

It's Time to Consider God's Blessing

It's Time #7 - Pastor Gary Combs - February 23, 2025 - Haggai 2:18-19

IT'S TIME TALK: You'll notice a card in your seats today called "It's Time - My Commitment." We put them in your seats, so you'll be ready to offer your commitment at the end of today's service. We started collecting them last week, but we know that some of you needed more time to think and pray about it. So today is your opportunity to respond at the end of the service.



Let's look inside. Notice the **gift guide**. It shows how we can follow **the biblical principle of proportional giving** in order to reach our goal of \$1.5 million, over and above our normal giving.



This biblical principle of proportional giving might be summarized by our motto:

"NOT EQUAL GIFTS BUT EQUAL SACRIFICE"

Now, look at the bottom section. Those who are ready today should go ahead and complete the name/address section, the way you're planning to offer your faith commitment (annually, monthly, weekly) Some will want to give a lump sum. Write that in. Then put your total 3-year commitment in the 'MY TOTAL COMMITMENT' block. Be ready at the end of the service to bring your completed card forward and drop it in the container on the stage.

Now, would you like to know where we're at in our commitments so far? Are you sure?

Total commitments as of today: \$ _____ !

Let's give God thanks and praise! And let's be praying for those who are making their commitments today. We're so close to our goal and I believe God is going to move us to not only meet it, but exceed it.

Then next **Sunday, March 2nd**, we're going to **celebrate** what God has done in us and through us! We'll celebrate and we'll offer our "**First Gifts**" next Sunday.



That's why we've also put a "First Gifts" giving envelope in your seats today. Take that home and think and pray about the amount you want to give to get started on your commitment!

Let's rejoice and give praise to God for these commitments! And let's be ready to make our own commitment today!

Trans: We're on a spiritual journey together learning to grow in our generosity towards God. I hope this series has been a blessing to you. That's our topic today. God's blessings.

INTRO: Today's sermon is entitled: "**It's Time to Consider God's Blessing.**" We're continuing our series called "It's Time!" We're going through the book of Haggai. Our theme comes from...

Haggai 1:2; 2:4-5 (ESV) "These people say the **time** has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord... Yet now **be strong... Work**, for I am with you, declares the Lord... My Spirit remains in your midst. **Fear not.**"

God told the Israelites that it was time to BE STRONG, DO THE WORK, and BE FEARLESS! I believe that God is telling us It's Time to do the same! If we obey Him, will we be blessed? Yes, absolutely! But being blessed might not mean what you think it does...

Need: What does it mean to be blessed? Everybody's saying it these days! From the Walmart greeter who says, "Have a blessed day!" (What kind of day would that be? Does she mean have "nice" day or is she calling on God to bless me?) To the Hollywood star who wins an Oscar saying, "I feel blessed." (Has it become the go-to term for those who want to boast about an accomplishment while pretending to be humble, fish for a compliment, acknowledge a success (without sounding too conceited), or purposely elicit envy?).

"While blessing has climbed the pop charts of Christian terms used outside the church in recent years, it seems that few within the Christian community pause to wonder whether or not this popular notion of blessing is biblically accurate." — William R. Osborne, *Divine Blessing and the Fullness of Life in the Presence of God: "A Biblical Theology of Divine Blessings"* p.15.

BODY: In Haggai 2:18-19, God spoke through the prophet Haggai to help the Israelites understand what it meant to live under God's blessing. We can understand what it means to live under God's blessing. How can we understand what it means to live under God's blessing? The text gives **three considerations** to understand what it means to live under God's blessing.

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Read text: Haggai 2:18-19 (ESV) ¹⁸ Consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. Since the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider: ¹⁹ Is the seed yet in the barn? Indeed, the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have yielded nothing. But from this day on I will bless you."

THREE CONSIDERATIONS FOR LIVING UNDER GOD'S BLESSING:

1. Consider the blessing of God's presence.

EXP: (18) The Israelites had neglected rebuilding God's temple, which symbolized His presence among them. In Haggai 1:2-11, God told them their struggles were because they prioritized their own paneled houses over His house. Now, God calls them to "consider"—to carefully reflect on what happens when they put Him first. The foundation was laid, and from this day forward, everything would change—not because of their work, but because they had repented and were focused on God's presence!

"Consider" (18; 2x) (חַשַׁב, *śûm*) - to put, place, set, set your mind and heart on, "consider carefully." "Again the prophet calls on the people to "give careful thought" (*śimu na' lebabekem*). These words appear twice in v. 18. The repetition underscores the urgency of the prophetic call for repentance." — Taylor, Richard A.. Haggai Commentary (NAC 21) (p. 238).

"Day onward" (18; 4x) (מַעַל, *ma'âl*) - upward, above, onward. From this day forward.

"Twenty-fourth day ... ninth month" (18) (כִּסְלֵו, *Kislev*) - 24th day of Kislev, December 18th.

"Since the day" (18) - it had been 3 months since they had returned to work on the Temple:

Haggai 1:14-15 (ESV) And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the **sixth month**, in the second year of Darius the king.

"Foundation ... was laid" (18) - Probably since they had returned to the work, not 16 years ago.

ARG: **One of God's greatest blessings is His promised presence with us!**

Haggai 2:4-5 (ESV) ...Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the Lord. 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. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

God calls us to be content in His promised presence, knowing that all blessings come from Him.

Hebrews 13:5 (ESV) Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

ILL: - We had a birthday party for my wife Robin and my granddaughter Kenzie yesterday. They share the same birthday. We've always instructed our children, and now our grandchildren, to "Read the card before you open the gift!" We want them to recognize the one who (the giver) blessed them before considering the blessing (the gift). They're starting to get it.

APP: Are you seeking God's presence or only His presents? Are you seeking the Giver or the gift. True blessing is found in a relationship with God through Jesus. In Matthew 28:20, Jesus says, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

2. Consider the blessing of God's provision.

EXP: (19) God asked them a question: "Consider: Is the seed yet in the barn? What about your harvests? Have they yet yielded nothing?" Where do you think your provision comes from? All blessings flow from Him!

"Seed yet in the barn?" (19) (זֶרַע, *zera*) - seed, sowing, offspring. In ancient Israel, the sowing season was from late October to December. This timing coincided with the early rains that softened the soil after the long, dry summer, making it suitable for planting. The main crops sown during this time included wheat and barley, which would then grow through the winter and be harvested in spring (March–June). Since God was asking this question in December, the answer would be "No. It's in the fields."

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“Yielded nothing” (19) - God had already explained that He had “struck” (2:17) their crops, so that they produced less than expected in the past because of their lack of repentance. Now in December, it wasn't yet time to harvest grapes, figs, pomegranates and olives. Would the harvest be off again? Consider it.

ARG: God's blessing of provision was part of His conditional covenant with Israel based on obedience.

Deuteronomy 28:2-6 (ESV) ² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God. ³ Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. ⁴ Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. ⁵ Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. ⁶ Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

In Christ, we have every spiritual blessing and every need supplied. Christ is our Provision.

Ephesians 1:3 (NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Philippians 4:19 (ESV) And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

ILL: A farmer doesn't reap a harvest the day after planting. Faith precedes provision. Don't dig up in doubt what you planted in faith!

APP: Don't dig up in doubt what you planted in faith! Have you sown in faith but haven't seen the harvest yet? Keep trusting! Are you relying on God's provision or your own efforts? **Consider:** Are you trusting in God's timing for His provision, or are you only looking at what you can see right now?

3. Consider the blessing of God's purpose.

EXP: (19) “But from this day on I will bless you.” God has purposed to bless His people. He had not been blessing them as He desired. For first He had to discipline them. “But” now He is ready to bless them “from this day on.” God's blessings are connected to His purpose. God blesses us not just for our personal gain but for His greater purpose.

“I will bless” (19) (בָּרַךְ, *bārak*) - to praise, bless. A biblical definition of blessing is God's favor and goodness freely given to bring about His purposes, leading to spiritual flourishing, joy, and ultimately His glory. Blessing is not merely material prosperity, but rather the fullness of life that comes from being in right relationship with God.

ARG: God blessed Abraham for the purpose of being a blessing to all the families of the earth.

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV) ¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

God's eternal purpose has been realized in Christ Jesus. He has blessed us with access to God.

Ephesians 3:11-12 (ESV) ¹¹ This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

ILL: I've rarely given my children gifts that they've asked for. I like to surprise them. As I think about it now, I actually had another purpose. See if you can identify my purpose for these gifts:

- I bought Stephen his first big boy Lego for his 5th birthday. I had to help him build it.
- I bought Erin a purple 35mm camera when she was 5. I had to show her how to use it.
- I bought both my sons a guitar. They didn't ask for it. I had to teach them how to play.

As I look back I realize my purpose was I wanted to bless them with something we could enjoy together.

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APP: I think that might have something to do with God's purpose for blessing us. He wants to share His life with us. I think it blesses God to bless us when we look past the blessing to the One who blesses. Are you using God's blessings for His purposes? If God blesses you financially, how can you use it to advance the Gospel? If God blesses you with time and talents, how can you serve others? Consider: How is God calling you to use His blessings for His kingdom? God blesses that we might be a blessing!

CONCLUSION: Haggai 2:19's promise—"from this day on I will bless you"—wasn't just about crops growing. It was about God calling His people to trust His presence, depend on His provision, and walk in His purpose. Blessing in the Bible is God's gracious presence, provision, and purpose at work in a person's life. While it can include material and earthly benefits, the greatest blessing of all is the gift of His Son!

If God has given us His Son, then He will graciously give us all things!

Romans 8:32 (ESV) He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

If we have Jesus, we have all that we'll ever need!

Do you want to live under God's blessing?

- 1) Trusting in His presence?
- 2) Depending on His provision?
- 3) Walking in His purpose?

Let's pray and let's prepare our hearts to make a faith commitment to God.