**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** In this series, Supporting Cast, we are looking at the lesser known yet vitally important characters in the Bible. We believe that every single person has a specific role to play in the story of God and it is only when we all follow God’s call that He can accomplish His work in the world.

**Week Overview:** This week focuses on the story of Haggai. Haggai was a prophet that delivered messages of rebuke and encouragement to the Israelite people to help lead their side-tracked lives back to the will of God.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

* Story of a time when you were side-tracked or lost.

**Tension (what’s the struggle):**

* Have you had a season of life when you were side-tracked or lost? How do we get back on track?

**Text:** Haggai 1:3-7, 12-15

**THP**: Options…

* Side-tracked? Seek truth.
* Truth puts us back on track
* Seek truth when life has you side-tracked

**Supporting Points:**

* Crucial conversations are what lead us back to God’s will
  + They might not always be nice but they are necessary
  + Do you have someone in your life who you trust enough to confront you?

**Application (call to action)**:

You might be in one of two places…

* You need a Haggai in your life
* You need to be a Haggai in someone else’s life.

Personalized intro

Hey Northview Students!...

\*\*\*Story of a time when you were “side-tracked or lost” lean towards something funny and light-hearted.\*\*\*

Today, I want to start with a question. Actually, it’s a pretty big question. What is every child’s dream? I know, it’s a lot to think about but trust me I have the answer...going to Disney World. Ok, maybe it’s not every child’s dream but it was definitely mine when I was younger. I will never forget my first experience at Disney World. My entire family went, we had a group of like 15 people and I was maybe 7 years old. It was magical and beautiful and hot and sweaty and crowded and all of the things that make Disney wonderful and I have nothing but good memories there...except for one.

Picture this. We are in the Animal Kingdom, people everywhere. I am with my uncle and my cousin, hanging out looking at the gorillas and I am fascinated. After a while of staring I snap back to reality and realize that my uncle and cousin are gone. Vanished. I immediately start crying, panicking, and frantically looking around for my people. I was so terrified at that moment. Turns out, they had only gone a few steps over to the restroom thinking I was following behind them but I was so enthralled with the gorillas that I didn’t even notice they were gone. Within moments my uncle came running back to find me and I was safe once again.

Looking back now, I was probably only standing there alone for 2-3 minutes. However it was so traumatic for me because it was the first time in my life where I ever felt truly lost. I was confused, scared, and honestly paralyzed with fear because I didn’t know what to do.

Have you ever been there? Lost? Or maybe not lost, just sidetracked? Those seasons in life where you ask yourself, how did I get here? What am I doing? Where is everyone? Why do I feel like this? Those seasons of wandering. I think some of us today are a little bit side-tracked. We have lost sight of the goal. We have lost the bigger picture. We have lost our guide. We are just stagnant, living in the world, looking for the next step.

Today we are going to talk about what to do when life has you side-tracked. What do we do when we get lost? Which brings us to our THP today…

\*\*THP Options:

* Side-tracked? Seek truth.
* Truth puts us back on track
* Seek truth when life has you side-tracked

If you have a Bible with you, turn to the book of Haggai. If you’re wondering where the heck the book of Haggai is, you can use the table of contents in the front. Nobody is judging you. So, who is Haggai? I am going to guess that some of you have never even heard of him, let alone read this specific book. Thankfully, that is the entire point of our series, Supporting Cast. Over the next few weeks we are taking a look at some of the lesser known, yet vitally important people in the Bible. The truth is, regardless of how much stage time they get, every single person mentioned in the Bible plays a critical role in the story of God.

So what role does Haggai play? Well, Haggai is a prophet; a voice or a mouthpiece for God. The role of prophets is to deliver messages from God to His people. At this point in history, God’s people have just been given a fresh start. 40 years prior the Babylonian empire came in and destroyed everything the Israelites had. This included their cities, homes, and temple where they worshipped. They took the Israelite people as slaves and left all they had in ruins. Picture this. God’s people were once free in the land that God had promised them and now they are slaves, their city destroyed, with zero freedom. Yikes.

Thankfully after 40 years of slavery the Persians defeat the Babylonians and set the Israelites free! Slaves no more! However, they now have to return to their home where everything lies in ruins. Nothing is left. It’s now time to start rebuilding. Imagine building an incredible world on Minecraft, the game crashes, no progress is saved and you have to start all over. Devastating, right?

That is where we start in the book of Haggai. God is speaking to the recently freed Israelites who are trying to rebuild their life back home. Read with me Haggai’s first message from God to the Israelite people...

Haggai 1:3-7

“Then the Lord sent this message through the prophet Haggai: “Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins? This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says: Look at what’s happening to you! You have planted much but you harvest little. You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes! “This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says: Look at what’s happening to you!”

Do you ever feel like God is saying that to you? Look at what’s happening to you! I usually hear that voice in my head when I am four seasons into a Netflix watch party on a Friday night, but this is a little bit different. How does it say that the Israelite people are choosing to use their time and resources? Verse 3 tells us that God’s people have left the temple, God’s place, the heart of worship, as a pile of rubble. Rather than spending their time building up God’s house they are building large and luxurious houses for themselves. God’s priority is their lowest priority. They are seeking their own satisfaction, their own material things, over their relationship with God.

God is using Haggai at this moment as a wake up call. He is saying to His people...What are you doing?? Your priorities are all wrong! You are using your time, energy, and resources in all the wrong ways! You are not doing what I am asking you to do! You are not seeking me, the God who freed you! You are not building a place to worship. You are...side-tracked.

The Israelite people were headed down a path of selfishness and materialism. They weren’t concerned with God and His Kingdom. They were losing their connection and their sight of Him. They were lost because their eyes were not on the one who gives all direction to our lives.

I think some of us are in that place. We have this freedom in Christ but we have used that freedom to wander. Maybe we wandered a little too far and now we are lost. Just like the Israelites we are seeking our own priorities, our own material things, our own desires, and now we are side-tracked from the plan that God has for us. So, how do we get back to God’s plan and how do we stay there? How did the Israelites get back on track?

The answer: Haggai.

It’s easy to look at this story and see the two main characters, God and the Israelite people. The Israelite people are the ones who are returning to the land, rebuilding their lives, and not doing a very good job at keeping God at the center of it all. And God is well….God. But we can’t miss the character of Haggai. He is vital to this story because as a prophet, he is the one delivering all of these messages from the heart of God to His people.

Now, don’t be mistaken. God doesn’t need Haggai. In fact, if He wanted to, God could talk directly to the Israelite people as a loud thunderous noise from heaven that shakes the earth and sky. I can guarantee they would all start building His temple right away. Yet, He uses Haggai. Not because He has to, but because He wants to. He wants Haggai to be a part of the unfolding story of God. He wants the Israelite people to hear His message from someone who was just like them. From someone who modeled the obedience that God was calling them to.

So where does Haggai begin? With a warning. He starts with that Scripture we read earlier. “You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm.” He doesn’t sound like the best motivational speaker in the world right now, but it was a necessary message. It was the wakeup call that the people needed!

Have you ever had a conversation like that? A conversation that you felt was monumental in your life? Maybe it wasn’t the nicest thing that you have ever heard but it was necessary. It pulled you back to reality so you could see just how off-track you were?

\*\*\*Story of a time where one conversation made you realize how off-track you were, even though it was not an easy conversation to have\*\*\*

I had one of those moments in my life. I was in college, the second semester of my freshman year. First semester was incredible, I was in a new city, making new friends, loving my classes, loving college life, everything was great. Second semester was a little different. I came back from Christmas break and all of the sudden my classes got harder, my sleep schedule was off, I was drinking insane amounts of coffee to balance my lack of sleep, I was overcommitted, my relationship with Jesus was suffering, and my mental health was the worst it had ever been. I was anxious, depressed, and very unhealthy.

That’s when one of my professors pulled me aside after class. I loved this professor, she was easily one of my favorite professors I had ever had and I knew that she cared about me beyond having me as a student in her class. That day in her office, she told me that she was worried about me. The Kylee that she knew the first semester was not the same Kylee in her classes now. She said I was unhealthy, I was irresponsible with my body, and I wouldn’t be able to last like this for much longer. It was a painful conversation. I was sad, I was angry, and I didn’t want to face the reality that I wasn’t doing well. However, that one conversation was all I needed to hear to get my life back on track. From that day forward, things changed and I worked to get my life back on track.

Haggai is a vital part to the story of God because he delivered a message that was pretty hard to hear. It was raw, and honest, and straight from the heart of God. He wasn’t afraid to call the people out because he knew that was exactly what they needed to hear. If it wasn’t for this message, the Israelite people would have continued to venture off the path, side-tracked, away from God. But thankfully, he was obedient to deliver the message, not because it was nice but because it was necessary.

If you feel like you have wandered off the path. If you feel like you are side-tracked. If you feel like you are lost. **Here is the key...seek truth.**

Look what happens after Haggai delivers this warning. The hard but necessary message of truth he told to the Israelites gave way to this...

“Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people **obeyed** the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord.

Then Haggai, the Lord’s messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: “I am with you,” declares the Lord. So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. **They came and began to work** on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.” Haggai 1:12-15

Right here we see the direct positive consequences of Haggai’s warning. Immediately after telling the Israelites that they were off track and needed to get their life back in the right direction, they followed his guidance. Led by their governor, Zerubbabel and their high priest, Joshua, the Israelite people obeyed the voice of God and began building the house of God.

Haggai’s message of truth led people to get back on track. All it took was one man who was willing to have one hard conversation and one group of people that was willing to change.

When we look at the grand scheme of the Bible, Haggai doesn’t look like much. You don’t hear his name alongside Moses, Joshua, Paul, Peter, and so many others but his role is just as important. Without Haggai’s obedience, the Israelite people would have stayed lost and off-track, failing to restore God to the center of their lives like they should. Haggai is an integral part in the story of the Bible because his words of truth kept the Israelite people on the right path on their journey to being redeemed by God.

So, the question is, where are you today? I think there are two different perspectives that you can view today’s message from. It is going to be different for everyone depending on where you are in life. First...

1. **You need a Haggai in your life**

Some of you knew from the beginning of this message that you were lost. You are side-tracked. You have lost focus. God is no longer at the center of your life. You are pursuing selfish things, the things of this world, and God is asking you to build Him up in your life. That could look a number of ways...maybe it’s the people you are choosing to hangout with, the things you are looking at on the internet when the sun goes down, the way you are choosing to spend your free time, the things that you are doing on a Friday night (insert relevant examples) I’m not sure.

Whatever it is, you need a Haggai in your life. You need someone who isn’t afraid to call you out on the way that your life is headed. You need someone that isn’t afraid to speak truth into your life even when it isn’t easy to hear. You need someone to speak what is necessary even when it isn’t always nice. You need help getting back on track. Maybe for you that was tonight. You will remember this moment, this message, as the conversation that got you back on track. Maybe it’s not, but whatever it is, seek out truth. Pray for truth about what in your life needs to change and who or what is going to help get you back on track. I can promise you, that if you are honestly and desperately seeking God you will never be left wondering.

Jeremiah 29:13 says…

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

Some of you need a Haggai in your life because you are side-tracked and it’s time to rebuild God at the center of your life.

Or maybe you are here…

1. **You need to be Haggai in someone else’s life**

Some of you might feel like you are on track. You don’t feel lost but you know someone who is. You have that person in your life and you see them wandering. You see that they have decided to chase their own desires and they aren’t rebuilding God at the center of their life. You see someone that is side-tracked and you feel like God is stirring in you to tell them the truth, in love, that you want to help them.

I want to challenge you to have that conversation. I can’t guarantee that it will be easy but I can guarantee that if you have their best interest at heart and you feel like God is asking you to walk alongside them, it will be worth it because you are obedient to God. It might not be easy, it might not feel like the nicest thing but it will be necessary. Use this story of Haggai as a motivation to help that person in your life that you know is horribly lost. Knowing that having a truthful conversation could be all that they need to turn things around.

So where are you today?

\*\*Lead students into a moment of response through prayer, worship, etc.

**Kent - how about “side step the side track” as a main point? The whole idea is to avoid getting side tracked, seek truth and to pursue God’s purpose and plan. Side step the side track. Or I like back on track as you will read in the comment below :) I appreciate the personal stories, those are super helpful and help students lean into messages. Response time at the end seems appropriate.**

**Micah - wondering if “Back on Track” could be the THP? What do you do when you’re lost? You get “back on track.” All of the THP options feel just a tad wordy. What’s a mantra or battle cry our students could breath-pray throughout the week? If I’m lonely? I’m going to get “back on track.” Did I sin? Back on track, etc.**

**Harrison - I think adding on to the be a haggai and have a haggai and talking about why that is beneficial and the blessings that would come from that might be helpful.Overall, I’m feeling this script though. I like it. Maybe having students write down who their Haggai is… Or, giving students some time to process afterwards?**

**Scott - a result of correction is God’s blessing. He started with you’re always hungry and it’s never enough. Toward the end of the book, he talks about how we can praise God for the plenty while the seed is still in the barn. We can look forward to God’s blessing when we steer ourselves back on track. He will fill us in all the ways that we tried to be filled by following our own desires and ideas.**

**Aaron - After your two points about needing a Haggai and being a Haggai, I would talk specifically about how we need to create these environments in our life groups. In our LGs, we should have the place to lovingly call-out each other and help keep each other on track.**

**Ryan- Going off of Aaron’s point, could reference Paul’s teaching on how to practically go about having that conversation of being a Haggai in someone’s life**

**Harrison- I think adding onto the end of the have a Haggai and be a Haggai section and talking about the benefits and blessings of those would be helpful for clarity.**