

Sounds 2025 Week 13: Small Steps God Multiplies

Introduction and Context

“Give careful thought to your ways” (Hag 1:5, 7).

Not just *what* choices we’re making, but *how* we’re making them and *why*.

Key People & Roles in This Week’s Reading

- **Haggai — Prophet** (520 BC) whose short, pointed sermons restart the stalled work, calling the people to “give careful thought to your ways” (Hag 1–2; Ezra 5:1; 6:14).
- **Zechariah — Prophet** (520–518 BC), priestly background; offers visions and encouragement: “Not by might... but by my Spirit” and God’s joy over small beginnings (Zech 1–6; Ezra 5:1; 6:14).
- **Ezra — Priest-scribe** and later leader of a subsequent return (458 BC). He compiles the narrative; in **Ezra 3–6** he is not yet on the scene, but his book records Zerubbabel/Joshua’s rebuild and the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5–6).
- **The Remnant** — The returned community preserved by God through exile—a **small but faithful people** who respond to the word, fear the Lord, and resume the work (called “the **remnant**” in Hag 1:12, 14; 2:2). Numbered in Ezra’s lists at about **42,360** plus servants/singers (Ezra 2:64–65).
- **Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel** — Governor of Judah, descendant of **David**; civil leader of the first return from exile and the temple rebuild (Ezra 2:2; 3:2; 5:2; Hag 1:1; Zech 4:6–10).
- **Joshua (Jeshua) son of Jozadak** — **High priest** who partners with Zerubbabel; represents spiritual leadership during the rebuild (Ezra 3:2; 5:2; Hag 1:1, 12, 14; Zech 3:1–5).
 - In Hebrew, **Joshua** (often **Jeshua**) is **Yeshu‘a**—the same name rendered **lēsous** in Greek, **Jesus** in our New Testament (cf. Matt 1:21). **Jesus** is the Greek form of **Joshua**, which means *the Lord saves*.

The Problem

Haggai 1:2

Ezra 4:4–5

Haggai 1:4

- Ezra names the stall;
- Haggai names the heart behind the stall;
- Zechariah names the power that overcomes it: **“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty”** (Zechariah 4:6).

“Give careful thought to your ways” (Haggai 1:5, 7).

Stop the blur. Look at the outcomes:

Haggai 1:6

“By their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matt 7:16, 20)

Scripture calls us to **“test everything; hold on to what is good”** (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and to **“consider the outcome of their way of life”** (Hebrews 13:7).

Jesus directs our discernment: ***good trees bear good fruit.***

If the fruit is repentance, restoration, mission, mercy, and multigenerational life—**that is where the Lord is at work.**

Haggai 1:9

Provision is not the reward of self-priority; it is the **fruit of God-first living.**

“Return to me,’ declares the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will return to you.’” (Zechariah 1:3).

What would it look like to make God’s pleasure and honor the true north of my decisions?

The Solution

Haggai 1:8

“I always do what pleases him.” (John 8:29)

“Father, glorify your name!” (John 12:28)

1 Corinthians 3:16–17

Ezra 5:1–2

Word → Work → “Witness.”

A prophetic **word** from God leads to obedient **work**, sustained by God’s “**witness**”—His presence and encouragement through the prophets.

Zechariah 4:6–9

Ephesians 3:20–21

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6).

Zechariah 4:10

“the seven eyes of the Lord.” **God sees. God knows. God is with His builders.**

Application—Small Steps God Multiplies

God’s Spirit empowers the start, levels obstacles, multiplies our offering, and secures the finish—to *His glory in the church* (Ephesians 3:21).

For us, “**bring down timber**” (Haggai 1:8) looks like aligning our **time, talent, and treasure**.

Game Changer and into **Advanced Commitment Night this Friday**

- Are my budgets and my calendars preaching the same gospel as my lips?
- Have I grown busy with **my** house while **God’s** house—His mission through Ekklesia—waits?

Haggai 1:12–13

Haggai 1:14

Zechariah 4:6–7

1. **Don’t negotiate God’s priorities into “later.”** There will never be a perfectly convenient season to put His work first. But there is always grace to start today.
2. **Consider your ways.** If your efforts feel thin, if your “purse” keeps leaking, let that holy dissatisfaction lead you back to the joy of God-first living.

1. Hands to the work

- **Haggai 2:4** — “Be strong... **and work**. For I am with you,” declares the Lord.
- **Haggai 1:8** — “**Go up... bring down timber and build my house**, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored.”
- **Haggai 1:14** — “So the Lord **stirred up the spirit...** and **they came and began to work** on the house of the Lord.”

2. Hearts stirred by His presence

- **Haggai 1:13** — “**I am with you**, declares the Lord.”
- **Haggai 2:4–5** — “**I am with you... My Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.**”
- **Haggai 1:14** — “The Lord **stirred up the spirit** of Zerubbabel... Joshua... and the whole remnant...”

3. Commitments that declare: “Your house, Your honor, Your mission—first.”

- **Haggai 1:7–8** — “**Give careful thought to your ways... build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored.**”
- **Haggai 1:9** — “Because of **my house, which remains a ruin**, while each of you is **busy with your own house.**”
- **Haggai 1:12** — “Then the whole remnant **obeyed** the voice of the Lord... and the people **feared** the Lord.”

Conclusion

“Is it a time for you to live in paneled houses while this house lies in ruins?” (Hag 1:4). Jesus frames it: **store treasure in heaven** (Matt 6:19–21).

Our response:

1. Pray: “*Lord, show me where I’m **washing rental cars**. Reorder my loves. Your house, Your honor, Your mission—first.*”
2. Take one **obedient step**—time, talent, treasure. Trust God for the **capstone** (Zech 4:7,10).
3. **Bring your ‘yes’ to Advance Commitment Night.**