

# enJOY the journey

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November 10, 2019

Pentecost 22 - All Ages Service

[Haggai 2:1-9](#)

[2 Thessalonians 2:1-2,15-17](#)

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(prayer)

- Video ([Is There Life Out There](#))
- For the millennials out there, this is a "typewriter".



- It is an old fashioned keyboard-printer device that produced a single hard copy by imputing one character at a time. Downside: there was no delete button and you couldn't save the document, so if you wanted a second copy, you had to re-enter everything all over again.
- *Ok, boomer!*
- Anyway, that's why the woman in the video had to hand in the hardcopy of her assignment with the coffee stains on it.
- *I learned more from the stains than I did the paper.*
- It is not always about the final product - the end result - it's about what we learned along the way.
- Sure, as far as school goes, the final mark is usually important. But, far more important (in the big picture) is what we have learned.
- Sometimes we learn from our mistakes, or surprises along the way that have nothing to do with what we end up handing in.

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- Haggai was a prophet of God who lived in the late sixth century before Jesus' time. The story we heard today happened in the year 520BCE (second year in the reign of King Darius I of Persia).
- Almost 20 years earlier, after the Persians had defeated the Babylonian Empire, the hebrew people were granted permission to return to Judah after close to 70 years of [exile](#).
- At the start of the exile, when the Babylonians overran Jerusalem, the [Temple](#) (built ~350 years earlier during the reign of King Solomon) was ransacked and left in ruins.
- During Haggai's time, a new temple was being built.
- Haggai asked a few elders in the crowd watching the construction:
  - *How does it look to you now?*
  - *Is it not in your sight as nothing?*
- Haggai professes that the *splendour of this new house will (eventually) be greater than the*

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*former*. But, truth-be-told, even when construction was complete, the post-exile temple was not going to be anywhere near as *grand* as the first Temple.

- If any of Haggai's townsfolk were holding in their joy until something close to Solomon's Temple was back on Mount Zion, they were destined to never be happy.
- It wouldn't be for another five hundred years that a major expansion project would be undertaken with hopes of restoring something close to that original majesty... finally largely complete during the latter years Jesus' life.
- Did that mean that Psalm 100 had to be shelved in the years between Haggai and Jesus? Or was it still possible to *make a joyful noise to the lord and enter the temple courts with praise*?
- One of the hallmarks of the time of the Babylonian exile was that, even without the Temple, the people maintained their faith.
- As the composer of [Psalm 137](#) admitted, it was hard to sing the old songs of Zion; and yet, the psalmist refused to let go of viewing Jerusalem as *the highest joy*.

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- I know that there is wisdom in the modern proverb to *work first and play later*, but a constant adherence to [delayed gratification](#) is one of the most dangerous attitudes when it comes to a person's overall well-being, when taken to the extreme.

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- Does anyone recognize the movie shown in the image on the screen?



- It is screenshot of Christina Applegate, Steele Stebbins, Skyler Gisondo and Ed Helms in the 2015 next generational [sequel](#) to 1983's [National Lampoon's Vacation](#).
- In the original *Vacation*, Clark Grizwald takes his family on a cross-country road trip (Chicago to L.A.) to visit (the Disneyland-like) Wally World. While their time at the theme park is a fun episode at the end of the movie, the real adventure is *the journey*.
- In the 2015 version, Clark's son, Rusty, now an adult, tries to relive the magic of those childhood vacations, by taking his family on their own road trip to Wally World. And like his dad, Rusty Grizwald is an eternal optimist, trying to find some level of joy at every stop along the way.
- Now, the Vacation movies are an imperfect example, because a lot of things go wrong along the way. But the franchise never would have lasted for five movies if Ellen Grizwald had gotten her way and the family had just flown to L.A. instead of driving.
- Even so, a greater wisdom lies before us... It is not only the destination where joy and fulfilment can be known.

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- Robert Hastings said it well in his poem, [The Station](#), as life is imagined as a train ride:

*Stop pacing the aisles and counting the miles. Instead, climb more mountains, eat more ice cream, go barefoot oftener, swim more rivers, watch more sunsets, laugh more and cry less. Life must be lived as we go along. The station will come soon enough.*

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There IS life out there.

Let's learn more from the stains than from the paper.

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Let us pray:

Loving God, we pray for adventurous spirit: curious about all the wonder around us. Amen.

#289VU "It Only Takes a Spark"