

LIVE HONORABLE LIVES Sunday School- June 15, 2014

Unifying Topic: LIVE PURE LIVES

Lesson Text

I. Sin Contaminates (Haggai 2:10-14)

II. God Promises To Bless The People (Haggai 2:15-19)

The Main Thought: Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you (Haggai 2:19, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Almost everyone wants to belong to something that will make a difference in the world. What or who could help Christians feel that sense of belonging? God rewards and blesses the community of believers that lives in righteousness and fear of God.

Lesson Aim: To study Haggai's encouraging message above the benefits of faithful living.

Life Aim: To live a holy life committed to God's communal purpose and to be dedicated to working together in completing God's work.

2:10 In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying.

2:11 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; ask now the priests concerning the law, saying.

2:12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

2:13 Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

2:14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So it this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the lord; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.

2:15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord:

2:16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.

2:17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord.

2:18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it.

2:19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.

HISTORY:

After 15 or 16 years of delay, the people finally began to obey and began building the Temple. God says, yet once, referring to when He shook the mountain on Mt Sinai. If God did it once, He can do it again. In a little while, it's prophesized that He will shake the heavens, earth, sea, dry land, and the nations that will lead to the Deliverer to come. God will fill the coming temple; the Millennial Temple with His Spirit. Silver and gold will be no problem for He owns it all. And they will see that the latter temple will far surpass the grandeur of the former temple of Solomon. The Lord of hosts will give peace in that latter temple. The new temple was only a shadow of the greater things that were to come. (2:6-9). ¹They expected their problems to disappear. Three months passed and nothing had changed. They still had all their old problems and the temple was a long way from being finished. This shall be encouragement for the people.

LESSON:

Haggai 2:10-14 Sin Contaminates

2:10 In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying. The four and twentieth day... the ninth month... the second year... This is the third message of Haggai two months after the second one, delivered in December 18th. Haggai's message sought to demonstrate that while their disobedience caused God's blessings to be withheld; delayed, their obedience would cause His blessings to be released. Zechariah began his prophetic ministry one month earlier (Zech. 1:1).

2:11 Thus saith the Lord of hosts; ask now the priests concerning the law, saying. Now, we see that this message is directed to the priests who give the rulings of the Law. They are the ones that are well versed on the Law. It was the function of the priests to teach and interpret the Law; and the prophet is going to give them an illustration that will show them the situation they are in. They are hit with a series of questions.

¹ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1997-06-01-The-Blessings-of-Obedience/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

2:12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. This verse sounds rather strange to our ears, but to the Jews having hundreds of laws governing all aspects of lives, made perfect sense. Well another interpretation of this is: "*If a garment containing a piece of consecrated meat touches food, does the garment make the food holy?*" This law had to do with understanding what was holy and what was not. The holy meat is meat dedicated for sacrifice (Jer.11:15). When the unholy touches holy, the holy object becomes defiled. And Haggai asks the question whether holiness may be transferred from that second consecrated object (the skirt) to a third (bread, wine, oil, or any other meat). The priests answer with no! It was assumed that holiness can be transferred from a consecrated object to a person or other object (Lev.6:27). They could not transport holiness in such a simple manner, even though the garment is holy (set apart) because of the sanctified meat. This holiness can't be imparted to other objects by the garment. So, holiness will not rub off on others, but contamination will.

2:13 Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. While holiness may not be attained through indirect contact, one defiled by contact with a dead body pollutes all that he contacts. A healthy person cannot communicate his health to a dying person, but a dying person can communicate his disease to a healthy one. The Mosaic system clearly taught that ceremonial cleanness was not transferrable from one person or thing to another, but ceremonial uncleanness was. To understand this, think about water. If you put dirty water into clean water, it will all be dirty. If you put clean water into dirty water, it will still all be dirty. Haggai imposed this second question: Could a person touch another person and make him unclean? The answer was obviously yes. Haggai had made his point: you can transmit defilement from one thing or person to another, but you can't transmit sanctity.

2:14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the lord; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean. Haggai lets the priest know this is referring to the people, the nation, and the work of their hands. The people still didn't deserve to be called "*My people*", but they are still referred to as, "*this people*" again (1:2). *The work of their hands:* The people working on the Temple couldn't impart any holiness to it, but they could defile it by their sins. *Whatever they offered was unclean.* Even during their religious observances and sacrificial offerings, they were not pleasing to God. God couldn't bless the people, the nation, or the work of their hands, or their offerings the way He wanted to, because they were unclean. ²God wanted more than a temple built. He wanted the hearts of the people to be fully devoted to Him. God didn't want a big house filled with empty hearts. He didn't want animal sacrifice unless it was accompanied by a living sacrifice of the people. Their hearts clearly were not centered on Him. Their sinful ways had contaminated their consecrated offerings to God. It is always important that we keep ourselves clean before the Lord. All those questions now should have moved upon them to repent. Getting right with God involves reflection and repentance.

Haggai 2:15-19 God Promises To Bless The People

2:15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord:—

Haggai was praying, imploring them to consider (the four and twentieth day of the ninth month); reflect carefully; think ahead from this day onward of what would come to pass; before a stone was laid upon another stone in the temple. Why? Because when you look backward in the next verse, they could consider to look forward this four and twentieth day of the ninth month for things were about to change.

2:16 Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. Since those days—the days they were disobedient. ³The people needed to give careful consideration. They needed to remember that before they began to obey the Lord by rebuilding the temple (1:12), they had been disobedient to the Mosaic Covenant. They were going broke economically and spiritually. In those days the farmer found less than expected. When he came to a heap of grain expecting to find twenty measures, he found only ten. When he went to the pressfat (wine or oil press or vat) expecting to get fifty measures of wine or oil, he found that there were only twenty. There was no way that he could get ahead. Their entire nation was in an economic decline—all because they had disobeyed God.

2:17 I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord. The reason this happened was because Jehovah was sending judgment upon them in the form of all kinds of catastrophes—blasting wind, mildew, and hail. Though these catastrophes took their toll on the economy, they did not achieve their

² <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1997-06-01-The-Blessings-of-Obedience/>

³ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/haggai.pdf>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

purpose of causing the people to repent and obey Jehovah. Instead of building the house of Jehovah, for which He had brought them back to the Land for, they turned not to God's house, but to their own houses. Their past disobedience rendered every spiritual exercise vain, but they still didn't return to the Lord. That's all God wanted. He wanted His people to turn to Him with a whole heart and put Him in the center of life. As in Matthew 6:33, they were to put God's interests first; seek His plan. God is not out to get us, but to help us!

2:18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it. This is the third time Haggai admonishes them to consider the day (v.15; v.18-twice). As God speaks through Haggai, He says consider now this day; consider from this day forward; from the day as it is now, and even going back to when the foundation of the Lord's Temple was laid. Why? Even though they had hardships; suffered shortages of staples, the Lord revealed that He would now "bless" them, beginning that "very day," the twenty-fourth of the ninth month. He didn't want them looking backward anymore; yes, punishment had to run its course, and the past is the past, but now look forward to God's promises! –His blessings—the day this prophecy is being given! Look at it like this: Abundant blessings begin the moment you obey the Lord!

2:19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you. ⁴All gardeners understand this principle. You don't plant today and harvest tomorrow. It takes a few weeks for the plant to poke it way through the soil and even more weeks and months for the fruit to ripen for harvest. Historically it took the Jews four years to finish rebuilding the temple. No doubt they faced continued opposition and discouragement. But by starting to rebuild they were planting fresh seed in the ground. It hadn't come up yet, but God is saying, *"Don't worry. You're going to reap an abundant harvest eventually. Just be faithful and I promise the harvest will come in."* Even before it's seen, it's already done by God!

SUMMARY:

⁵Haggai has asked several rhetorical questions; but now the Lord directs him to the priests with a specific legal question (vv.10-11). Whenever anyone had a question pertaining to the Mosaic law, a priest was the one to consult (Duet.33:8-10). The question posed by Haggai concerns the transmission of holiness (v.12) and of uncleanness (v. 13). Is it possible for the garment with sacrificial meat wrapped in it, and touches other food, will the garment communicate its *holiness* to other food (vv.10-12)? The priests reply based on Leviticus 6:27 teaches that if anyone touches holy meat directly he will become *holy*, but nowhere does Scripture "say that indirect contact will sanctify a man. The garment in which meat was wrapped became *holy*, but could not be passed to a third object. Haggai ⁶makes it clear that *holiness* will not rub off on others but contamination will, and the people, the nation, the work of their hands and even their offerings were unclean (v.14).

The harvest did not fulfill expectations. They came up short. The Lord struck with blasting, mildew, and hail in all the works of their hands, and whatever they offered but they did not turn to the Lord. And Haggai wants them to consider one more thing, the date of this prophecy. Even though they hadn't seen it, they were to give careful thought from the day onward that the Lord would surely bless them (vv.15-19).

APPLICATION:

God will always get us back in line when we don't come on our own. If we plan to do anything for God or give anything as an offering to Him, it will have to be done with a pure attitude. We want to live without the punishment that comes from disobedience, but rather, we want to live with His favorable purpose. Even good works done for God can be tainted by sinful attitudes. The only remedy is God's cleansing. A pure and honorable life is followed with abundant blessings from God.

⁴ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1997-06-01-The-Blessings-of-Obedience/>

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