**Haggai 1 In 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, 2“Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying: ‘This people says, “The time has not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.” ’ ” 3Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4“*Is it* time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple *to lie* in ruins?” 5Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts “Consider your ways! 6“You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are 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.” 7Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Consider your ways! 8Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the Lord. 9“*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. 10Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. 11For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, 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.” 12Then 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 13Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, spoke the Lord’s message to the people, saying, “I am with you, says the Lord.” 14So 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, 15on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.**

We’re in the book of Haggai tonight – the year is 520 BC. The Medo-Persian empire has now conquered Babylon. The reign of the Persians has begun. Haggai, a contemporary of Ezra and Zechariah, is prophesying the word of the Lord to the remnant that returned from Babylon in 538 BC. Ezra 3:8 mentions that the new temple was started in 536 BC. Notice the difference – the foundation is started in the May/June time frame of 536 BC and Haggai is standing in Jerusalem 16 years later… 16 years of not getting much done, 16 years of taking care of all the houses, except the Lord’s house, 16 years of putting off what is not of personal benefit… and God isn’t particularly happy.

When I was a teen, I worked on cars a lot. My sister burned the clutch out of her Datsun 210. She had a bad habit of riding the clutch. Daddy told me I’d have to put a clutch in it for her. He said it was the brotherly thing to do… that was code for a free mechanic job. I’d already put one in… now a few thousand miles later… here we were again. I went and bought the clutch assembly, but I was working 40 hours a week and going to college full-time. Needless to say, the new clutch wasn’t my top priority. One evening, Daddy came and asked when I thought I’d get to it. I replied I hoped the coming weekend. I’ll never forget Daddy saying, as he shook his head and walked off, “If that was your car, it’d have been done a week ago.” My car – immediate need! My sisters car – maybe next weekend.

That’s exactly what we’re seeing here tonight. We find ourselves back in Jerusalem in 520 BC. The temple had been destroyed in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar after the Siege of Jerusalem. Using verse 1 and translating it for the Babylonian calendar in use at that time, we know that the day is August 29th, 520 BC. The word of the Lord is coming by way of Haggai to Zerubbabel (the governor) and Joshua (son of the high priest).

Let’s pick up in verse 2 **2“Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying: This people says, The time has not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built.”** This people refers to the remnant. God has heard them as they minimize the importance of doing His work. The foundation has been started, but the Samaritans are harassing the Jews. There may have been arguments over dates – 605 BC when the first captives were taken versus 586 BC when the rest were led away – God said 70 years. For whatever reason, the foundation was started but then just stopped and lay there for 16 years, while the people said the time hadn’t come.

Procrastination takes all kinds of forms. Haggai has been sent to set the record straight. Verses 3 & 4 **3Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4“*Is it* time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple *to lie* in ruins?”**The people are dwelling in paneled houses, using their blessings for personal enjoyment and allowing the house of the Lord to languish. Many times, we give God what’s left rather than what’s right. We figure out, after all our expenses, plus our fun money, what can we afford to give God.

Look at verse 5 there. **5Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts “Consider your ways!** God says – No, that’s not correct. That is an incorrect way of being a steward over my blessings to you. It all belongs to Me and I trust you with it. I’ve been invited by God on more than one occasion to “Consider my ways.” My daddy used to say – I’m going to ask you a question and you might want to consider before you speak. He meant – consider your ways boy… I wouldn’t be asking if I didn’t already know the answer. God knows His temple shouldn’t be in ruins while people live in luxury. Yet today, that’s what we see. We’d do well to consider our ways.

Verses 6-11 **6“You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are 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.” 7Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Consider your ways! 8Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the Lord. 9“*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. 10Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. 11For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, 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.”** Malachi 3:8 says, “Will a man rob God? Yet, you have robbed Me! But you say, “In what way have we robbed You?” In tithes and offerings.” God will not bless a person for withholding what is rightfully His. You eat, but don’t have enough. You drink, and are not filled. Clothes don’t keep you warm. Wages disappear like you’re putting them in a bag with a hole in it… He says, “Consider you ways!” You looked for much but it came to little – you had better consider your ways! Listen to Luke 16:11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches?* What are those true riches? Relationship with the God of the Universe – true relationship – rich and deep.

When the faithful act, God blesses. Look at verses 12-14 with me - **12Then 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 13Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, spoke the Lord’s message to the people, saying, “I am with you, says the Lord.” 14So 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.** The people got to work, they became the faithful remnant, and the Lord stirred the spirit. They obeyed. They feared. Their obedience overcame their obstinance. They saw from whom their blessings came and they worked. Look at verse 15 **15on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.**  This translates to Sept 21st, 520 BC. 24 days after Haggai started prophesying! 16 years of waiting turned around in 24 days. The power of God plus the stirred up spirits of the people equaled the building resuming. The excuses were gone. When God is in it, nothing can stop it.

We know by Ezra 6:15 that the temple was completed in 515 BC… 70 ½ years after the Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the first temple. God was true to the 70 years. The people delayed for 16 years. God knew they’d delay. He knew they’d procrastinate. He knew there’d have to be new leaders. His timing is always perfect. No man can delay God’s time.

If we walk away with nothing else tonight though, let’s remember to consider our ways. Being short at the end of the month may not mean that we’re not making enough… consider our ways. I can still hear my father saying, “Consider before you speak.” I know God still says, “Consider your ways.” Let’s commit to that tonight for the week to come.