

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 Jehozadak, the high priest:

2 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "These people say, 'The time has not yet come for the LORD's house to be built.' "

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.

6 You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."

7 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways.

8 Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored," says the LORD.

9 "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the LORD Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house.

10 Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops.

11 I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands."¹

¹ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/my-bible/#/passage/niv/haggai/1/>

Good Morning/Afternoon First Baptist Members and Friends! As we move toward the heart of worship I invite you to bring your focus to Jesus. Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith. Last week in Adult Bible Study we considered the 10th chapter of John. Those 42 verses provided another way to consider and praise Jesus. Allow me to share them with you.

Praise Jesus **as the Gate**

He is the one door to good pasture and abundant life

Praise Jesus **as the Shepherd**

He calls His sheep by name

Praise Jesus **for being in control of His life**

He laid it down and He picked it up – for us²

Praise Jesus for He loves you and invites you to love Him too.

This morning we begin the first of four lessons from the book of Haggai (HAG-eye)³. I don't think I have preached from Haggai before, but I have preached from Ezra and therefore the story for our consideration is familiar to many of us. Allow me to place the story within its historical context.

Background

In 538 B.C. the conqueror of Babylon, Cyrus king of Persia, issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Led by Zerubbabel, about 50,000 Jews journeyed home and began work on the temple. About two years later (536) they completed the foundation amid great rejoicing ([Ezra 3:8-11](#))

(In July 2013 we had two sermons on this event-**WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO SHOUT ABOUT AND WHO IS THE GOD IN YOUR TEMPLE** – if you desire a refresher they are on the website.)

² Life Change Series NAVPRESS John p. 117

³ <http://www.day4ministries.com/?p=7180>

Their success (IN BUILDING THE TEMPLE) aroused the Samaritans and other neighbors who feared the political and religious implications of a rebuilt temple in a thriving Jewish state. They therefore opposed the project vigorously and managed to halt work until 520, after Darius the Great became king of Persia in 522 ([Ezra 4:1-5,24](#)).

Darius was interested in the religions of his empire, and Haggai (HAG-eye) and Zechariah began to preach during Darius second year, 520 B.C. When the governor of Trans-Euphrates and other officials tried to interfere with the rebuilding efforts, Darius fully supported the Jews.

Haggai ([1:1](#)) was a prophet who, along with Zechariah, encouraged the returned exiles to rebuild the temple (see [Ezra 5:1-2; 6:14](#)). Haggai means "festal," which may indicate that the prophet was born during one of the three pilgrimage feasts (Unleavened Bread, Pentecost or Weeks, and Tabernacles; cf. [Dt 16:16](#)). Based on [2:3](#) (see note there) Haggai may have witnessed the destruction of Solomon's temple. If so, he must have been in his 70s during his ministry.

An outline of the first 11 verses would look like this:

- I. First Message: The Call to Rebuild the Temple ([1:1-11](#))
 - A. The People's Lame Excuse ([1:1-4](#))
 - B. The Poverty of the People ([1:5-6](#))
 - C. The Reason God Has Cursed Them ([1:7-11](#))⁴

With that as background information would you consider with me these words?

⁴ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/haggai/>

GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO YOUR WAYS

SHALL WE PRAY! Dear God, we your people have come to the time in worship where we are waiting to hear from you. We have sang our hymns of praise; we have read the Words you preserved for our hearing, we are remembering the words Paul spoke to Timothy:

*¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching,
rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,*

*¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped
for every good work.*

So we ask that you open our hearts and our minds and our ears in order that we might hear and be transformed. In the name of your Son Jesus the Christ we pray. AMEN and AMEN.

GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO YOUR WAYS

***5** Now this is what the LORD Almighty says:
"Give careful thought to your ways.*

***7** This is what the LORD Almighty says:
"Give careful thought to your ways.*

It is not very often in a single passage of scripture with the exception of the Psalms and wisdom sayings that we find words repeated in this way. Verse 5 begins a brief but powerful lecture about what the people, the returned exiles, the chosen ones have done.

***6** You have planted much, but have harvested little.
You eat, but never have enough.
You drink, but never have your fill.
You put on clothes, but are not warm.
You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."*

Verse 7 begins the explanation for why they are suffering.

***9** "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little.
What you brought home, I blew away.
Why?" declares the LORD Almighty.
"Because of my house, which remains a ruin,*

while each of you is busy with his own house.

I can almost hear your thoughts. We take care of **this house**, this building at the corner of Westwood and Orchard. We shovel the snow in the winter and mow the grass in the summer. Once a quarter, or so, we have a church clean up day and make sure the educational wing and the balcony get a through cleaning. Before and after every fellowship event we make sure the lower level is clean and pleasing to the eye. We have a House Committee with the responsibility of making sure our church building meets codes and standards. We might be thinking this lesson really does not apply to us.

But what would happen if we extended the scripture from the physical building to the spiritual building and considered the statement from that perspective.

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Are you able to agree that the words the "Lord's House" could also be read as temple. For it a temple that David wished to build for the Lord, it was a temple that God allowed Solomon to build, it was a temple that was destroyed and the remnant returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. So when Haggai (**HAG-eye**) tells the people they need to work on the "Lord's House" he was speaking of the temple. Put a pin there, we are going to bring this all together.

In the OT "temple" generally had two meaning it was a place of worship and a designation for a chosen people. When Jesus uses temple in the Gospels He is generally referring to own body, yet He was often misunderstood and those who did not understand thought He was talking about the rebuilt temple at Jerusalem. But in the Epistles "temple" refers

*to the body of every baptized Christian, sanctified by the indwelling Spirit of God.*⁵

*¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;
²⁰ you were bought at a price.
Therefore honor God with your bodies.⁶*

Therefore I believe the application for this lesson is to be found not as we look at the physical building, but rather as we look at ourselves. So the scripture says:

GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO YOUR WAYS

Now we are at the heart of the matter. If our bodies are indeed a temple where the Spirit of God dwells then it would just make sense to

GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO YOUR WAYS

But there is much more involved than just making sense. There are blessings and punishments promised by God. Blessings we will miss if we are not careful. I am going to share three, as I understand them.

- 1. Blessings are missed because we fail to put God's purpose, priorities and plans first.** Haggai (**HAG-eye**) spoke to the people calling them back to God's values. "Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins?" (Hag. 1:4) In other words, "Why are you working on your purpose, your priorities and your plans and not mine". Many people fail to realize they are living displeasing lives and so fail to repent of their sins of omission. Whatever is not done out of faith is sin. James writes, "If anyone knows the right thing to do but fails to do it for him it is sin." (James 4:7)

⁵ http://biblehub.com/commentaries/pulpit/1_corinthians/6.htm

⁶ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6&version=NIV>

2. Blessings are missed because people fail to remember

God's will, word and ways. Haggai (HAG-eye) told the people in Jerusalem that the work of God was neglected, overlooked and considered as a lower priority their own concerns. Haggai spoke, "This is what the Lord Almighty says: Consider how things are going for you! You hoped for rich harvests, but they were poor. That is why the heavens have withheld the dew and the earth has withheld its crops. I have called for a drought to starve both you and your cattle and to ruin everything you have worked so hard to get." (Haggai 1:7-11)

- a. The heaven's dew – spiritually refers to the glory of God.
- b. The earth's fruit – refers to spiritual prosperity; produce.
- c. The land's grain – refers to increase.
- d. The land's oil – refers to the anointing.⁷

God has the ability to withhold His blessings to the disobedient.

*Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away⁸*

3. God's blessings are missed because people procrastinate.

The people began building the Temple 23 days after they arrived back from being in exile. Too many people hear excellent sermons on TV, the radio and church but fail to respond due to a bad case of procrastination. Forgetting to act is a recipe for disaster in God's plans. James wrote, "Be doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves." (James 1:22) When you hear a message from God be sure that you put it into action. Ask God what He wants you to do when you read His word and make plans to put it into practice

⁷ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/where-are-the-blessings-kevin-taylor-sermon-on-doing-gods-will-44036.asp>

⁸ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+37&version=NIV>

immediately. **Some say that** 92% of the world **has** yet to make a decision about Christ, as Savior and soon it will be too late. Many people have delayed too long and so have settled for **less** of God's blessings because they failed to act on God's will when they were young.⁹

God's blessings are missed because people procrastinate.
God's blessings are missed because people fail to remember
God's will, word and ways.
God's blessings are missed because we fail to put
God's purpose, priorities and plans first.

For the moment I begin to write this sermon I continuously heard the chorus to the "Heart of Worship" in my head. I looked at the lyrics and tried to find the connection to the message I was hearing from God and the lyrics I was also hearing. I did not find a connection, so I returned to my writing with the lyrics continuing to play in my head.

At the end of my writing time I was looking for a closing that would bring the application of the message to an end. As I reviewed several sources I had considered earlier in the week I found a reference to the "Heart of Worship" and this time I moved beyond researching the lyrics into researching the author.

Allow me to read what I learned and what I clearly believed was God sent.

"The senior pastor at Matt Redman's home church in Watford, England, believed that the congregation had lost its way, even though the church, with its innovative weekend services and elaborate worship arts production, had become a pace setter for many throughout Europe. He sensed that many in the church had become spectators rather than participants in the

⁹ <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/secrets-to-gods-blessings-paul-fritz-sermon-on-gods-provision-78995.asp>

journey of faith, so he did a bold thing. He decided to eliminate the sound system, all musical accompaniment, and multimedia. He announced to the church that they would be going through a season of simplicity in which they would use nothing but the unamplified human voice during their weekend services.

Can you imagine? No microphones. No guitars. Not even a keyboard.

In various interviews, Redman has recounted that the weeks following his pastor's unconventional decision were filled with plenty of awkward silences.

Attendance declined steadily, but the staff did not flinch. They were committed to a church-wide rediscovery of true worship.

Eventually, unaccompanied prayers became transparent, beautiful in their honesty, and undecorated music became more heartfelt than ever. Gradually the sound system, multimedia, and instrumentation were reintroduced, but the fast made a lasting impression on Redman and many others in the church.

Redman wrote Heart of Worship to express the changes God made in his own heart during this unusual season. At first he had no plans to share it, but he did so at his pastor's urging.¹⁰

¹⁰ <http://blog.proclaimonline.com/2013/04/25/behind-the-songs-heart-of-worship/>

MATT REDMAN LYRICS

When the music fades
All is stripped away
And I simply come
Longing just to bring
Something that's of worth
That will bless Your heart

Bridge:
I'll bring You more than a song
For a song in itself
Is not what You have required
You search much deeper within
Through the way things appear
You're looking into my heart

Chorus:
I'm coming back to the heart of worship
And it's all about You,
It's all about You, Jesus
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it
When it's all about You,
It's all about You, Jesus

Verse 2:
King of endless worth
No one could express
How much You deserve
Though I'm weak and poor
All I have is Yours
Every single breath¹¹

And the people of God said Amen!

¹¹ <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/mattredman/theheartofworship.html>