

Hello again everyone, happy Veterans Day! God bless America!

Our hats are off to our veterans with a HUGE Thank you!!! You are APPRECIATED!!!

Only two people have ever died for you, the American Soldier and Jesus Christ; both so that we can live free.

Free from fear and free from worry. One helps us live free in this life, the other enables us to live free in all eternity!

THANK YOU Jesus! Thank you Vets! Praise be to God!

Pastor Don

“Setting Priorities” Haggai 1:12-2:9 Nov.10, 2013

Question: Dusk is fast approaching as you arrive at your secluded country cabin for a week in the woods. As you enter the room, you can see on the table a big new box of matches, a candle, & a lantern. In each corner, there is a candelabrum. There is a fire place and a chandelier. What do you light first? Answer: the match!

A married couple in Atlanta always dreamed of going to a play in New York City. They picked a good one, bought their tickets several months in advance as the show was sold out far ahead. Finally the time for their trip arrived. They flew to New York, checked into their hotel, went to dinner and then arrived early at the theater so they would not miss anything. The place rapidly filled with people. They had great seats; they were well pleased. The man noticed that every seat in the house was filled except for the one next to him. He thought that was odd. At intermission, he asked the lady sitting on the other side of the seat if she knew why this seat was empty seeing as how hard the tickets were to come by. She said it was her husband's seat. They too had planed well a head to see this show, but he died. I'm sorry to hear that replied the man. He asked her if she couldn't find anyone else who wanted to come to the show. No, the widow replied, they are all at the funeral home.

A factory owner said the hardest thing to get his workers to do is prioritize. We all prioritize things each day whether we realize it or no. Were does God rate on our list of priorities?

A certain writer has 3 pictures on his desk. On the left is a picture of him with his parents as a baby. On the right is a picture of his grandparent's grave and head stone. In the middle is a picture of his wife and children. He explains them this way; we are all born and we will all die. It is what we do in the middle that counts. Is having quality family time one of our priorities?

Occasionally, our circumstances cause our priorities to change. A lady on the Titanic was about to get into a life boat when she asked if she could return to her cabin to get something she had forgotten. They said you have 5 minutes, hurry or we will leave you. She ran to her room. Her path took her through the casino. Money was scattered everywhere. She went passed her jewelry box to the fruit basket and took the 3 oranges that were there. This lady choose oranges over diamonds. Facing uncertainty, possibly death, changes our prospective and our priorities. Priceless things like jewelry become worthless and worthless things become priceless.

What are our priorities this morning? Do we have Godly priorities? Is God our #1 priority?
(Pray)

The name Haggai means festival. Haggai is considered a minor prophet and his book is the second shortest book in the Old Testament. It only has 38 verses. Obadiah is the shortest book in the Old Testament with only 21 verses.

We are not told too much about Haggai, God's prophet to the people of Judah after their release from Babylonian captivity. We are not told his age, his occupation, his tribe or his father's name. We know that he is mentioned twice by Ezra. Both Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 mention Haggai and the prophet Zechariah. We know that Haggai's message came in 520 B.C. We know his message was simple; rebuild the Temple. The Temple was destroyed in 586B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians invaded. They looted the city, destroyed the temple, and carried most of the people off to Babylon. In 538 B.C., the Jews began to be released from Babylonian captivity. They returned to Jerusalem with the idea of rebuilding the temple.

The people started to rebuild the temple in 536B.C. They rebuilt the alter on its original site and laid a fountain but that was all they did. They ran into opposition and by the time that was over came, they had become apathetic. By then they had gotten busy doing other things, like building their own houses. They lost sight of their first priority. They had become too busy for God. Are we too busy for God? If we r 2 busy for God, we r 2 busy!

When one finds oneself being too busy, one needs to set priorities. Haggai is about setting priorities and sticking to them. Haggai knew what was important and what needed to be done first. He challenged the Israelites to build God's house, the temple, and start whole hearted worship once again in Jerusalem.

You see, in order to justify their failure to give God's work priority, they procrastinated. They told themselves that the time was not right to build God's house. Haggai told them different. He tells them in Haggai 1:2 "Thus says the Lord of hosts, these people say the time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." God continues in verse 4 saying "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses and this temple to lie in ruin?" The people were spending their time, money and efforts making their homes elegant and ignoring the rebuilding of the temple. Since the principle building material in Jerusalem was stone, wood paneling made one's home very elegant and expensive. God was angry with his people for neglecting him and his house. They would have known that if they had paid attention. Haggai 1:5-6 "Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! ⁶"You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages *to put* into a bag with holes." God is asking the people to examine their lives, their habits, their attitudes, and their activities. When it appears that God is not blessing us, we need to pause and ask ourselves why. Are we guilty of a sin, like these people were? They were in direct disobedience to God's command to go and rebuild his temple.

But, we must remember that the lack of blessings or an abundance of problems does not necessarily mean that we are guilty of sin. Remember Job's friends; they accused him of being guilty before God but he was not. God had a great plan in motion in Job's life.

The blessings came at the appropriate time. We need to consider our ways, especially our priorities. Is God 1st in our lives? Does His work take precedence over our own?

Do we obey what God tells us to do? Is doing His will our number 1 priority?

In verse 8 God tells them to go into the mountains and get wood to build the temple. Building the temple would bring glory to God. He tells them in vs. 9 why He was withholding His blessing; ⁹"You looked for much, but indeed *it came to* little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts; "Because of My house that *is in* ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house". God tells them that they all had houses to go to while His was still in ruins. By worrying about their personal needs, these people were ignoring their spiritual concerns. That tends to lead to problems. Do we put our spiritual concerns before our physical needs?

Jesus tells us we should. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus says “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” If we are living a faithful life to God, this will be our slogan and it will be reflected in our lifestyle.

Are we living a life of faith, totally dependent upon God? Is God our number 1 priority? What does our lifestyle show that our #1 priority is?

We can't live a life of faith in our own strength. That is why God gives us his spirit. God is with us always. He reminds us of this in vs. 13 “*I am* with you, says the Lord.” It is a great comfort to know that God is with us. These people took great comfort in these words. They faced adversity from without and famine from within, but if God is for us, who can be against us? Paul tells us we can do all things thru Christ Jesus. If God is with us, we have nothing to fear. He is with us; this should be a great comfort to us. It was to these people. Stirred by the spirit, they began working on the Temple. They finished it in 516 B.C.

Zerubbabel is an important figure in this story. He is the governor of Judah. Since they were technically under the control of Persia, they could not have their own king. As governor, Zerubbabel brought the throne back in to the house of David, as he was a descendent of David. After being interrupted by the exile, the Messianic line was re-instated from David to Jesus. Both Mary and Joseph can trace their genealogy back to Zerubbabel and then to David.

All society is made up of 3 parts: the government, the religion and the common person.

Here we have all 3 parts of society listening to and obeying God's message. Zerubbabel, representing the government, did not think himself above God. Joshua, as the high priest, represents the religious part of society. His job was to teach people about God, but he did not think he was too good to listen and learn as well. And finally society itself, the remnant of the people, the common person. They all listened, believed and obeyed.

God stirred up their spirits and they enthusiastically went to work building the temple. God enables us by stirring our spirit. What God calls us to do; he will equip us to do. Some times all that is necessary is motivation. What is God calling us to do? Can we feel that stirring of our spirit? Is answering this call one of our priorities?

God is a great encourager; do we obey him and carry out his tasks? As a form of motivation, Haggai asks if any remember Solomon's temple. It had been destroyed 66 years before, so only some senior citizens would remember what it actually looked like.

They saw it with their own eyes. It was one of the wonders of the world. The people might have been discouraged remembering the Glory of the former temple and comparing it to this one that they were building. But Haggai says be strong in the LORD. He is with us. That is the same thing God told Moses. God had brought His people back from Babylonian exile just like He led

them out of Egyptian slavery. He promised to be with them just like He has promised to be with us today. Hebrews 13:5 “He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” This is quoting Duet. 31:6 “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” Do we know that God is always with us? Do we feel his presence? Are we confident that He is always with us?

It may not have looked like it to them but the glory of this new temple they were building would out shine the previous one. How is that possible? The answer is simple; this temple that they are building will hold Jesus Himself! Jesus was there many times; as a baby, as a boy and as a man. And one day he is coming again to reign for 1000 years. Then the temple will really know glory! Haggai prophecies of the millennium. In a little while he says. No one knows when Jesus will return. It will happen in God’s perfect timing. Then he says all the nations of the world will come looking for Jesus. They will bring silver and gold, which God already owns. Everything belongs to God, we are just his stewards. Are we doing a good job for him?

Peace will be found when Jesus rules. Peace is more than just the absence of war; it is abundant life, it is everything being as it ought to be. True Peace is only attainable thru Jesus Christ. He is the Prince of peace. He gives us peace with God, each other & ourself.

To Haggai and the Jews, the temple represented God’s dwelling place; His presence with them. This rebuilding of the temple invited His presence back again.

This temple is also a picture of the church. Not the building, buildings and structures are not the church; they are places of worship. People are the church. We are the church. We are the temple. Paul says in 1 Cor. 6:19 “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” 1Cor. 3:17 “If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy which temple you are.” God’s spirit dwells in his temple. God spirit dwells in Christians; therefore, Christians are the living temple of God! Is being a living temple for God one of our priorities?

Another possible reason the people of Haggai’s day procrastinated about building the temple was that they felt they could never match the glory of the old temple. Having a great past can be a stumbling block to building for the future. We cannot live in the past; we must live in the present and plan for the future. We like the past because we know what happened; the future is scary because we don’t know what it holds; but we do know who holds it. The same one who held the past. If God gave us success in the past, and He never changes, it stands to reason that He will give us success in the future. Prices Creek is 179 years old. We have a great past; we have a great future because we are still trusting the same God. Is pleasing God still our number 1 priority? Christians need to

prioritize their lives because there are so many things seeking our attention. We exist to glorify God. Is this our first priority? 2^{ndly} we were put here to love others. We serve God by helping

those in need around us. This is the Brethren motto, for the glory of God and our neighbors good! So, what are our priorities? Do our priorities glorify God? Do they obey His will for our lives? Do they help others? Amen! Let's pray.