
Sermon Notes

February 14, 2016

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

What Really Matters?

Haggai 1:1-11

¹ In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest: ² "Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the LORD."

³ Then the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, ⁴ "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?"

⁵ Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. ⁶ You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

⁷ "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. ⁸ Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD. ⁹ You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house.

¹⁰ Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. ¹¹ And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors."

A Six Word Summary

- ❖ If you had to summarize your life in six words, what would they be?
 - book: *Not Quite What I Was Planning*
 - what matters most to you?
- ❖ As we look at the way Christ is building our lives and fitting us together as His church, what matters most to us?
 - individually?
 - collectively?
- ❖ What are our priorities?

Haggai

- ❖ Haggai delivers a message about misdirected priorities
- ❖ Along with Zechariah and Malachi, Haggai is one of the last 3 prophets through whom God speaks in the OT
- ❖ Haggai speaks for God during a very difficult time in Israel's history
 - the time of the restoration: the period during which a remnant of Israel's population returned to her homeland following 70 years in Babylonian captivity
 - the character of the people who make up this believing remnant is quite different from that of the people who were hauled away into captivity several generations earlier

- ❖ Though the remnant want to do the right thing(s), they are slack to follow through on their good intentions
 - a 16 year hiatus!
 - through Haggai, God says to us: "What's the condition of My church?"

The Word of the LORD

- ❖ *The word of the LORD* or *Thus says the LORD* (7 times in the first 9 verses!!)
 - contrasted against: *these people say*
 - are we listening to ourselves or listening to the Lord?
- ❖ *Consider your ways* (vv. 5 & 7)
 - the people had begun to rationalize their failure
 - being defensive and making excuses is often a sign of underlying guilt
- ❖ The people are
 - saying "It's not the right time to be doing this."
 - not saying "No", but they are saying, "Not yet!"
 - it is easy for us to do the same thing
- ❖ God says:
 - "You have time for everything else. What about my work?"
 - "Stop putting your own comfort and your own concerns at the top of your priority list!"

Priorities

- ❖ Israel's upside down, misaligned priorities were
 - tragic
 - a form of idolatry
- ❖ Jesus calls us to be part of **His** great building project
 - Jesus' building project is about uniting His people into a living temple, a shared shrine for His Spirit
 - 1 Corinthians 3:16, *you* is plural!
- ❖ Misplaced priorities cost more than right priorities (1:6, 9-11)
 - an exercise in futility
 - always unsatisfied, always left feeling empty
- ❖ The corrective to all this is to get busy with the Lord's work. Put first things first. Decide what really matters & stick to it!

Personal Application

1. What six words would you use to summarize your life thus far?
2. What stands out as a monument of neglect in your life?
3. What are you allowing to take priority in your life?
4. What do you need to do to reorder your life around the things that matter most?