*Work,*" He says, "...*for I am with you, declares the LORD...*" That's a great promise. Sometimes when you have a lousy job to do, it helps to have someone with you whom you really admire and appreciate. You will do that lousy work because you love working with that person who brings dignity to your labors.

God says, "I am with you. Though the work might seem small and insignificant, I am in it. I am in this work. I am in what you are doing in those neighborhoods in Elgin. I am in what you are doing back in that Friendship class. I am in what you are doing when you teach the Word of God faithfully to children and adults week in and week out. I am in what you are doing with those youth who do not always seem to respond readily to what you are doing. I am in your parenting as you labor in faith in Me. I am with you," declares the Lord.

A job increases in value when you have great respect for the people with whom you're working. God says, "I am working with you and My presence is powerful." Look at verses four and five. *"Work, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts, according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt."* "I'm that same God Who split the Red Sea in two, Who empowered William Grimshaw to preach 24 times in one week and Who is at work in you today in 2012." The God Who split the Red Sea is with us in His powerful and very personal presence.

Look at verse five again. *"My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not,"* He says. "My Spirit is with you, not just as an observer or bystander, but I am the Living God and I am here to animate all that you are doing through faith in Me. I am here to take your weak efforts and to empower them with almighty strength." That's what God did in Haggai's day.

At the end of Haggai 1:14, *"And the LORD [by His Spirit] stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua..."* He animated and energized them. And God says, "I'm with you today, New Covenant Bible Church, to stir you up and to empower your ministry."

Do you ever wonder, "Is God doing anything here? Is God doing anything in me and in my family?" I want to urge you according to the Word of God from Haggai to reject those wonderings as whisperings from Satan himself. Those are whisperings from the devil, wanting to cast doubt into your mind, wanting to tell you that your labor in the Lord is in vain, wanting you to give up and discourage you. Instead, God comes to us and says, "Don't get discouraged. Instead, believe that God is with you just as He's been with His people throughout history, trust in the active dynamic working of His Spirit in your midst, and work—work in faith, believing that He's at work in the process. That encourages us. Cast off the weight of indifference, cast off the weight of discouragement, and then finally, cast off the weight of defiling sin.

3. Throw Off the Weight of Defilement

Cast off that weight! Look at Haggai 2:10. Another message comes through the prophet Haggai. The people have been working for about three months on rebuilding the temple. It's the 24th day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius that the Word of the Lord comes again by Haggai, the prophet. In our calendar, that would be December 18. From August to December people are working and God brings another message beginning in verse 11.

Thus says the LORD of hosts: Ask the priests about the law: 'If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?' The priests answered and said, 'No.' Then Haggai said, 'If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?' The priests answered and said, 'It does become unclean.' Then Haggai answered and said, 'So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, declares the LORD, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean.'

In this message through the prophet, God is saying, “At first you were indifferent, apathetic, not working at all. You got to work now. Then, I dealt with your discouragement. But there’s one more problem or weight that you must always be watchful of—the weight of doing God’s work but not doing it God’s way—the weight of doing God’s work while you are harboring unrepentant sin in your life.

How does that work? Maybe you think that because you’re out there working on the temple, that just by engaging yourself in holy things you will somehow become holy in the process. Maybe you think that because what you’re doing is a noble thing that it somehow automatically makes you a noble person. The problem is that if you take a clean cup of water and pour some dirt in it, the whole cup becomes dirty. But if you take a dirty cup of water and pour some clean water into it, it doesn’t become clean.

God is saying to His people, “I don’t just want you doing My work; I want you giving Me your heart. I don’t just want you to be busy doing things for me; I want you to be loving and obeying me and doing what you’re doing from a pure heart with motives that are designed to bring glory to Me.” If you carry your sin into God’s work, you’re not going to become holy by doing God’s work; rather, God’s work will be defiled by your sin and polluted by your unholiness.

Holiness is not contagious. It doesn’t just happen because you’re active in the church. You could be very active doing work in the church but your heart could be very impure in the process because you’re harboring sin in your life. God is urging His people that in order to do God’s work in God’s way, their hearts need to be purified by faith. How are our hearts purified by faith? By looking to Jesus Christ.

Acts 15 says that God is able to purify our hearts through faith in Christ. Every work we do in the work of the Lord has to be done by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, looking to Him to take that which we do and to make it a pleasant offering to the Lord. We need Him to continually cleanse our hearts and conform us to His holy character. He does that through faith in Jesus.

This whole book of Haggai ultimately points us to Jesus. There are two places where it does that. The first is in Haggai 2:6-9.

For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.

God is saying here through Haggai to these people who are looking at what they're doing and thinking it seems so small, "I'm doing far more than what your eye can see right now. My purposes are so much bigger than you can imagine. A day is coming where I'm going to shake the heavens and the earth, and all the glory of the nations will be poured into My house. I am going to be glorified." And that day that He's speaking of there is fulfilled in Christ.

Christ came into the world the first time, fulfilled all righteousness, and brought peace, justification and life to those who trust in Him. But He's coming again a second time in glory. God is going to shake all the kingdoms of this world and all the glory of the earth, until all the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Whatever we've done in Jesus' name right now is a part of what God is going to do at the end when Jesus returns.

We are going to realize that we've been building far more here than we could see. We've been involved in something much bigger than we could imagine. God has used the work we've done in His purposes and when it all comes to consummation, we're going to be amazed at how God has weaved together our little works in His grand plan to bring glory to His Son.

That makes me ask the question, "Am I giving myself right now to the things that are really going to matter when Jesus comes again?" When He returns, all that will matter is Christ and His Kingdom. Are the things I'm giving myself to right now things that are going to endure then, at the time of His coming?

That's the first passage that points us to Christ. The second passage is at the end of Haggai. It's kind of a cryptic word. Let's read together beginning in Haggai 2:22.

Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms. I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders. And the horses and their riders

shall go down, every one by the sword of his brother. On that day, declares the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares the LORD, and make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the LORD of hosts.

God is saying, “Zerubbabel, you are going to play a signal role in My Kingdom purposes.” That is because if you trace the genealogy, in a very roundabout way Zerubbabel is a descendent of King David—a living heir. For a long time, it looked as if God’s promises to David had come to a standstill—like there would no longer be a king reigning in David’s line. But Zerubbabel is that king. He is in that line. He becomes a part of the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is saying, “Zerubbabel, I am going to use you and make you a signet ring.” He’s really ultimately referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is about Him even more than it is about Zerubbabel. It’s about the fact that all of God’s promises find their “yes” and “amen” in Jesus Christ.

The book of Haggai is telling us, “God does not forget His promises and God will not abandon His purposes.” He does not forget His promises. He will not abandon His purposes. When you give yourself to Christ and His Kingdom, you are giving yourself to something that will abide for eternity! *“Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”*

God is going to be faithful to His promises. Right now, “Run this race with endurance. *Lay aside every weight...Looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.*” Get rid of whatever in your life keeps you from living whole-heartedly for His Kingdom purposes, because in the end, His Kingdom will endure and it will be the only thing that endures.

Let’s pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You speak to us in many times and ways. All of these words are ultimately designed to help us to see more about Your Son and what You’re doing in the world through Him. Lord, that’s all that matters. And we pray that we would learn to make much of Christ and to make little of whatever is not of Christ. Lord, we can identify with the people in Haggai’s day because they’re so much like us: we get distracted by our pursuits and comforts, the business of life in this world, and we forget the bigger picture. We pray, Lord, that You would work in our hearts—wean us from those things that keep us from giving ourselves fully to You. Lord, where there is sin defiling us, we ask for the grace of repentance, that we would cleanse ourselves of all that defiles flesh and spirit and perfect holiness in the fear of You because You are walking amongst us as our God.

Your presence is in our midst. Where we're discouraged, Lord, we pray we would take comfort and be re-energized by the promise of Your empowering Spirit in our midst. And Lord, we thank You that the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdoms of our God and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever. So we would offer ourselves to You now, Lord, as living sacrifices. And we would say to You, Lord, afresh, "Take our lives and let them be holy, fully consecrated to You, God." In Jesus' name. Amen.

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