

Title: **“GO UP TO THE MOUNTAIN”**

Text: Haggai 1:8

Subject: *Building the House of God*

Date: Sunday Evening — January 20, 2008

Tape: Haggai #4

Readings: *Darvin Pruitt and James Jordan*

Introduction:

My text is Haggai 1:8. The Title of my message is **“GO UP TO THE MOUNTAIN.”** But I want to begin my message by reminding you of an incident recorded in Mark 5. The Lord Jesus healed the poor Gadarene demoniac by his great mercy and grace. A more pitiful sight can hardly be imagined than the sight of that wild, naked, filthy man, living in a graveyard, running to and fro among the tombs, crying and cutting himself. A more delightful sight can hardly be imagined than the sight of that same man, after the Son of God saved him by his grace. He is sitting at his Savior’s feet in adoring wonder, gratitude and love, *“clothed and in his right mind.”* Now, look at Mark 5:18. The Lord Jesus is about to leave the coasts of Gadara.

(Mark 5:18) “And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.”

I cannot imagine anything more reasonable. Can you? What a wonderful change grace had wrought in him. He who, but a few minutes before, was a terror to everybody, is now so heavenly composed that he desires never to leave his great Savior. His heart is fixed upon his Redeemer. He wants to be in his company permanently.

Is that not the case with every heaven born soul? The sinner who has experienced the mighty transforming power of God’s saving grace in Christ, being called of God and turned by omnipotent mercy *“from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to unto God, that he may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith”* (Acts 26:18), every saved sinner, desires *“that he might be with”* the Savior. Having once tasted that the Lord is gracious, we cannot but long to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. But the Lord Jesus refused to grant this beloved soul the desire of his heart. Read on...

(Mark 5:19-20) “Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. (20) And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel.”

Soon, the Lord Jesus would bring him home to glory, but for the present must remain among the Gadarenes, and tell his family and friends, all among whom he lived, what great things the Lord had done for him, how the had performed then and how he had compassion upon him.

That is precisely the reason our Savior has left us in this world. He has left us here to tell eternity bound sinners what great things he has done for us, how he has done them and how he has had compassion upon our poor souls. I can think of no reason for God leaving us in this world except to use us for the saving of other chosen, redeemed sinners. Every believer is completely fit for heaven (Colossians 1:12). We are completely forgiven of all sin, perfectly righteous, and approved of by God through the sin-atoning blood and imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we have been given a righteous nature in regeneration. Righteousness has been imparted to us by the Spirit of God. Why then has God left us in this world to live in this body of flesh? It is because he has chosen to use saved sinners to carry the gospel to other sinners for the saving of his elect!

Saved sinners are to go home to their unsaved friends, and show forth “*the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light*” (1 Peter 2:9), until we have fulfilled the purpose for which he has sent us into the world. Let us ever live with our eyes and our hearts in heaven, with Christ, longing to depart and be with him who loved us and gave himself for us. Yet, we ought to be content to live on this earth for as long as our Savior is pleased to use us for his glory and the calling of his elect. The thought that the God of Glory might use such things as we are to build his house, his church, his holy temple, that he should condescend to use us, putting into our hands the treasure of his gospel, to save his elect is thrilling. Is it not? That ought to make us happy as we wait all the days of our appointed time, until our change come (Job 14:14).

With that as the background, turn with me to Haggai 1:8, and hear what the Lord God says to us by his prophet.

(Haggai 1:8) “Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.”

GOD’S WORD TO JUDAH

First, read this as God’s word to Judah, to his ancient people he had delivered out of Babylon. Remember, he specifically sent them back to Jerusalem to rebuild his house and reestablish his worship.

“**Go up to the mountain.**” — Pointing either to Lebanon or to Mount Moriah, upon which the temple was built, the Prophet said, “This is what the Lord God requires of you. — ‘Go up to the mountain.’ Go cut down the great cedars, and bring them down from the mountain for the building of my house, the temple.”

“**Bring wood and build the house.**” — The foundation was already laid, but the superstructure had been neglected. Therefore the Lord commanded his negligent people to devote themselves to the noble work for which he had brought them out of Babylon, and get on with it immediately, with the utmost diligence, speed and vigor. They were not to stop, or even pause, until the whole building was completed:

“**And I will take pleasure in it.**” — In as much as the temple itself was a type of Christ, the Lord God took pleasure in it as such. It was to be built for Christ’s sake, because he would come into it as the promised Redeemer and Savior of his people.

This sentence might be translated, “**I will be satisfied, or propitiated in it.**” But, remember, the mercy-seat never was brought into that second temple. So, if the words are more accurately translated “I will be satisfied, or propitiated in it,” there is a specific reference here to the coming of Christ, whose body was the temple of God, in and by whom the pleasure of the Lord was accomplished, in and by whom God’s purpose and his justice were satisfied, by whose sacrifice the Lord God was propitiated. — “*He is the propitiation for our sins*” (1 John 2:2).

Again, the Lord may here refer to the work itself, saying, “**I will take pleasure in it.**” The Lord said he would take pleasure in their work in building his house as a work acceptable to him by Christ Jesus, being

according to his mind and will. He promised his people that he would take pleasure their work and accept it as well as them.

Perhaps these words, “**I will take pleasure in it,**” refer to their worship of God in the temple when it was finished, as they worshipped him in spirit and in truth he promised to accept them, forgive their sins, and be propitious to them for his Son’s sake. For Christ’s sake he would accept...

- Them,
- Their Sacrifices,
- Their Worship,
- Their Prayers,
- And Their Services.

Personally, I think all four interpretations are necessary to accurately express the Lord’s message, here.

“**And I will be glorified, saith the LORD.**” — He promised that he would be glorified by his people, by their work, in the temple itself as the place of his worship, and in his Son, of whom the temple was a type.

That was God’s word to Judah by his prophet Haggai; but this word of God from Haggai was given by God the Holy Spirit as...

GOD’S WORD TO US

I mean by that that this is God’s word to you and to me, personally and individually.

(Haggai 1:8) “Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.”

If we would have God take pleasure in us, as his temple, to love us and come to us, and make his abode with us (John 14:23), to dwell in us, and walk in us (2 Corinthians 6:16), and be glorified in us we must go up to the mountain, not of Lebanon, but the mountain of God in heaven itself, from whence comes our help. We must go up to the mountain by faith. **Faith in Christ is often spoken of in the figurative language of going up to the mountain of God** (Isaiah 2:2-3; 25:6-9; 30:29; Micah 4:2).

(Isaiah 2:2-3) “And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (3) And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

(Isaiah 25:6-9) “And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. (7) And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. (8) He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*. (9) And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

(Isaiah 30:29) “Ye shall have a song, as in the night *when* a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.”

(Micah 4:2) “And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

I mentioned the fact that the temple was built upon Mount Moriah. That was also the mountain upon which Abraham sacrificed a ram in the place of his son Isaac. As he did, Abraham called the name of that place “*Jehovah-jireh*,” saying, “*In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen*” (Genesis 22:14). It is as though he had said, “Here one day shall be seen the wonders of redemption! Here God will, indeed, provide himself a Lamb for a burnt offering! “

- If we would be saved, accepted, and well-pleasing to God, we must go up to Mt. Calvary by faith and bring the non-decaying cedars of his everlasting love, perfect righteousness and redeeming blood as beams for our house, building upon Christ himself, the Foundation God himself has laid.
- By faith, we hold Christ the King in the galleries of his house (Song of Solomon 7:5), and he takes pleasure in us. Indeed, he calls us his Hephzibah, his sweetheart, to whom he is married (Isaiah 62:4).
- And the Lord God promises to all who go up to the mountain and build upon Christ, “*I will take pleasure*” in you, my house and temple. — Propitiated! — Pleased!
- And he promises more than that. He promises, “*I will be glorified.*” — In your salvation. — In you!

Look at the text once more, and read it as...

GOD’S WORD TO HIS PEOPLE

(Haggai 1:8) “Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.”

This is God’s word to his church and people collectively. It is our great privilege and responsibility to build God’s house, to build his church. I am fully aware that it is Christ who builds his church, not men. And I am just as fully aware that the Son of God builds his church by the use of men. He has left us here to seek his sheep.

(John 10:14-16) “I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.”

This is why we do what we do. This is why I go somewhere almost every week, across the length and breadth of this country, preaching the gospel.

This is why we hold Bible conferences, support missionaries, send out pastors, build churches, and send tapes and literature around the world. We are seeking the Lord’s sheep.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ has a people in this world called his elect, his sheep.
2. The good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, laid down his life for his sheep.
3. At the appointed time of love, he will call each of his sheep.
4. The Lord Jesus will preserve and keep all his sheep.
5. The good Shepherd will bring all of his sheep safely into his heavenly fold.

The means by which the God of Glory saves his elect is the preaching of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. And the Lord our God, in his great, infinite wisdom, has put this great treasure of the gospel in such earthen vessels as we are, that the excellence and power may be of God and not of man (1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

(1 Corinthians 1:18-31) “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (19) For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. (20) Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (21) For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (22) For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: (23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (25) Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: (27) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; (28) And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which

are not, to bring to nought things that are: (29) That no flesh should glory in his presence. (30) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

The Lord God commands us to go up to the mountain, to the very throne of his grace, and fetch the wood, the elect cedars of Lebanon, and build his house.

- By Prayer and Supplication
- By Maintaining the Public Ministry of the Gospel
- By Sending out Missionaries
- By Publishing the Gospel
- As His Witnesses — “*Ye are my witnesses!*”

He says to us, as he did to the Gadarene of old, “*Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.*” That is why he has left us here (Colossians 1:21-29).

(Colossians 1:21-29) “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled (22) In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: (23) If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; (24) Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church: (25) Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; (26) *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: (27) To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (28) Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: (29) Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

Now, look at the promise he gives us, as he sends us forth with the gospel to build his house, to seek the salvation of chosen sinners, He says of this work he sends us to perform...

- “**I will take pleasure in it.**” — In the Work. — In the Means (“*It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe!*”) — In the Result, in the House Built!
- “**I will be glorified!**”
- “**I am with you, saith the LORD**” (v. 13).

(Isaiah 55:11) “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.”

(Matthew 28:18-20) “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”

(John 20:21-23) “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. (22) And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: (23) Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.”

I have never been more excited about the work of the gospel than I am now. I have never been more full of expectation. I call upon you, children of God to go everywhere, telling lost, needy sinners, “*how great things the Lord hath done for thee and hath had compassion on thee.*” Make it your business to build his house for his glory.

Amen.