

CITYWEST CHURCH

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BUILDING THE HOUSE

Haggai 1:1-11

In the second year of the reign of Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came through Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, stating that this is what the Lord of Hosts says:

“These people say, ‘The time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord.’”

Then the word of the Lord came through Haggai the prophet, saying:

“Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?”

Now this is what the Lord of Hosts says:

“Consider carefully your ways.
You have planted much
but harvested little.
You eat but never have enough.
You drink but never have your fill.
You put on clothes but never get warm.
You earn wages to put into a bag pierced through.”

This is what the Lord of Hosts says:

“Consider carefully your ways.
Go up into the hills,
bring down lumber, and build the house,
so that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,
says the Lord.
You expected much,
but behold, it amounted to little.

And what you brought home, I blew away.

Why? declares the Lord of Hosts.

Because My house still lies in ruins,

while each of you is busy

with his own house.

Therefore, on account of you

the heavens have withheld their dew

and the earth has withheld its crops.

I have summoned a drought

on the fields and on the mountains,

on the grain, new wine, and oil,

and on whatever the ground yields,

on man and beast,

and on all the labor of your hands.”

The attitude of the people is highlighted that there is an issue with their hearts and it is in conflict with God. They are busy working to improve their circumstances instead of restoring and building God's House. Consequently, they are suffering from drought and lack of provision through their work and crops also the likely thought is that they would need to work harder and invest more to improve their circumstance. But the conviction here is that they have the order and their priority wrong, it's not them first and God later but the other way around.

Times were incredibly difficult as they were the first Israelites to return post exile and they were returning to a devastated and pillaged nation. They had to rebuild everything including their houses and the temple, but they seemingly have restored their houses. Despite the hardship this attitude and failing to restore the temple is still a problem!

In contrast, God, through Haggai, tells them to “consider carefully their ways” or think about their priorities, and he does it twice.

1) Their circumstance, **their hard work not amounting to much and their lack of satisfaction or adequacy**. That they do these basic things work, eat, drink, save financially, yet are not fulfilled or seemingly do not have enough.

2) **The second is direction to go and build God's House**. To go up and collect wood to bring down and rebuild the destroyed temple. He then explains that **due to this failure to prioritize God above self, their needs are not being meet**. They are putting their circumstance and comfort above God and his dwelling place in the nation and among the people.

“WHAT HOUSE ARE WE BUILDING?” Are we focusing on our own circumstance OR are we focused on His? There are 2 'houses' that need building church,

1. The Individual

1 Corinthians 6: 19-20

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body.

This has been the focus of Citywest for the past couple years. It should cause reflection, challenging of life that God is yet to impact on, but also where do we put the majority of effort, resource, what motivates you, what drives you to do the things you do, for the Kingdom, or for yourself.

2. Body or Bride of Christ – The Church

And the FACT IS GOD'S HOUSE, RIGHT NOW, IS IN RUINS!

Ephesians 2:19-22

Therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. In Him the whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together into a dwelling place for God in His Spirit.

The Church, God's dwelling place is important to Him. The Church isn't a service, it isn't the building. The church – is made of people!! Each one of us upon generations of believers over thousands of years of have gone before sharing the word, being the salt and light leading us to where we are now, BUT with Christ as the cornerstone, our perimeter, guiding stone for all other stones and building blocks. I would like to think that if the we or the church is a body then a church service is a but one function or thing that the body does, maybe breathing, taking in so that the body may work and set about its task and purpose. If it is a building then the church is the frame to provide the framework for believers to be built up.

So how do we do this – **HOSPITALITY**.

Engaging with others outside of the church for their restoration and reconciliation. The temple isn't just us, it is all people Christ wants restored to Him, he loves them all, he created them all and he sees His children and creation separated and broken and wants them to come back and be with Him "all peoples and all nations".

It was estimated that from the world's population in January 2023, that 3.3 billion people are considered reached with the gospel. 4.5 billion people engaged but unreached and a further 277 million people Unengaged and Unreached.

The definitions for those words are these:

Unreached: 4.5 billion, are those that there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelise the group without outside assistance.

Unengaged: 277 million, a people group with no known active church planting underway. An engaged people group is when a church planting strategy is being implemented.

The engaged and reached the 3.3 billion, we are only talking about those who have access to the gospel, not saved so the picture is even more dire.

Australian Census in 2021, 93.1% of people responded with 43.9% recording Christianity as their faith. That is part of the 3.3 billion and of Australia's contribution less than half identify with Christianity.

That is why I say the church is in ruins. Because it was meant to be 100%, not just of the 3.3 billion but all.

2 Peter 3: 8-9 speaking of the day of judgement – says this

Beloved, do not let this one thing escape your notice: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise as some understand slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance.

He wants all people to come to him in repentance and be restored to His body, built into His house. Not one left aside.

The trap that is there that Haggai is talking about is that once I was set and ready, then I would go. But God clearly states through Haggai, the opposite. That we are to build His house as a priority.

We must GO UP to the hills

BRING DOWN the lumber

AND BUILD!

The lumber doesn't come to use, we must go and it can be hard work, seen to be hard, we must bring and then it can be built. GO UP, BRING DOWN AND BUILD! WHY, so

“That He may take pleasure in it and be glorified”

Is that not why we are here, and the reason for the church. So that He may take pleasure in us and be glorified?

But there is something so beautiful in Haggai that must be seen and proclaims His goodness. The temple was His dwelling place so it would be safe to assume that He will come and dwell with them when the temple was completed and finished, Hear this church.....

Haggai 1:12-15

Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, as well as all the remnant of the people, **obeyed** the voice of the Lord their God and the words of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. So the people feared the Lord.

Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, delivered the message of the Lord to the people:

“I am with you,”

declares the Lord.

So the Lord stirred the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, as well as the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and began the work on the house of the Lord of Hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

Before the house was completed or building had commenced, God was with them when they made their choice to obey and follow, and all throughout the process, just like He is today. So church, we made a choice, to follow Him and obey His teachings to go up, bring down and build, to go into all the nations and baptize, and He isn't there at the end ONLY, he is with us now and in the process as we make room for Him in our own lives, but also as we go and proclaim Him to others.

This is an encouragement to consider where your heart is, where your priorities are, and which house you are building. God is with us. When we make room for Him in our lives, He moves in! When the Body moves, His blessing comes and He is glorified.

'Darius' was called and is known as Darius the Great, ruled from 522-486 BCE. He was called the great because he both brought the Persian Empire to its height and ruled it. We often see the Persian or Babylonian empire as the opposition to Israel and God, evil, horrible. And it is true they did oppose, and they destroyed Israel utterly, destroyed God's temple and ruled with ruthless and merciless tyranny. But something incredible happens here, where we would least expect help to come from, which demonstrates nothing is out of God's hands, nothing is exempt from His reign and power and that He wants all to come to Him, whether people proclaim Him as Lord or Not, He wants restoration. We were not part of His body but we are now thanks to the Jesus' sacrifice and the diligent evangelism of others, building the house. He didn't just make us in the church, he made all, the people out there we may consider tyrants, merciless, ruthless, but he loves all and He commands us to do the same the greatest commandment, and out of that love, we need to go and tell people just that.

Get this....

Haggai 1:9-11

You expected much,

but behold, it amounted to little.

And what you brought home, I blew away.

Why? declares the Lord of Hosts.

Because My house still lies in ruins,

while each of you is busy

with his own house.

Therefore, on account of you
the heavens have withheld their dew
and the earth has withheld its crops.
I have summoned a drought
on the fields and on the mountains,
on the **grain, new wine, and oil**,
and on whatever the ground yields,
on **man and beast**,
and on all the labor of your hands.”

What was taken away, grain, new wine and oil, man and beast. Before I read this, remember this is Darius, King of kings and considered a God among men, **GOD WORKS IN ALL BEFORE WE SEE IT FOR HIS GOOD AND HIS GLORY.**

Ezra 6: 1-14

Thus King Darius ordered a search of the archives stored in the treasury of Babylon. And a scroll was found in the fortress of Ecbatana, in the province of Media, with the following written on it:

Memorandum:

In the first year of King Cyrus, he issued a decree concerning the **house of God in Jerusalem:**

Let the house be rebuilt as a place for offering sacrifices, and let its foundations be firmly laid. It is to be sixty cubits high and sixty cubits wide, with three layers of cut stones and one of timbers. **The costs are to be paid from the royal treasury.**

Furthermore, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and carried to Babylon, **must also be returned to the temple in Jerusalem and deposited in the house of God.**

Therefore Darius decreed:

To Tattenai governor of the region west of the Euphrates, Shethar-bozenai, and your associates and officials in the region:

You must stay away from that place! Leave this work on the house of God alone. Let the governor and elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its original site.

I hereby decree what you must do for these elders of the Jews who are rebuilding this house of God:

The cost is to be **paid in full to these men from the royal treasury out of the taxes of the provinces west of the Euphrates, so that the work will not be hindered. Whatever is needed—young bulls, rams, and lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, as well as wheat, salt, wine, and oil**, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem—**must be**

given to them daily without fail. Then they will be able to offer sacrifices of a sweet aroma to the God of heaven and to pray for the lives of the king and his sons.

I also decree that if any man interferes with this directive, a beam is to be torn from his house and raised up, and he is to be impaled on it. And his own house shall be made a pile of rubble for this offense. May God, who has caused His Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to alter this decree or to destroy this house of God in Jerusalem.

I, Darius, have issued the decree. Let it be carried out with diligence.

In response, Tattenai the governor of the region west of the Euphrates, Shethar-bozenai, and their associates diligently carried out what King Darius had decreed. So the Jewish elders **built and prospered** through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah son of Iddo.

God Reigns Church, God is glorified, and He uses the very people who tore it down and desecrated the temple and His people, to build it up again and to provide for it. Hospitality is how the people come to the house so God can build so God can be Glorified, and He provides, that's how it's meant to be.

QUESTIONS:

1. What house are you building, what is your highest priority? Self, God, Other?
2. Are you contributing to building the house of God and fellow believers? Who can you intentionally speak to in your life about Jesus.
3. How can you continue to grow in both areas, your own spirituality and also contributing to church growth? (consider now and long term).