

Consider Your Ways: Haggai 1's Rebuke of Neglect

Scriptures for Today: Haggai 1:1-11

Haggai 1:1-11 *In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, 2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built. 3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. 9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. 10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. 11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.*

Introduction:

We are starting the book of Haggai, the 37th book in the Bible. It has 2 chapters, 38 verses. Takes only 5 and a half minutes to read.

Before we jump into this passage, we need to understand the historical context and the current condition of God's people at this point in the Bible.

Back in the beginning of October we started learning about the period of time when God's people were ruled by earthly kings. That started in 1 Samuel with king Saul. *(Please go back and listen to those sermons if you haven't already)* King Saul disobeyed God and David became king. Then David sinned against God and invited a lot of trouble into his life.

God had mercy on David and redeemed that situation.

Solomon was born and became King.

God blessed him because he asked for wisdom.

Israel become a mighty and prosperous nation under the rule of Solomon.

Solomon's heart was turned away from God later in His life.

The mighty nation of Israel was split into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom of Israel fell into idolatry and worshipped other Gods. And the southern kingdom of Judah followed in their footsteps.

God sent prophets to warn them of the coming judgement if they did not turn from their evil ways and obey the Lord.

A prophet was raised up to rebuke the nation -> The people ignored the word of God -> Then God would send another prophet -> The people would harden their hearts...And this pattern continued for about 345 years (*From the end of Solomon's reign to destruction of Jerusalem.*)

Both Israel and Judah were destroyed and carried into a foreign land. They were scattered among the nations. Imagine if the United States of America was conquered by another country, like China for example, and we were carried away far into another land. That's what happened to Israel and Judah.

But God always preserves a remnant. Judah was in captivity for 70 years.

After 70 years God raised up Cyrus king of Persia and allowed the remnant of the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. We see this in the book of Ezra.

Some of the Jews returned, and they re-laid the foundation of the temple. But then opposition came and the work came to a stop.

Just like in your own life, when you try to serve God, opposition will come. Are you going to push through the opposition and keep serving the Lord? Or will you give up and focus on yourself?

For 16 Years the Jews gave up and focused on themselves. They lost the zeal to keep going. They lost the motivation to keep pushing forward. God's house was unfinished, lying in waste and ruin. Meanwhile the people grew comfortable and complacent. They were settling into the land, but they weren't prospering.

That brings us to the book of Haggai Chapter 1...God comes to wake up the people and to point out the neglect that was taking place.

Haggai 1:1-11 Exposition

Haggai 1:1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest...

Right off the bat, we see that the Word of the Lord is coming to the leaders of the remnant of the Jews, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech (the high priest).

Zerubbabel was a descendant of King David. He was the governor who was put in place to oversee the people in Jerusalem. At the end of the day, the leaders are the ones who have the responsibility to make sure the work is getting done and things are going as planned. This is why God is going directly to the ones in charge.

(Example) Just like if we stopped doing the things that God wants us to do here at this church, like going out into the community and preaching the gospel. If we all stopped soul winning and started backsliding and going the wrong way collectively as a church, who would be responsible for that? The leadership would be responsible. Josh, Gary, and I would be at fault.

Also, in your own home, when things are not running smoothly. When things are out of order, or there is chaos. Everything that happens in a home comes down to the Husband, who is the head of the Household. **Men, we must take responsibility for everything that happens inside of our houses.**

If a business fails, the ultimate responsibility falls on the CEO. If a marriage is failing, if life at home is failing, the ultimate responsibility falls on the Husband. **We take ownership, we figure out what the problem is, and we fix it.**

In Jerusalem, things were failing. God's house was being neglected...and this neglect reflected the heart of the people and the leaders. God goes directly to the ones who are responsible.

Haggai 1:2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.

God is telling Zerubbabel and Joshua—Hey, this is what is being said by the people, this has been your mentality for the past 16 years. They are saying, "the time is not come for the Lord's house to be built"

The people were making excuses—Just how we like to make excuses in our own lives...

"The time has not come for me to get out of bed"

"The time has not come for me to go to Church"

"The time has not come for me to take responsibility for my marriage"

"The time has not come for me to go soul winning"

"I'm not ready for these things yet"

What you're actually saying is...

"I'm too preoccupied with other things that are more important to me."

What is God's response?

Haggai 1:3-4 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *lie* waste?

God is saying, "you say the time is not come to build the house of the Lord—is it time for you to dwell in your cieled houses while the house of God is laying in waste?"

Understand that the problem isn't that the people had houses to live in, the problem was that they had **cieled** houses.

Cieled means *to furnish or line the interior of, especially the walls or the roof with wood paneling or other materials*. When something is cieled, it's not about shelter, it's about style.

2 Chronicles 3:5 And the greater house he **cieled** with fir tree, which he overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm trees and chains.

This is a description of the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem hundreds of years before. Notice the greater house was cieled with fir trees which were overlaid with gold.

Jeremiah 22:13-14 Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; *that* useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; **14** That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and *it is* cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.

Understand what God is saying when He says "is it time for you to dwell in your cieled houses? The people were going above and beyond to make their own habitations pristine and extravagant, while God's house lied in waste and ruin.

(Example) That would be like if Josh and I lived in amazing multi-million-dollar mansions, while this building was a complete dump and falling apart. That would be a great sin for us to do such a thing.

This is essentially what was happening—The people were prioritizing their own possessions and neglecting the house of God.

In our own lives, we often go above and beyond to make sure we have the things that bring us comfort, *(Like the other day I really wanted to eat my apple pie with vanilla ice-cream...)* but we put very little effort into the things of God.

Haggai 1:4-5 *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *lie* waste? **5** Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.**

God was calling the people to consider their ways. They were prioritizing the wrong things in their life. They were sent to rebuild the temple, but temple was put on the back burner. Their houses were being built up and beautified while God's house was in ruins. God is saying, Consider your ways. Consider your priorities. Consider your life. What are you focusing on right now? He goes on to tell them...

Haggai 1:6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little...

The people were working hard to provide for themselves. But their abundance of labor did not bring an abundance of fruit.

Do you ever feel like you're working endless hours but you're still lacking? There might be a reason for that...

ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink;

The people were eating and drinking but they were not filled or satisfied. They only had enough for them to desire more.

ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes.

The people were providing for themselves, they worked hard to earn wages, but they were putting their wages into a bag with holes. Their money was being consumed by other things that did not bring any value to their life.

Their earnings were making themselves wings and flying away as an eagle towards heaven. Never to be seen again. *Just like Proverbs 23:5 describes.*

Maybe you feel like that in your own life. Working hard but have nothing to show for. Consuming but never satisfied or filled. What is God's reply?

Haggai 1:7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.**

God says it's time to wake up and consider the ways of your life. What are you doing with your time? What are you doing with your resources? What are you doing with the life that God gave you?

Understand the Creator of the Universe gave you that life. God in Heaven, who is above all things, considered you, and breathed life into your soul. You don't want to waste it.

Maybe you've grown comfortable. Maybe you don't feel like going up against opposition. You'd rather just keep to yourself, go to work, make your money, feed your flesh.

Often times we want to focus on the possessions that God has given us instead of focusing on the God who gave us those possessions.

We can come up with excuses: "I'm going to be a good steward of what God has given me." Then taking care of those possessions becomes the main priority in your life. Your home can become your main priority. Your children can become your main priority. (Those things should have a high priority, but should they be the highest? Not before God)

Remember just like God allowed you to have those things, He can take them away from you in a moment.

You need to consider your ways. Make sure you are prioritizing the right things in your life. What does God want us to prioritize?

Haggai 1:8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and **build the house**; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.

What does God want us to prioritize? We put Him first. We build His house. We build His kingdom. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.

What is the purpose of anything we do in this life? All things are done so that God in Heaven will be glorified.

Consider your ways and see if there is anything in your life that is not bringing Glory to God. If it does not bring Him Glory, then it's time to remove it from your life.

Does doing drugs bring glory to God? Then remove it.

Does drinking alcohol, a substance that causes your eyes to behold strange women and utter perverse things, bring glory to God? Then remove it.

Does watching movies, tv shows, and listening to music that is filled with cursing, blasphemies, fornication, and evil communication bring glory to God? Then remove it.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

And please do not just hear these words, say amen, and then not take action. If you know something is not pleasing to God, if you know something does not glorify God. Don't continue to do it. Remove it from your life today.

Parents, if you know your kids are watching or listening to things that will hurt them and do not bring glory to God, then it's time to remove those things from their lives. Children do not dictate what they do in your home.

You explain to your children that everything we do in this house will bring glory to God. You explain it to them in love and show that you care. You replace those things with good things that please the Lord.

Maybe you're thinking, If I prioritize God first how will I have time to take care of the other things in my life?

If I go to church on Sunday instead of working, how will I pay my bills?

If I get rid of those things that don't glorify God, how will I have any fun?

If I go soul winning, how will I have time to fix things around the house?

Haggai 1:9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it.

When you spend all your time, and energy, and hard work, taking care the things of your own. You're looking for much, you think you're doing something with your life by working hard every single day, but God blows upon all that hard work and you come back with little or nothing...

Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

The reason that you're running but you're not going anywhere, the reason why you eat and are not satisfied, the reason why you work, but have nothing to show for, might be because God's house has been put on the back burner in your life.

Maybe for you, the things of God are #3, maybe they're #2. But if they're not #1, understand you will miss out on the blessings and provision of God.

Haggai 1:10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.

What does that mean? It means that because you do not prioritize God in your life, the work that you do will not be fruitful. He will hold back the dew. The land will not produce in abundance. Your work and labor will be in vain.

Haggai 1:11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

If the majority of our time is spent on things that have zero eternal value, don't expect God's hand to be upon you and don't expect His blessings.

Did you know when you have a little bit of faith in your life and you put God first, you give Him the opportunity to show you His power.

If you think you have to be the one to provide everything, you're saying God I don't need your provision. I'll take care of myself. Understand if you're His child, he's going to blow upon labor, and you will come up short handed.

Take that step of faith in your life, prioritize the things of God, and watch Him provide for all your needs. You'll end up with way more than what you thought you could have.

Conclusion

We see how God, through Haggai, brought this wakeup call to the remnant of the Jews who were growing in complacency and comfort. They had forgotten what was important. They ran to their own houses while God's house laid in waste.

God said, Consider your ways. Understand why things are going the way they are. Understand why you're not satisfied, understand why you're laboring in vain, understand why the land is not bringing forth fruit for you...It's because you have forgotten the house of the Lord.

Please consider that same command this morning. Consider your ways. Consider the priorities in your life. What things can you remove from your life that do not bring glory to God?

Remember how short this life is...

James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Our life is like a vapour. It's like the steam that rises when you boil water. It's there for a brief moment and then it's gone. How are you going to spend that brief moment that God has given you in this flesh?

Will you serve the Lord? Will you put away the childish things? Will you seek to glorify God in everything you do? Or will you neglect the house of God? Will you neglect the things He has called for you to do?

Ephesians 5:15-17 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, **16** Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. **17** Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.

Please consider your ways today and walk circumspectly, don't be foolish, be wise. Redeem the time that God has given you. We are living in evil days. Let's not be unwise. Let's understand what the will of the Lord is by reading His Word. Let's go out and preach the Gospel!

Let's Pray