

Haggai 2:10-19 “Serving Rightly”

INTRO:

- (1st – rebuke: Consider God’s house/ 2nd Encouragement: Presence of God with you to build/ 3rd Encouragement: Temple to come...work of God though now little would be great & glorious) 4th Rebuke: Serving God rightly, blessings that flow. (3 mo. Since work has begun, Chisleb (Nov./Dec.)

Col.3:23 “And whatever you do, do it heartily (“from the soul”), as to the Lord and not to men.”

- not productivity, but integrity...part of me is in what I do.

- We can work heartily for the Lord; or heartless for the Lord. We can do a religious duty out of obligation & commitment to a moral law; or we can serve Him out of love.

DANGER: no one knows...but God does! (Jesus – Pharisees)

I. CHALLENGING THE PRIESTS IN THEIR DUTIES: (10-14)

A. MATTER OF LEGAL PRACTICES (10-13)

- (11) “*Lord of hosts*” (12 verses) = “*mass/ army*” –military term– expresses great power, authority, control ,all are under His leadership. *King directing His operations, advancing His kingdom, rebuilding His people.

- (11) Haggai (though a prophet) is told to “ask the priests”...*why?*

1) **ROLE:** it was the responsibilities of the people to ask, but the role of the priest to teach God’s ways. (understand, answer q’s, resolve doubts, clarify issues).

Lev. 10:10-11(Levites) “*that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.*”

Mal. 2:7 “*For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And people should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*”

- *Haggai knew his role/place: give particular duties (1:8-9), but priest had role in God’s work too... directed by the “head” (Jesus), he works in harmony with the rest of the body.*

2) **REALIZATION:** out of their own mouths they would realize their failures.

Interaction of discovery: (Way of God: Adam – where are you?.../Cain – why has your countenance fallen?... /Peter – “do you love Me?”)

(12-13) 2 questions regarding holy living:

1) (12) (worship) holy meat –sacrificial meat carried from altar carried to holy eating place.

Lev. 6:25-26 “*Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed, the sin offering shall be killed before the LORD. It is most holy. The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of meeting.*”

Lev. 7:5-6 *and the priest shall burn them on the altar as an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a trespass offering. Every male among the priests may eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place. It is most holy.*

- altar made that meat holy (set apart)... priest would take the meat in fold of garment and carry it to a holy eating place. Garment touches common items along the way – doesn’t transfer holiness.

2) (13) (walk) legal defilement: - touching a dead person.

- Numbers 19 – legally defiled for 7 days, removed by purification 2x (3rd/7th days) with water and ashes of red heifer cow.

- Question: If holiness doesn’t transfer out, then what about unholiness? Does uncleanness transfer?

Unclean man touching the same things (v. 12) = unclean.

*** POINT: Unholiness (worship/ walk) spreads further & faster than holiness. Paths to sin - manyfold; paths to holiness – one (God’s way).

B. MOTIVE OF THE HEART (14)

-Israel had a problem of heart: “*So is this nation and people*”...

- (religiously – defiled) Priest did a holy act (altar erected, sacrifices) but where was the heart = disobedient in heart (neglecting God’s house) – they thought their sacrifice on the altar excused them from building the house...(religious duty met)

- Holy work didn’t transfer to heart... ritual devotion/ external actions = polluted in God’s eyes. God wants our hearts, before our hands!

- God is always concerned with our hearts in our service to him...*why?*

***Holy actions can be done by unholy hearts - hypocrisy (God knows though man doesn’t)

Prov. 15:8 *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.*

Prov. 21:27 *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; How much more when he brings it with wicked intent!*

- WARNING: hypocrisy is a leaven among God’s people, slowly infecting, invading, cancer. (Jesus – Mat. 16:6 beware of the leaven of the Pharisees...doctrine...action w/o heart)

- The impure hearts made all religious actions impure to God...”dead” works! Uncleanness being transferred around

***Without a changed heart our righteousness = filthy rags (unclean)... no amount of religious works, promises, or efforts can change the heart, only Jesus giving a new heart!

***To serve God rightly: 1) *How does He want me to serve?* (truth, according to His Word, not own way)
2) *Does He have my heart first?* 3) *Can I serve Him now & trust Him with the future?*

II. CONSIDERING THE PROMISED BLESSING: (15-19)

- when the heart is right then you benefit the devotion, your service to Him is right on track: (curse gone, chastening done, blessing restored!)

A. PRESENT SUFFERING (15-17)

- “consider” = “lay it to heart” (before any stone is laid in place (offsite work started) ...

remember – lack, waste, decay from disobedience! Failed expectations (16)...Remember His chastening hand (17).

Mal. 2:1-2 *"And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not hear, And if you will not take it to heart, To give glory to My name," Says the LORD of hosts, "I will send a curse upon you, And I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, Because you do not take it to heart.*

***It is always good when God reminds us of our failures to allow them to push us forward in righteousness.

(17)... *"yet you did not turn to Me."*

- God can pull the rug out, allow the hardships, chasten the child...yet they don’t turn! Blinded by own sin, hard hearted, they don’t turn and repent!

B. PROMISED BLESSING (18-19)

- consider again...

- (19) season – winter crops: what would come? Seed in barn, no fruits now...nothing appears to promise a good harvest

***though they could not see His blessing outwardly, God’s promise was standing true. “Don’t let the past discourage you from serving Me today, You have a future and a hope in ME!”

They would have their losses recovered & thrive.

Zech. 8:11-12 *But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,' says the LORD of hosts. For the seed shall be prosperous, The vine shall give its fruit, The ground shall give her increase, And the heavens shall give their dew-- I will cause the remnant of this people To possess all these.*

"this day" ...not next week, next harvest time you’ll see, but now!

**God is not obligated to bless the life that refuses to deal with sin...but when we do, we find the flood of grace and promised blessings restored!*