TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader/Opening Prayer by: Don Taylor
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#748 When Upon Life's Billows
#286 Wonderful Story of Love
Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#382 Why did My Savior Come to Earth?
Communion Devotional by: Daniel Balch
Lord's Supper and Contribution
#539 Higher Ground
Sermon: "The End is the Beginning"
Acts 28:11-31

#915 Trust and Obey
#523 I Know the Lord will Find a Way
Closing Prayer by: Tommy Cary

Welcome by: Bobby Rader

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

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Opening Prayer: Jerry Mallernee
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Sermon: "Facing the New Year"
Philippians 3:12-14

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Closing Prayer: Ken Coleman

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Jan. 1, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

How Do You See It?

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? Yet now 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. 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. 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…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. **(Haggai 2:1-9)**

God, through the prophet Haggai, effectively has the people look back into the past and see how it came to nothing. Notice the question in the middle of the third verse: *How do you see it now*? That is a good question to ask as we approach a new year: looking back at 2022, how do you see it now? It probably looks a bit different than it did at its outset. We can look back and see all the pounds we lost and then regained. We can see the promises we broke. We can see all the hopes and dreams, the disappointments and sorrows of 2022.

We can also ask this question about 2023. How do we see it now? As we look forward to the prospects of this year, do we see doom and gloom? Do we see hope and promise? Behavioral scientists have discovered that we usually see things that we are prepared to see: parts of our brains act as a sort of filter for unnecessary information, so that the important stuff gets through. As a result, often, once something has been brought to our attention and we have been prepared to see it, we will see it virtually everywhere we go. Ever noticed how if you decide to buy a new car, and you have the make, model, and even color picked out, you suddenly see that vehicle everywhere? They were always there; it's just now your brain was ready to see them!

We see what we are prepared to see. If we are prepared to see doom and gloom in 2023, that's what we will see. If, on the other hand, we have prepared ourselves to see possibilities and opportunities, then that is what we are going to see. So think about that question: *how do you see it how?* Let's consider that in 3 different areas.

1. How do you see yourself? When you look in the mirror, do you see someone who is weak, constantly failing, not worth very much? Or someone who is eager, optimistic, and ready for the next day to begin with promise?

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

J. C. Whitfield, Gayle Coleman's sister, will be having gall bladder surgery soon.

Robert Williams, the Mast's son in law has been diagnosed with cancer in his jaw and will have surgery on January.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Susan McCain

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders meeting Wednesday, Jan. 4th at 5:00 p.m..

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Jan. 3rd at 8:00 a.m.

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

Small Groups

We will be launching a new small groups ministry on Sundays this month in lieu of our traditional evening services. If you would like to participate, please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board. More details will follow.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
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Sometimes we say things like, "I can't do that." "It's too hard." Or maybe something like, "I know I'm hard to get along with, but that's just the way I am. I can't change." (Feel free to insert your own, personal character flaw there.) But Scripture tells us that God can bring about dramatic and drastic changes, if we will let Him. He changed Saul of Tarsus, the archnemesis of the church, into its foremost proclaimer, the Apostle Paul. He can do the same in our lives, too.

But much of that depends upon what we see. How do you look to yourself? Let me challenge you from Scripture to see yourself the way God sees you: *it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure* **(Philippians 2:13).** We are part of God's investment in the future, in other words; we are bundles of unlimited opportunity and potential. God wants to use us to help accomplish his purpose in the world! He is at work in you, and he can change you—if you will let him work his will in your life.

2. How do you see the world? The most famous verse in the Bible teaches us that *God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* God sees the world as redeemable, and He sees each of us as channels through whom His message of love might travel.

What do you feel when you look at the world? Do you feel anything at all? One of the factors paralyzing the church today is the apathy, the indifference that is so prevalent. For many of us, as long as we are secure and comfortable, we don't really give the world a second thought. But God challenges us to see a world that needs redemption and ourselves as his coworkers in reaching that world. Do we really care about those suffering physically? Spiritually? Do we care about the suffering, the lost who are crying out for help? What do we see?

3. How do you see the church? In our text, God instructed Haggai to speak to the Governor, the High Priest, and all the people. They had been set free from captivity in Babylon and had come back to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple of God. And God says to the prophet Haggai, "Speak to them and ask them first this question, `How many of you remember what the Temple was like before it was destroyed?'" Some hands must have gone up, a few who could remember when the temple stood in all of its glory and splendor: when people came and worshiped, when sacrifices were offered, when prayers rose up to God. Those had been exciting times of worship and fellowship as people came together in God's house! Then God asks, "*How do you see it now*?" And what they saw was just a pile of rubble, because the temple lay in ruins.

But then three times God says, "Be strong." "Be strong," to Zerubbabel. "Be strong," to the High Priest. "Be strong," to all the people. How could they be strong? *For I am with you. I made a covenant with you. My Spirit is in your midst.* And as a result, they were commanded to work!

How do you see the church? Do you see just a big building? Do you live in its past and dwell on how its present might fail to measure up? Or do you see people with the potential to make a difference in the lives of others? People who are in covenant with God? People whom God can work through for his glory! One of the things we need most is a renewed sense of the importance of the church here in this place. We have great ideas to cultivate that which we will be sharing with you, and hope that you will get on board. But whether you do or not largely depends on how you answer that question: *how do you see it?*

Bryant Perkins