

## ‘A Call for Right Priorities’ Haggai 1:1-15

**Introduction:** My aim this morning is to be used of God to help you better carry out Matt. 6:33 which says: *‘but seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.’* So, this morning, we’re looking at a call for right priorities.

We know very little about Haggai. He was a man of one \_\_\_\_\_. His point was: get your priorities straight and renew the work of God. What that meant for them was to finish building the temple of God. Haggai had a unique place among the prophets. He was one whom the people actually did what he said! His book, the second shortest book in the OT, is also unique for its clear dating. He gave 4 sermons in 4 months in the year 520 BC, then he disappeared from the scene.

This is addressed to us also, we can’t sit back and say: ‘oh those naughty people, they should’ve built the temple.’ We too are to get our priorities straight, we too are to renew the work of God. How?

**I. By refusing to make excuses.** 1:2 ‘the time, the time, is not right to do that now.’

A. To be fair I must add that sometimes it isn’t the right time to do something.

B. People will blame almost anything. *Yet, the only one who can stop you from doing God’s will for you is you!* You cannot say the economy is stopping me, my church is holding me back, my past is stopping me; is that one’s excuse for not obeying God?

Where is our view of God? The almighty God who keeps billions and billions of stars in their courses, who keeps them from running into each other, is our view of God too small?

**II. By using wisely the talents, skills and resources we do have.**

A. vs. 3,4 Let me first say this: God does give His people good things to enjoy, but He also expects a stewardship of those things.

B. God is saying: get your priorities right. God’s work, God’s way, first. Then in vs. 9 God says: ‘because my house is a ‘horeb’, in this context it meant ‘because my house is in ruins, I will call for a ruin on your fields.’ There’s a word play going on here. \_\_\_\_\_ will come, it will bring ruin. Why? So you’ll learn where your priorities should be.

C. God is speaking to our country, to get its attention. We remember 9/11, then the economic crisis of 2008, then the Covid plague, we could mention many other things, the riots, the transgender craze, the storms, the drought. God is speaking to our nation. God speaks to us through the events of life and nature. If we don’t listen, it might be: 1-2-3-4-5, goodbye nation. Israel in its great pride said: ‘oh, we’re God’s chosen people, it’ll never happen to us’, but it did.

D. Some might say: ‘where is the mercy of God?’ The mercy of God is seen in the fact that we are still here! The Christian never stops casting himself on the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. We say: ‘Lord, don’t give us what our sins deserve, we need mercy.’ I have often wondered if the Monday night news is a reflection of how well God’s people listened to God on Sunday.

Remember, life is not just a series of disconnected, random events.

E. Back in Haggai’s day, the condition of the temple reflected the condition of their hearts. They needed to be revived. Spiritual apathy had set in. They were to get their priorities straight. For them, that meant to finish building the temple of God. For us, it will probably mean something else. Jesus said in Matt. 6:33 that we are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then, all these other things will be added to us.

F. So Haggai says to us today: Ponder these things. Are you experiencing any of these things? Experiencing any shortages? Consider your ways. Not your neighbor’s ways, we’re experts at that.

What’s the point here in Haggai ch. 1?

The point is: no one cheats God without badly cheating themselves.