



Sermon Notes from 1 September

A New Found Obedience (*Haggai 1:12-15*)

by Pastor GL Wong

The first step for a heart renewal is making God your top priority. The second is to step out of your comfort zone by faith in God. God wants us to step out of our comfort zone, where there is idolatry and faithlessness, into the faith zone. While God gives *forgiving grace* to those who remain in the former, He wants us to experience *transforming grace* in the faith zone. Each of us are called to something according to our own measure of faith. In your union with Christ, exercise faith (Eph 3:17) and step out of your comfort zone!

How to step out of your comfort zone by faith in God effectively

1) Step out in unity with others

God's desire is for His people to respond to Him as a community. The people of Israel, having received the God given dream to build His house, moved with good intention and action. Everyone was involved (v14) and encouraged one another. When we make God our top priority and step out of our comfort zone by faith in unity with others, we experience the joy of being part of something bigger than ourselves. God's plan is for the whole community to be involved (Eph 4:11-13). We are best able to step out of our comfort zone by faith in God when we do so together!

2) Hear the voice of God through the faithfully preached Word

v12 – The people obeyed because they heard the voice of God through Haggai, the messenger of the Lord (v13). God speaks, and He does so through a chosen human agent. God speaks to us today by his Son; Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-2). God has ordained the preaching of His Word by faithful preachers as the primary means in which His message is to be delivered. When God's faithful messenger preaches the Word, His people will hear and those appointed

for salvation will believe (2 Ti 4:1-2, Ro 10:14-15). Preaching is of a supernatural class of its own! It is God's ordained means of grace for the building up of His house. In hearing the Word, you are called to worship, submit and obey God. So seek to hear faithfully!

3) Fear God above everything else

v12 – The people feared God because they were in reverent awe of Him. They saw Him as a majestic God. When you fear God, your heart is tender, and you receive His Word in obedience (Pr 28:14). You tremble in holy fear with humility and sensitivity (Is 66:2). Grow in Christlikeness and step out of your comfort zone by working out your salvation with fear and trembling (Php 2:12-13)! If you do not fear God, all your other slavish fears will chain you back in your comfort zone. It is a distinctly Christian joy to have less but to experience no lack at all (Ps 34:9-10). Fear God and seek first His kingdom and righteousness!

4) Surrender your spirit to God

w13-14 – The focus is on what God says and does. It is God's presence that stirs up the spirit of every single person to take effective action to build His house. Without God's presence, nothing can be accomplished because unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. To step out of your comfort zone, you need the presence of the Spirit of Christ. You need the Spirit of Immanuel (God with us) to stir up your spirit that you may exercise faith in Him. Surrender your spirit to Him, for it is a surrendered spirit that God stirs up!

Mt 5:3-4 – Recognise your spiritual poverty and surrender your spirit in love and gratitude to God! Step out of your comfort zone by faith and receive superior comfort that comes from Christ Himself!