



Sermon Notes from 1 September

Hearing the Prophetic Call (*Haggai 1:1-11*)

by Pastor GL Wong

The book of Haggai helps us to see how God renews the hearts of His people. As God was not Israel's top priority, Haggai called and challenged them to make Him their top priority. Until and unless God is the top priority in our lives, Agape's dream will not be fulfilled.

In 586BC, Babylonians attacked the southern kingdom of Judah and destroyed God's temple and exiled the Jews. 50 years later, King Cyrus of Persia allowed the Jews to return, and they started to rebuild the temple. However, their efforts were delayed and eventually stopped for 16 years, until Haggai (a Jewish prophet) charged them to delay no longer and start rebuilding. The Israelites repented, obeyed God and finished rebuilding the temple in 4 years. This story is more than just the physical rebuilding of the temple; it is a story about having the right priorities in life.

Examining the life of misplaced priorities:

1) The problem of misplaced priorities

Hag 1:3-4, 9 – Haggai rebukes the people for focusing on their own houses and not on the temple of God; which represented the presence of God. In the New Testament, the Bible refers to us (God's chosen people) as the temple of God (1 Pe 2:5). Haggai's rebuke warns us not to be consumed with our own lives. We should be building up the body of Christ and not neglecting God's presence in our lives. He is calling us to make God our top priority!

The problem of misplaced priorities cannot be understood in relation to self. It can only be understood in relation to God. The ultimate reason any human being has misplaced priorities in life is because he is not making God his top priority. God needs to be top priority because He is worthy! To prioritise anything correctly is to ascribe the right value to it's worth. God alone is most worthy (Ps 145:3, 2 Sa 7:22, Re 4:11):

v2 – God rebukes His people for their excuses. Good intention is not the same as action. A good intention that does not lead to action is usually self-deception. Humbly receive rebukes from God (2 Tim 3:6-17) and worship Him in spirit and truth with your actions!

2) The consequences of misplaced priorities

Those who experience misplaced priorities will experience two lacks:

#1 Lack of satisfaction – They will always find the enjoyment of things less than satisfying (vv5-6). If you put anything other than God as top priority, that thing cannot handle the weight of being ascribed such great value. Only God can. Only when He is your top priority can you truly be satisfied (Php 4:12-13)!

#2 Lack of Flourishing – v6 – There is a clear and decisive connection between the lack of obedience and the lack of flourishing. Obey and flourish (Le 26:3-4, Isa 48:18)! Make God your top priority in life and walk in obedience (Mt 6:31-33)!

3) The hope for all with misplaced priorities

vv7-8 – God had withheld blessings to His people because of their misplaced priorities. It is not humanly possible to make God our top priority by ourselves. Our only hope is through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. For all who trust in Him by faith, He took the curse and punishments for our misplaced priorities and granted us His righteousness—the blessing of His single-minded devotion to God.

There is no obedience apart from our sacred union with Christ. When you make God the top priority in your life, you are able to do so because Christ in you has made God the top priority in your life. God has empowered you to make Him the top priority in life (Ga 2:20), so declare this: "yet not I but through Christ in me!"