

FIRST THINGS FIRST

PRECEPT

HAGGAI 1:1-15

¹ In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest: ² This is what the Lord Almighty says: "These people say, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord's house.'" ³ Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: ⁴ "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?" ⁵ Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways.

(READ THE REST OF VERSES 6-15)

PROMISE

We are like branches of a tree, being in different stages of life. We all spend our time differently, having different goals, likes, careers, etc, but we all are equally made for one purpose.

Our message today comes from the book of Haggai, one of the shortest books in the Bible. Haggai had an important message for the Jews who had recently returned from exile. They had forgotten their God, choosing instead to focus on their own interests, so it was time for them to "give careful thought to their ways" (Haggai 1:5, 7). Nothing was more important for the Jews than to show that the Lord was at the center of their thoughts and actions, so Haggai directed them to finish rebuilding God's temple. However, rather than leaving them alone with the task of rebuilding, Haggai continued to preach to the Jews, encouraging them with the hope of future glory in the temple and a victory to come over the enemies of God's people (2:7-9, 21-22). According to Haggai's message, if the people would place God at the center of their lives, they would realize the future blessings that God had in store for His people.

God calls us to rebuild His temple, the house of the Lord. The Bible tells us that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), so what we do our body and time reflects what our priority and treasure is.

STOP MAKING EXCUSES (V.2). It is always easy to make excuses when we don't want to obey God. We can always find rational justification for not doing what God wants us to do; *the time is not right, I've got family responsibilities, my children need me now, when things settle down at work*, etc. The call for us to rebuild the house of the Lord is not the responsibility of the pastor, leader, or others. Stop making excuses and take responsibility.

STOP BEING SELFISH (V.4). Like all of us, most times, we are so busy taking care of our own roof, that we forget that the house of the Lord is in ruins. When was the last time we prioritized God?

STOP MISSING OUT ON GOD'S BLESSINGS (V.3). See that no matter how much we work, it is not always enough to pay all the bills. Many times, it feels like money just comes and goes. If we want to be blessed in everything that we do, that even if we don't work much we have enough, and that even if we serve God we have enough time for the day to do other things, then we must obey God on what He has called us to do.

TAKE TIME TO REFLECT AND EVALUATE (V.5). The Lord is asking us today, what are we doing with our lives? Are we spending time on things that really matter?

Jim Rohn says, "For things to change, you have to change." The decision is ours. If we want to live purposefully and intently, we must heed to the call of the Lord to build His temple; we must build our lives on Him and obey Him at all times.

PRACTICE

1. Priorities. How much time did you spend this week with your spiritual disciplines?

2. Obeying God. What will please God according to Haggai 1:1-15? What is the result of obeying God?

PRAYER

I. Joy

- May we all be filled with joy even in the midst of life's challenges and trials.

II. Prayer

- Let us pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, and rejoice always.

III. Hope

- May hope overflow in our hearts and lives. May we be beacons of hope to others.

IV. Families

- Pray for protection from harm and discord and may homes be filled with love & joy.

V. Lost

- Pray that God may soften the hearts of the lost to receive His truth and salvation.

VI. Leadership Seminar

- May God grant us wisdom as we learn our leadership style for God's glory.

VII. Church

- May God bless our whole congregation. May we be a light in our community.