

Sermon Note: Nostalgia

Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction

This Sunday we begin a new three-week series, **The Days are Surely Coming**. We're starting with *Nostalgia*, that pull toward the way things used to be—family traditions, music, sanctuaries, even church calendars that feel like home. Nostalgia can comfort and connect us, and it can also make the present feel smaller than it really is. In Haggai's day, a community stood in the rubble of yesterday's glory and wondered whether anything new could possibly measure up. We carry similar questions in our own season: What do we cherish from the past, and where is God inviting us to see promise growing in real time? As we begin, we will honor the gifts of yesterday and open our hearts to the future God is shaping among us now.

Illustration Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vwu385K3Oq0>

On the front lawn, Andy introduces each toy to Bonnie and, with one last playtime, passes his childhood into trusted hands.

Why This Video?

In this scene from *Toy Story 3* (2010), Andy entrusts his toys to Bonnie as he prepares to leave for college. The scene lingers on the tenderness of letting go, honoring memories without clinging, and discovering that love can move forward through a new steward. It is the ache and warmth of nostalgia tipping into generosity, showing how what we treasure can become a gift for what comes next.

Video Discussion Questions

1. What small detail in the handoff scene—an expression, a line, a pause—most captured the ache of letting go for you?
2. Andy tells Bonnie short stories about each toy. How does that storytelling shape the meaning of the gift for both of them?
3. Where do you notice generosity at work here, and how is it different from simply giving something away?
4. The moment before Andy entrusts Woody hangs in the air. What possibilities feel alive in that pause, and why?
5. When Andy and Bonnie play together on the lawn, how does shared play change the tone of the handoff?
6. Who seems to carry the most agency in this exchange? Does that shift as the scene unfolds? If so, how?
7. If you imagine yourself as Andy, Bonnie, or one of the toys, what hope do you carry forward and what would still be hard to let go?
8. What practices from this scene could help someone honor cherished memories and still hand off the care of them to someone new?

Haggai 2:1-9 (CEB)

¹On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the Lord's word came through Haggai the prophet: ²Say to Judah's governor Zerubbabel, Shealtiel's son, and to the chief priest Joshua, Jehozadak's son, and to the rest of the people: ³Who among you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Doesn't it appear as nothing to you? ⁴So now, be strong, Zerubbabel, says the Lord. Be strong, High Priest Joshua, Jehozadak's son, and be strong, all you people of the land, says the Lord. Work, for I am with you, says the Lord of heavenly forces. ⁵As with our agreement when you came out of Egypt, my spirit stands in your midst. Don't fear. ⁶This is what the Lord of heavenly forces says: In just a little while, I will make the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land quake. ⁷I will make all the nations quake. The wealth of all the nations will come. I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of heavenly forces. ⁸The silver and the gold belong to me, says the Lord of heavenly forces. ⁹This house will be more glorious than its predecessor, says the Lord of heavenly forces. I will provide prosperity in this place, says the Lord of heavenly forces.

Scripture Study Questions

1. Haggai has brought a remnant of people back to a devastated homeland. It is a time of ambivalence—of both hope and despair. How was this true for the Jewish community? What were their difficulties, and what opportunities could they find?
2. When considering “the glory that once was” for yourself, can you recall the trajectory that led to the current reality? (For example, the church was thriving, but there was a crisis of some kind, and then...; your job was going great, but you were injured, and then...).
3. What can you learn from this past (without dwelling or getting stuck) that helps you enter a new future?
4. As people of God, how have you experienced God's presence (or not) when there was some crisis or turning point in your life?
5. What prophetic voices among your church community can see the trajectory of your current course? Who can call you to “correction”? Are they respected? Listened to? How do you, or can you, “see the signs of the times” and know what and whom to trust?

Additional (Optional) Questions

1. The Israelites felt that God wasn't able to live among them because God's presence had always been in the Temple. How does this passage challenge that feeling?
2. When the first Temple had been built, there was an amazing display of God's power, and the presence of God filled the Temple with splendor. Look back at the passage to see if you can find where it talks about that. What does it imply?
3. Where have you experienced God's presence or a sense of awe? What is your “best” experience with God?
4. Do you feel like God's presence is mostly in churches?
5. When the people returned from exile, they had to rebuild more than the Temple. They had to rebuild their lives, their identity, and rediscover their purpose. How do you rebuild those kinds of things?

Weekly Action

This week, choose one cherished piece of your faith story—a hymn, a short prayer you use at home, a service practice, or a seasonal tradition—and entrust it to someone newer. Take a moment to pray for guidance on who to share it with, then write one or two sentences about why it matters to you and attach one simple

resource (a lyric sheet or link, a tip for getting started, a photo, etc.). Share it personally—after worship, with a kind note, or with a phone call or short text—and set one small next step within the next week to discuss it (or even *do* it) together.

Prayer

O God of new beginnings, you always show us the way. We ignore it; don't understand it; try but fail to follow it. And then, light comes. Your wisdom penetrates the confusion and uncertainty. And then we are energized with your holy power. Help us to see “the way out of no way” when we are stuck; the path through resistance when we are thwarted; the opportunities embedded in crises when they come. You are the way; for that, we give you thanks and praise. Amen.

Disclosure: This Sermon Note was created by LJUMC staff with resources from Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church and with the support of AI tools.