

Consider Your Actions

Haggai 2: 10-19

Haggai had received and conveyed two messages from the Lord for the remnant that returned from Babylonian captivity. The first message was a challenge for the people to consider their ways. The second message from the Lord followed about a month later. This message was a challenge for them to consider their Lord. It has been about two months and Haggai received another message to share with the people. This message was in regard to their actions, their way of life, and involved their personal holiness before the Lord. If they were to prosper spiritually and enjoy the goodness of the Lord, the people would have to adapt a holy lifestyle before the Lord.

It has been over 2,500 years since Haggai conveyed this message from the Lord and things have not changed in our day. Our God is as holy and righteous today as He was then. His ways have not changed and they never will. If we are to prosper spiritually and enjoy the good hand of God upon our lives, we too must adapt a holy lifestyle before the Lord.

This is an attitude and behavior that requires resolve and commitment. We must pursue holiness on a daily basis. It isn't impossible to live in a way that pleases the Lord, but it requires effort. It will never be obtained through a complacent, apathetic attitude. We must be willing to crucify the flesh and its sinful desires continually. [2 Cor.4:10-11 – Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.](#) ^[11] [For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.](#) [Gal.6:7-8 – Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.](#) ^[8] [For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.](#) Let's take a few minutes to examine the [charges](#) Haggai conveys as we think on the challenge to: [Consider Your Actions](#).

I. A Word to Reveal (10-13) – God spoke through Haggai to reveal where the people were spiritually and to challenge them in their walk with Him. Notice:

A. The Audience (10-11) – [In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,](#) ^[11] [Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying...](#) The Lord had spoken specifically to the priests regarding the law of God, the written Word. The previous addresses had spoken to the people at large, but this was reserved for the priests, those in positions of authority and influence. If anyone was expected to know the Word of God and follow Him, the priests certainly were. God knew the people would never rise above the spiritual level influenced by the priests.

- Although this was given specifically to the priests in Haggai's day, there is application for all believers. It presents a challenge especially to those in positions of leadership. We are now a

priesthood of believers. Those who know the Word of God are without excuse. God has clearly defined what He expects of the church within His Word. We must heed the Word and obey its direction for our lives.

B. The Analysis (12-13) – *If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.* ^[13] *Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.* Haggai now asked a couple questions that reveal significant truth. The first question asked whether a person or object that was considered holy could make another person or object holy simply by mere contact. Could the holy piece of flesh make an ordinary piece of bread holy simply by touching it? The proper response was: No. This truth has not changed. Righteousness is never transferred by physical contact. We cannot share or convey our righteousness in Christ to another. This requires a personal relationship with Him. It also deals with the inadequacy of rituals and traditions to secure righteousness. This is obtained by grace through faith in Christ alone! Merely attending services at the Temple would not translate to holiness for them and religious activity will not for us either.

- The second question asked whether an unclean object could defile something that was previously clean. The proper response here was: Yes. God had declared certain objects, animals, and people with certain conditions unclean. Anything that was dead would render one unclean if touched. The principle reveals that uncleanness could tarnish and hinder that which was considered clean previously. The priests were being cautioned to guard themselves from that which was considered unclean, lest they be defiled.
- We no longer live under the law, but this principle remains and needs to be taught and practiced. In Christ we are cleansed by His shed blood and considered righteous before God. We are accepted of the Lord based on the sacrifice of Christ. We know that while living in a body of flesh we are prone to sin. Even believers struggle with sin, but this reveals the impact it has on that which is considered holy. When we engage in sinful activity, partaking of that which is unclean before God, sin defiles and hinders our fellowship with Christ. It must be confessed and forsaken!

II. A Word to Rebuke (14-17) – The priests may have thought their deeds were hidden and all was well, but the Lord saw their lives and knew their sin. He rebukes their sinful ways. Consider:

A. Their Defilement (14) – *Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.* Although work had begun again on the Temple, and progress was being made physically, the people were yet defiled spiritually. They were engaged in religious activity but it wasn't pleasing to the Lord because it was being done with unclean hands. God wanted the Temple restored, but He was more concerned with the condition of the people than the rebuilding of the Temple.

- What a challenge that presents to the modern church. We are busier now than any generation before us. Churches schedule more events and activities than ever before, and yet we have no power. We seek to “do church” apart from sanctified lives that depend on the Lord to give the increase. Busyness will never translate into holiness. There is no substitute for the power of God in our midst, and His power will never be enjoyed by those with unclean hands and hearts.

B. Their Delinquency (15) – *And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD.* Haggai offers a reminder of their procrastination in rebuilding the Temple. Their hearts were not set on the things of God. There was no sense of urgency to rebuild the Temple in order to have a place to worship. They were so consumed with their own lives and desires that worship was not given the priority. This attitude was present long before the first stone was laid on the Temple foundation and that attitude remained. They were now working, but their whole desire was not given to the Lord. They were willing to work on the Temple, but as of yet their lives were not being lived according to God’s demands.

- This is a plague that has consumed the modern church. Now, I know we all have to work in order to survive. There are activities and events that require our time and attention. However, I am convinced the majority of church members in America are not genuinely concerned with serving the Lord or living for Him. Most are satisfied with things the way they are. There is no real concern for seeing unbelievers come to Christ in salvation. Church attendance is fine as long as it is convenient. Many are content to attend services, desiring to receive something from the Lord, but are unwilling to serve Him or give of themselves for the good of others. The modern church is as delinquent as those in Haggai’s day!

C. Their Despair (16-17a) – *Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.* ^[17] *I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands;* Things had become desperate for the people. Their crops had not produced their usual abundance. God had sent a blasting sun and wind, rains that caused mildew, and hail that damaged their crops. Their disobedience had resulted in chastisement from the Lord. They were not enjoying the blessing that could have been received.

- Is this same scenario not prevalent in our society today? The massive storms and droughts we now experience are not mere coincidences. The lack of power our churches and individual lives experience is no coincidence either. I am convinced God is seeking to gain our attention. He is seeking to reveal the error of our ways. He is working to draw us back toward Him. My grandfather used to say, “When a man can’t hear, sometimes he has to feel.” There is a lot of truth in that. What will it take for us to return to God and seek Him?

D. Their Defiance (17b) – *yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD*. Through all of their trials and misfortune, they remained defiant. God had sought their attention and yet they refused to seek Him. It was as if nothing would deter them in their search for pleasure and self-indulgence.

- How bad must it get before we realize our need and seek the Lord? He is tenderly pleading with us today to return unto Him with our whole hearts. I am sure the majority here today would agree that God is sovereign over our lives. Most would agree that He is worthy of our devotion and worship. You would also agree that the blessings we enjoy come from His gracious hand. Knowing that, I must ask: why are we unwilling to turn toward God and serve Him with our entire being? Why is He not the priority in the average home? Why is He given a backseat to everything else in life? He is our only hope, and repentant obedience is our only course of action!

III. A Word to Reassure (18-19) – God didn't leave them without hope. He gave Haggai a word to reassure them if they would return unto God and serve Him. Consider:

A. The Precedent (18) – *Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it*. God challenged them to mark this time as a reminder for the future. He had spoken to them regarding their lives. They were making progress on the Temple and the work needed to continue. They must also ensure their lives were lived in light of His holiness. God had given the opportunity for revival and spiritual renewal, but it was up to them to respond.

- Their labor on the Temple would serve in much the same way as the memorial Israel set up when they crossed the Jordan River entering Canaan. God is calling us to return unto Him as well. We need to make a fresh commitment to the Lord today, and set up a stone to remind and challenge us regarding our commitment. God will work in our midst and bless our efforts, but we must meet His conditions and serve Him faithfully!

B. The Promise (19) – *Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you*. There could be no doubt that their disobedience had come at a very high cost. Their crops were scarce. The grapes, figs, pomegranates, and olives had failed to produce. The people were suffering due to their disobedience. This could and would change if they would seek the Lord. He promised renewed blessing if they would live as they knew He expected. God wasn't asking something ridiculous or difficult. He simply wanted them to follow Him.

- I remain convinced that we are living below our means spiritually. We could have so much more than we currently enjoy if we would only seek the Lord and serve Him. He would willingly open the windows of heaven and bless our efforts if we would only meet His conditions. He remains seated on the throne in Heaven. He is still able to save and change lives!

Conclusion: Where do you stand in your relationship with the Lord? Was there a time when you responded to the call of salvation? Do you know Christ as your Savior and Lord? If so, is your life pleasing to Him? Can you honestly say that Jesus is your priority? Are you seeking ways to serve Him? If there are needs, and I am certain we all have them, why not respond to the leading of the Spirit and come to Christ today. He alone can meet your need. If you need salvation, He alone can save. If there is disobedience in your life, He alone can restore!