



Series: Disrupted But (Part 3)

Speaker: Rhordan Wicks

INTRODUCTION

"I may be sitting down on the outside, but I am standing up on the inside," responded the defiant little girl after her mother's repeated threats to get her to sit down on the high-chair. How often have we responded to God this way? How often have we been half-hearted in our compliance with God's commandments?

In Haggai 2:10-14, the prophet received a third message from God concerning the people of Judah, who did not experience any improvement in their circumstances in the three months since they resumed work on the temple. Notice the slight difference between his first and third prophecies. The first told us to seek God's kingdom, not to work on our own priorities. The third shows us that not only must we work for God's kingdom, but that we are to do so from pure hearts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In our day to day, it is easy to just go through the motions (it means to do something in a mechanical, unreflective manner, especially as a matter of routine and without commitment or enthusiasm; half-hearted), checking off our lists of mundane tasks along the way. Do you feel like you are just going through the motions with some routine tasks that you do? Can you identify these tasks?

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2. Read Haggai 2:10-14 (c.f. Numbers 19:11-13, 22 and Leviticus 5:2-3)

Haggai questioned the priests about the transmission of both holiness and impurity. The priests

answered correctly that according to the Law of Moses, holiness is not contagious, but impurity is. For example, a sick child cannot catch health from contact with a healthy child, but the healthy child can become sick. The principle of transmission really only works one way most of the time.

(a) What was God saying about the people? What had defiled the nation? As a result of the defilement, their work was defiled (verse 14b) and worship defiled (verse 14c). Because the work of God was neglected, every other work of the people was defiled. Even the sacrifices placed on the altar were defiled.

(b) In what ways are we like them? What does it mean to live in a way that is not defiled? (c.f. Matthew 6:1, Matthew 15:1-16, Psalm 24:3-4)

3. Read Haggai 2:15-19 (c.f. Haggai 1:3-11)

Prior to the resumption of the temple work, the situation of the remnant was desperate. During that time one would come to a heap of sheaves which should have yielded twenty measures of grain. That heap when it was threshed, however, only yielded about half what would normally be expected. When anyone went to a press to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty in respect to the vat. The vintage was as disappointing as the harvest. The disappointing harvests were not an accident of nature but an act of divine intervention (verse 2:17).

(a) What was the people's response to God's judgement (refer Haggai 2:17b)? What does this show you about the hearts of the people?

What is shalom? Why do you think God stressed this gift, instead of something else?

(b) Pay attention to verse 19: "From this day on I will bless you." What conditions are attached to this blessing? What does this tell us about who God is?

(c) How can we respond now to our knowledge of who God has shown Himself to be in Haggai? the Levitical sacrifices in which the offerer receives back some of the meal to eat. Sin disrupts shalom. When anything heals the rupture and closes the gap between us and God, there should be a celebration, a joyful meal in God's presence.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

We often focus on our outward activities but God looks at our hearts. Motives are important to God. Our private thought life matters to Him. Do we truly seek Him every day, or is our Christianity just a mask and our worship half-hearted? Do we take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5)?

Three times God repeats the same word or phrase in Haggai 2 that He repeated in Haggai 1, "*consider*" or "*set your heart*" or "*give careful thought*" (verses 15 and 18). Would you heed the

warning of Haggai? Place God at the centre of your life. God will bless you.

MEMORY VERSE

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place?

The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,

who does not trust in an idol

or swear by a false god.

They will receive blessing from the Lord

and vindication from God their Saviour.

Such is the generation of those who seek him,

who seek your face, God of Jacob.

Psalm 24:3-6