

3 – While We Wait

Haggai 2:18-19 NLT - 18 "Think about this eighteenth day of December, the day when the foundation of the LORD's Temple was laid. Think carefully. 19 I am giving you a promise now while the seed is still in the barn. You have not yet harvested your grain, and your grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, and olive trees have not yet produced their crops. But from this day onward I will bless you."

God promises the fruit and while we wait to see His blessing, we are called to be faithful. In verse 19 attention is directed to the future. They have no crops, in fact they haven't even planted the seed, but God promises blessing. While we wait, we must keep the end in mind.

How are these two statements different?

- *God blesses us because of obedience.*
- *We obey because God blesses us.*

It's easy to lose focus over time. Don't forget that God has a calling unique to who you are and where He has placed you. We may not see the fruit yet, but if we live faithfully day by day, we will.

WRAP-UP

Every day of our lives we have a choice to make. We can choose to live faithfully, no matter what we see happening around us. But we don't do that because we are trying to earn God's blessing. God is interested in our hearts not our works. However, if we allow Him to change our heart, then we will desire to bless and obey the God who loves us and gives us a courageous calling.

MEMORY VERSE.

Haggai 2:19 NLT - 19 I am giving you a promise now while the seed is still in the barn. You have not yet harvested your grain, and your grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, and olive trees have not yet produced their crops. But from this day onward I will bless you."

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life _____

Challenge. Ask God to show you the Holy Task, or Kingdom Work He is calling you to.

“Courage to Be Faithful”

Haggai 3

INTRODUCTION

Life's journey takes us through peaks and valleys, but most of it happens in between. The prophet Haggai addresses the everyday lives of the remnant who returned to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. At the beginning of His book, Haggai states the accusation- the people were focused on their own houses while God's temple lay in ruins. They had their priorities backwards. Now months later he is asking for a heart check- have you repented and reordered your priorities or are you just doing the work outwardly without really changing on the inside? Because it takes a day-by-day commitment to be faithful to God in all that we do.

Ice Breaker

What has been your worst experience dealing with something that was contaminated?

Key Passage

Haggai 2:14 NLT - 14 Then Haggai responded, "That is how it is with this people and this nation, says the LORD. Everything they do and everything they offer is defiled by their sin."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Sin is contagious, Holiness isn't

Haggai 2:12 NLT - 12 'If one of you is carrying some meat from a holy sacrifice in his robes and his robe happens to brush against some bread or stew, wine or olive oil, or any other kind of food, will it also become holy?'" The priests replied, "No."

Haggai wanted to make a point: You can't do Kingdom work and not be holy. Sin will rob you of your courageous calling. He pointed them back to the Levitical law. They knew a thing is holy when it is set apart for God's

purposes. The Hebrew word for holy – *kodesh*, doesn't mean something that is perfect or pious, it means it's uniquely set apart for God's intended purpose. You can't mix something that is set apart for God with something that's sinful and still call it "set apart" because it is mixed and therefore contaminated.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 NLT - 9 "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? 10 But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve."

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NLT - 26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

We all battle with our "human tendency" to put ourselves on the throne where God belongs. We mix our motives with God's calling. What does Ezekiel reveal as a solution to our problem? What will it take for us to follow God's direction rather than our own?

Haggai 2:13-14 NLT - 13 Then Haggai asked, "If someone becomes ceremonially unclean by touching a dead person and then touches any of these foods, will the food be defiled?" And the priests answered, "Yes." 14 Then Haggai responded, "That is how it is with this people and this nation, says the LORD. Everything they do and everything they offer is defiled by their sin."

The Israelites didn't become holy because they returned to Jerusalem, or even because they did work on the temple. We might be tempted to think that doing good works, or serving God is what He wants from us. But God wants an undivided heart and a right relationship. That begins with repentance.

Haggai 2:15-17 NLT - 15 Look at what was happening to you before you began to lay the foundation of the LORD's Temple. 16 When you hoped for a twenty-bushel crop, you harvested only ten. When you expected to draw fifty gallons from the winepress, you found only twenty. 17 I sent blight and mildew and hail to destroy everything you worked so hard to produce. Even so, you refused to return to me, says the LORD.

God was trying to get their attention. The reason things weren't going well is revealed in verse 17. What should their response have been to the disappointing results of their efforts? It is tempting to think we must do more or try harder when our efforts fall short. What have you been disappointed in recently? Ask God if He is using that to get your attention and return your focus to the one who needs to be first place in your life.

2. Forewarned by God

Many years earlier, as the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, God had told Moses what was going to happen. In Deuteronomy 30 He said they would go into exile, but they would return, and then if they obeyed with all their heart and soul, their fortunes would be restored.

Deuteronomy 30:6, 8-9 NLT - 6 "The LORD your God will change your heart and the hearts of all your descendants, so that you will love him with all your heart and soul and so you may live! ... 8 Then you will again obey the LORD and keep all his commands that I am giving you today. 9 "The LORD your God will then make you successful in everything you do. He will give you many children and numerous livestock, and he will cause your fields to produce abundant harvests, for the LORD will again delight in being good to you as he was to your ancestors."

As you read the above passage what do you notice about the order in which things happen? What happens before the people obey and keep God's commands? What does this tell us about our own ability to be faithfully obedient?

Deuteronomy 30:17-19 NLT - 17 "But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, 18 then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy. 19 "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!"

In verses 17 and 18 God issued a stern warning and a choice. What is it that would destroy them? What are some things that can draw our hearts away from God? What are the "gods" we are drawn away to serve and worship?