

Hope for Everyone

Series: Hope for Everyone Stand Alone **Date:** October 4, 2026

Primary Scripture: Hag 2:1-9; Heb 12:26-28

Key Principle: *Stay faithful when the fruit doesn't fit your forecast.*

Good morning, Menlo Church, and welcome to a really special weekend around here. We just watched a snapshot of what God has been doing. Menlo Church is growing at every one of our campuses, church plants are starting throughout our region, and widening networks of churches across are working together in ways that, a couple of years ago, seemed impossible.

That's real fruit. That's God at work through ordinary people in this room. But I also know that for some of you, that video felt a little different. Maybe because of the expectations you walked in with. Maybe because of what you hoped we'd be experiencing by now.

I think there are a couple of different forecasts in the room today. Some of you have been at Menlo for a really long time, and you're carrying a picture of the glory days. Either the way it was, or the way it feels like it was. And what you're experiencing now is different.

Others of you are newer, and you're wondering when we're going to see those 250,000 people show up. I get it. Both of those are forecasts, and a forecast changes how you see today.

If you pulled up the weather app on your phone right now, the forecast for the week ahead is built mostly from past data projected forward. Everybody has a forecast.

Almost four years ago, as our family considered Menlo and prepared to come here, I made one too. I figured the hardest part of the transition would be our elders, the volunteer leaders who oversee this community.

They had carried so much for so long, and I was a stranger who was going to have to ask them to trust me. I figured you, the church, would be ready for some stability. And our staff, I assumed, would be the most eager for what came next. I got it almost exactly backward.

Our elders trusted quickly, and God gave us a depth of relationship I had no right to expect. And you have been the fastest church to love me and let me lead that God has ever allowed me to serve. You get it. You're here because you believe in what God is doing in the Bay Area.

The hardest part was with the people closest to the work. That makes sense to me now. When you give your life to building something, you carry a picture of what you said yes to. Every person on our team said yes to something, and those pictures couldn't all fit the same future.

That wasn't failure. It's just people caring so deeply for a place and holding to expectations that can't all be satisfied. My forecast was wrong. I thought change would come easiest right where it ended up costing the most. I had to let God reshape my expectations.

All of us have forecasts like that. And God's people in the Old Testament knew something about forecasts. They had been living in exile, and the Persians, who had taken over the region, were letting God's people go home. But when they got back, they came home to rubble.

They laid a foundation for the temple, and then opposition and challenges and life got in the way. The project sat untouched for 16 years. Talk about permit delays. In Haggai 1, we see God's people who have finished working on their own houses while His house sits in the weeds.

Now they've finally restarted the work, and the sermon we're about to read is what Haggai preaches a few weeks into construction. What God tells His people through Haggai is the same thing I hope we hear today: Stay faithful when the fruit doesn't fit your forecast.

The sermon that God gives to Haggai to bring to God's people begins with THE PROBLEM OF NOSTALGIA. All of us carry nostalgia, no matter how long we've been in any particular place, because we bring the patterns of our past to the expectations of our present.

The sermon begins in Haggai chapter 2 this way, "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?'"

The date here matters more than you might think. The seventh month, the twenty-first day, is the last day of something called the Feast of Booths. It's the same festival where Solomon dedicated the first temple back in 1 Kings 8.

So they're celebrating the anniversary of the old glory while standing in front of a construction site for a much smaller temple. When Haggai asks, "Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory?" he's looking right at the older people in the crowd.

Solomon's temple had been destroyed 66 years earlier. Only the elders could remember it. When that foundation was first laid, about a decade and a half earlier, Ezra 3 tells us the old men wept, and the young people shouted for joy, and nobody could tell the sounds apart.

Two very different experiences of the same moment. That's the range of emotion across Menlo on any given Sunday, depending on what people carry into the room. The elders remembered Solomon's temple.

The younger ones had grown up on Isaiah and Ezekiel, prophets who promised a new Jerusalem so glorious the nations would stream to it. One group was grieving a memory. The other was grieving a promise that looked nothing like what they'd hoped for.

And then the question: "Is it not as nothing in your eyes?" Notice God doesn't correct them. He asks them to confess, like we talked about last week. He invites them to say out loud what they're really thinking and feeling.

The problem wasn't what they saw. The problem was how they saw it. For a lot of us, nostalgia is a forecast built on dated data. It's old information, and we don't always remember it as accurately as we lived it. At Menlo, we have an incredible gift.

People here have been part of this church for decades. I hear it all the time: people who gave sacrificially to build the rooms you're sitting in today. That is so humbling. And here's what I don't want us to miss.

The best way to honor the legacy of those who sacrificed in the past is to keep pushing forward for the mission of the future. And if you're newer and you're waiting on the 250,000, I love that you dream that big. Hold onto it.

Just don't let the size of the dream keep you from seeing what God is already doing right in front of you. Whichever group you're in, the call is the same. Stay faithful when the fruit doesn't fit your forecast.

The second point in Haggai's message for God's people was about THE POWER OF GOD'S PROMISE. God was reminding His people, and still is, that what He calls them to do is impossible without Him and without confidence that His power is behind our effort.

Verse 4 starts this way, "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."

After acknowledging the reality of the situation, we see two words designed to pivot the conversation. 'Yet now.' Even if the disappointment is real. Even if what you see isn't the forecast you had. Yet now, be strong.

And He doesn't just say it once. He says it three times, to three audiences. First, Zerubbabel, the governor from the line of David. Then Joshua, the high priest from the line of Aaron. And then, "all you people of the land."

This doesn't stop with the leaders. It goes to everyone. Nobody sits this one out. Now look at what He calls them to do. He does call them to work, but not on their own. "Work, for I am with you." Presence comes before performance.

God doesn't say, "Work hard, and maybe I'll show up." He says, "I'm already here. I've been here. So get to work." This isn't new language. Some of you know Joshua 1:9. Or 1 Chronicles 28:20, where David charges his son Solomon as he prepares to build the first temple:

"Be strong and courageous and do it... for the Lord God, even my God, is with you." Strength and courage were always part of the family business for God's people. As a matter of fact, if you walked through the lobby at your campus today, you would see 1 Chronicles 29:14 on display.

Those words come from the same moment. David is gathering the resources for that first temple, and he prays, "For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you." Hold onto that. We'll come back to it.

Then Haggai says, "According to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst." Remember what festival this is. The Feast of Booths was when God's people lived in tents for a week to remember the wilderness.

To remember that God was with them in tents long before there was ever a temple. His presence was never tied to a building. God made that covenant with Israel. And if you're a follower of Jesus, you live under the new covenant.

Jesus didn't just hand us a set of rules or a pep talk. He gave us a promise that He will never leave us or forsake us, and that this hope really is for everyone. So when He says, "Fear not," He's not saying it because the work is easy. He's saying it because He's already here.

That's why we stay faithful when the fruit doesn't fit our forecast. Our forecast doesn't go far enough...in the landscape of eternity, we are dreaming too small.

The final point in his message is THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLACE, not just the place that we're reading about, but actually, there are some parallels we're going to see for the place that you are experiencing this service today.

Verse 6 starts this way, "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. And I will shake all nations, **so that the treasures of all nations shall come in**, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. **The silver is mine, and the gold is mine**, declares the Lord of hosts. 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.**"

I want to be careful here, because the church has a lot in common with the temple, but a campus is not the temple. The temple was where God's presence lived. Now He lives in His people. If you follow Jesus, you are the temple. The temple was where sacrifices were offered.

Jesus made the last one. Nothing we do in these rooms makes anybody more acceptable to God. God's people have gotten this wrong before. In Jer. 7, people kept repeating, "This is the temple of the Lord," as if the building guaranteed God's favor. God called that a lie.

But that doesn't mean these places don't matter. After Jesus rose, the first Christians still met in the temple courts every day. They gathered to worship and to hear the Word taught. The building no longer held God's presence, but it was still a place where His people gathered and where outsiders could find them.

Jesus Himself called it "a house of prayer for all the nations." An open door in the middle of the city. That's what a campus is for when it's done well. It doesn't hold God's presence. It hosts the people who carry it and helps offer it to those who don't know the hope He offers.

And here's the biggest difference. The temple was built for the nations to come in. You can hear it right in Haggai: the treasures of the nations coming in. The church gathers so it can go out. Our campuses aren't the destination. They're hubs of hope, where we gather before we're sent.

Now, when God says, "Yet once more, in a little while," His little while never fit their forecast. And it doesn't fit ours. Peter tells us that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. We don't get to project our timeline onto His.

And when He says, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine," that's not an arm-twisting giving verse. It's the same thing David prayed: It's all His already. God doesn't need our money. And that's exactly what frees us to give without anxiety.

God is pushing His people to think about mission, not monument. Then He says, "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former." Herod would eventually expand that second temple into something grander than Solomon's. But that's not the fulfillment.

Jesus walked into that temple. The glory of God, in person. And about forty years after Jesus, that building fell. The glory didn't. If they could have seen every detail, it would have been so much easier. But God grows our faith in the places where we can't see the details.

He grows your faith when you stay faithful, even when the fruit doesn't fit your forecast.

There's a kingdom vision bigger than all of this. God is shaking things. Some of you have felt Him shake your own circumstances this year. All of us feel the ground move every time we open the news. But no matter what shakes in our lives, God and His purposes will be unshakable.

So let me ask you. What's your forecast? For a lot of us, the forecast we're thinking about most isn't just spiritual or personal. It's professional. We're living right in the middle of it. Some of you are building it.

And whether you're excited or anxious, or both, you're wondering what an AI world means for your job and for your kids' future. I get it. And as much as you might want to AI-proof your portfolio or AI-proof your career, the only way to AI-proof your life is an identity that can't be shaken.

One that shapes you and brings hope to other people. The Tower of Babel is one of the oldest stories we have about people building something powerful to make a name for themselves. It didn't shake God. Whatever AI becomes won't shake Him either. And it doesn't have to shake who you are.

Disruption may come for your industry. It may come for things you've spent years building. But Jesus told us to store up treasure where moth and rust can't destroy and thieves can't break in. Put your life into the one thing no disruption can touch: the kingdom of God, and bringing hope to people who don't have any.

That's always been the best investment. It still is. And in a season of disruption, part of being ready as a church is having hubs of hope all over this region, so that when people start asking the questions no chatbot can answer, who am I and what am I for, there's a community nearby that knows the answer has a name.

That's what Hope for Everyone is all about. You've already heard many of the things that God is doing through the last couple of years of ministry here, and you can learn more at some of the stations at your campus today. While certain things are moving slower than I'd hoped, they're moving exactly as God wants them to.

Year three is our Haggai year. The foundation is laid, and the finish line isn't in sight yet. We have about \$7.6 million left to fund the rest of the vision. Zechariah was preaching to Haggai's people in those same months, and he told them not to despise the day of small things.

There are people in your life right now who you cannot imagine ever finding the hope of heaven. God is still working. And He wants to use you. So look at those three words on your response card: pray, serve, give. If there's one you haven't started, start there.

If you've started all three, take a next step in one of them. If you've already made a commitment, don't give up. Keep going. Over the rest of the service, pray about what God might be asking of you, write it down, and drop your card in the box on your way out.

One more thing before we finish our study. Luke 2 tells us about a man named Simeon, in that same temple. Year after year he stayed faithful, waiting on God's promise, and year after year the fruit didn't fit his forecast.

Then one day a young couple walked in with a baby. Simeon took the glory of God into his arms and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace." In this place I will give peace. Five hundred years earlier, old men wept in front of that foundation. Now an old man stood in that same temple, holding the promise in his arms.