

# Dwelling in Ceiled Houses

by David Dalton

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*David Dalton's sermon emphasizes the need for humility and active engagement in building God's house as a response to His truth.*

**Duration:** 35:33

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 6:9, Isaiah 55:2, Isaiah 61:10, Matthew 5:16, Matthew 7:24, John 17:17, 1 Peter 4:11

**Topics:** "Family"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for individuals and the church as a whole to prioritize glorifying God rather than themselves. He highlights the importance of allowing the truth to prick our consciences and urges listeners to consider their ways. The preacher emphasizes the need for sacrificial giving and a shift towards spiritual thinking rather than being consumed by material possessions. He concludes by quoting Jesus, who instructs his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him.

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## Transcript

It certainly takes a properly trained conscience, a conscience that loves truth and loves the acceptance of truth, to bring a soul to humility. Brethren, it is the fact that unless we come to humble ourselves before God, all the lessons that we study will not have the end result that they need to have. You see, it is the fact that forceful and great lessons in and of themselves cannot accomplish the task that needs to be accomplished.

It is the case that sorrow and bereavement will not bring us to the point that God desires for us to be brought to. It is the case, and it has been proven in generations, that force and punishment even will not bring people to the point of submitting themselves to the will of God. And even great debate and argumentation does not bring people to the conclusion where God wants them to be.

It takes the acceptance of the conscience to the truth that is presented, to bring the soul to be humble before God, to effect the change that God wants done. Eighty years before what Oren talked about with Malachi, we come into the time of Haggai. And Haggai, the prophet here, he has the people of Israel before him, and he is talking to them about the things that they have seen over the years.

Israel had heard many great and forceful lessons, and they had not yielded to them. They had heard and seen the lesson of the plagues upon Egypt. They had seen the dividing of the Red Sea.

They had been there at Mount Sinai when the force and the power of God was demonstrated as He came down upon the mountain and delivered His will. But God's Word still had not pricked their conscience. It is the case that at Haggai's day they had seen great sorrow and suffering and bereavement.

They had had the pain and anguish of the enemy nation coming in, defeating them. It is the case by Haggai's day they had undergone very great punishment. Seventy years in captivity, and if you want to talk about argument and debate, had they not debated with every righteous prophet God sent to them, man changed, because their consciences were not open for the truth to prick it and to become individually different because of the teaching of God's Word.

And brethren, as a remnant, if our hearts are not open to the pricking of the truth of God's Word to change our lives individually, we will not be the remnant of God. So Haggai on his day, this is the attitude, this is the very thing that he has to deal with, and it is the case as we look at this we need to recognize that there is an enveloping fog of pride that exists when we are prideful. Also there are the things that are called the self-satisfaction of excuses that we so often offer before God.

And then there are the exaltation of human glorification, or as Oren talked about, the deep darkness of denial of the truth. Haggai dealt with all of these things in the people of his day. He dealt with the fog of pride that surrounded them and kept them from seeing God's Word.

He dealt with the excuses that they continually offered before God that satisfied them, but not him. He dealt with the fact that they glorified themselves, rather glorifying him because they were doing his will, and they lived in total denial, or the darkness of denial, or denying the will of God. Brethren, we must deal with today, individually and collectively, those four things.

Unless we open our hearts and deal with those things, then we are not ready to make the changes that God needs for us to make. I am going to call your attention continually through the lesson to the fact that Haggai is dealing with the remnant. He is talking to the remnant.

He is talking to those who had come back from captivity. He is telling them they need to place these things in their lives. So if it is applicable to them as a remnant, it is applicable to us as a remnant.

To make this very clear to you, we are not talking about the ten tribes that were carrying away the Assyrian captivity. Today, we are not talking about the liberals, the radicals, the ultra-conservatives. See, we are not talking about ten tribes.

We are talking about us. We are talking about the things that God desires of us as his remnant people. And don't misunderstand me.

Listen to me very carefully. We are not talking about the kingdom for tomorrow. I am so thankful in some of the lessons that the kingdom of tomorrow has been talked about.

But if there is going to be a kingdom of tomorrow, then we must address the kingdom of today. And so the only way that we can address this as the kingdom of today is for us to open our consciences. We individually and personally here today must be open to the things that apply to us to be willing to go home and make the changes that we need to make.

And to affect the changes that need to be made within the congregations where we worship and where we work. If we are not willing to do those things, then the whole of the lectureship falls. Because that alone is

where the victory will be had.

You see, Israel had already spent 70 years in captivity. They had come out of the captivity. They came back to Judah.

They did not come back to Judah in the strength that they once had. They came out of Egypt as two and a half million people. And then they were divided into two kingdoms.

And that made the kingdom of Judah the smaller of the two. And then the kingdom of Judah itself was whittled down until finally it was carried away into captivity. And then when the Medes and the Persians allowed them to go back home, did you know only a few thousand of them went back? There were Jews living in that whole area of Chaldea that would not return.

Only a small number of them went back to Jerusalem. And as they went back to Jerusalem and there assembled themselves, sixteen years after going back, Haggai comes to them. For sixteen years they have had opportunity to do the things that God wants done.

And finally Haggai the prophet is sent by God and he comes and he addresses the situation as it is. Haggai chapter 1 now, verses 5 and 6. I'll get there. Verses 5 and 6 first.

Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. You know what he just said? Let the truth prick your conscience. What has to happen? Now as he addresses this, he says you let the truth prick your conscience, you consider your ways, and he gives three things.

He says you consider your ways, first of all, because where we are. You consider your ways, secondly, because of what you need to do. And you consider your ways, thirdly, because of how you got to where you are today.

Brethren, I submit to you that as we look at Haggai this morning, he calls us to task to do those three things. He calls us to task to consider, first of all, where we are. Secondly, to consider what we need to do.

And thirdly, so that we will not blunder and make continual mistakes, is to look at how we got where we are today. So Haggai calling this task to all, first of all in verses 5 and 6, he brings the first one out, verse 6. You have so much and bring in little. You eat but you have not enough to drink.

You are filled but you are not filled with drink. You cold, you, but there is none warm. And he that earneth wages, earneth wages, put it in bags with holes.

Here he comes and he addresses them and he says, as Judah says, here is the case. Here is the consideration of where you are. He says when you give consideration, he says it is the fact you have so much but you reap little.

Brethren, I think it is time for us to give consideration to that. I believe that spiritually we are sowing but we are not reaping very much for what we are sowing. And there are reasons for that.

Now if you want to be negative about what I just said, just do a survey today. How many growing congregations do you know? How many congregations do you know that are reaping in abundance for that that they are sowing? So just as Haggai addresses it and he says you are sowing but you are not reaping, there are congregations and a multitude of congregations today that are sowing something but they are not reaping back very much in the way of righteousness for that that is sown. There has got to be

a reason for that.

Are we sowing in local evangelism that which God wants sown? Are we sowing in missions that which God wants sown? Are we sowing in our daily living that which God wants sown? He says here the fact is you have eaten but you are not filled. Brethren, something is wrong when members come on Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, extra classes, every gospel meeting, every time the door is open and there is not a spiritual strength that has developed. And it's not all in the preaching either.

It's in the eating too. It's in the consuming of it. And the fact is we cannot eat spiritually and be filled spiritually when the majority of our time we are eating and consuming something other than that which is spiritual.

You can't just come and eat for a few minutes a week and go home and be filled spiritually. So here he confronts them. He says you have eaten but you are not filled and there are reasons for that.

But then he says you are clothed and not worn. Brethren, if we are, as the Scriptures teach us, if we are in of a truth as his children clothed with Jesus Christ, what has happened to the warmth of the zeal, the love, the teaching, the activity that the warmth of Jesus Christ demands of us? Do we need to be filled with the warmth of Jesus Christ? Absolutely. And if we are filled with that warmth, that warmth should show to the world.

That warmth should not be able to be contained within the walls of our buildings. That warmth should go to our community. It should go to the neighbors of the church building.

It should go to the community. It should go to our very neighbors in our own home settings. It should overflow in our lives when we are around people in the grocery store.

The warmth of the love of Jesus Christ should be a clothing that we are clothed with and that the world recognizes. But he said they were clothed but not worn. And then he said they sought out wages but they put the wages in bags and the bags had holes in them.

Brethren, when we do things in the body of Christ to glorify the local congregations, to glorify ourselves as preachers, to glorify in eldership or to glorify what we as humans have done, we have put our reward in bags with holes in them. It is time for us to pull together for the glorification of the God of heaven to put the reward in an eternal reward which he will of assurance give us if we do what he wants us to do. So Haggai has confronted them on these basis.

He said you need to consider your ways, verses 7 and 8. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Prick your conscience. Check your heart.

Go up into the mountain and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. He said now let's look secondly at what you need to do. The first thing God says to him, he says, you need to go to the mountain.

Brethren, we need to continue to go where God tells us to go to get the things to do that he wants us to do. Here he told them, he said the case is you needed to go to the mountains, and I have no doubt in studying what is taking place here, he is saying go to the mountains of Lebanon and bring back the cedars to build and finish the house. He tells us to go to his mountain, to go to his source.

As John 17, 17 was quoted by Brother Oren a few minutes ago. He tells us the source to go to. He expects us to go to the source that he has given to do the things that he wants done.

So as we turn and as we go to this source, we need not to be ashamed to give book, chapter, and verse for everything we say and do. Brethren, we have so-called brethren that are making us ashamed to quote the book. It's the mountain.

It's the source. It's the only place we can go. I don't know where they're going.

They're not quoting the book, chapter, and verse. I do know that. But we must do that if we're going to satisfy God.

But he says go to the mountain, and he says once you're in the mountain, he says you bring back the wood. We need to go to the mountain, and we need to bring back the materials that God intends for us to use to build his house. So we go to the mountain, and we get the wood that God tells us to use and to bring back, and we build his house girded on the base of the truth that we have found upon the mountain.

We've looked at 1 Peter 4, verse 11. We teach the things as the oracle of God. Everyone that speaks, speaks as the oracle of God.

So we bring those things back, and we build that that God wants built. What does that mean? That means we return to the doctrine of the New Testament. Brethren, that means that we return to divine approved examples.

That means that we turn for apostolic approval for the things that we do in practice. Brethren, that means we return to hermeneutics, proper hermeneutics. It means we return to the principles of studying the Bible to receive, to understand that which God has given.

Not to put into it what we want, what we desire, what is of a human mind, but to read the mind of God. That's the wood that we bring back. And then we must expect to enforce those doctrines and those teachings.

In 2 Timothy, chapter 1, verse 13, Timothy says, Hold fast to the form of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Jesus Christ. Brethren, when he said, Hold fast to it, I get the idea of the super glue. He says you'll be stuck to it.

You'll be unmovably stuck to it. And that word form there is a word that means pattern. He's saying you keep the pattern.

That means there is a pattern. There is a pattern that He has given to us that we must keep. And we must keep that pattern not only in the things of worship, which certainly we must.

We must keep that pattern in the organization, in the leadership that we've talked about, even going back to 1 Timothy, chapter 3. We must keep that pattern in the morality of life itself. Brethren, we are being tried today in the areas of sexuality, and we better stand the test. We're being tried today in the area of moral standards and the standards of marriage and marriage requirements, and we better stand the test.

We're being tested today in the areas of honesty and integrity, and we better stand the test. We're being tested today in the areas of brotherly relationships, and we better stand the test. We're being tested today in the area of the family.

And we as God's people had better stand the test. Now, at the bottom of this last 7th verse It's an interesting phrase because God says then, as if we have done these things, he says, verse 8, he says, Then I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified. Brethren, if we want to pleasure God, if we want to glorify him, we've got to go to the mountain and we've got to get the goods that he wants in his body, and we've got to implement them in place.

Turn to the life of Jesus Christ. John 17, verse 4, Jesus said these words, I have glorified thee on the earth. Think about that.

I have finished the works which thou gavest me to do. Brethren, if we're going to glorify him, we've got to do the work, and we've got to do it like he gave it to be done. We need to consider our ways, thirdly, because we need to look at how we got to where we are.

Brethren, before exploring this point, I must take about 30 seconds to remind you this. If you're turning your conscience off to the pricking of truth, I'd just as well quit, because this lesson is futile unless we're going to listen to it and let it touch our own consciences. Because the remainder of what Haggai had to say on this is not something that we very much like to deal with, and we need to deal with.

Haggai says, Is it time for you, O ye to dwell in your sealed houses, and this house to lie in waste? Sixteen years. Sixteen years. Do you know what they'd done? They'd gone to Lebanon.

They'd cut cedar, and they'd brought the cedar home, and they'd taken it into their own houses and sealed their own houses. Their houses were done. Their houses were the best.

They were lined, but they had forgotten God's house. God was not satisfied with the apathy of the whole, and he was not satisfied with the apathy of a so-called remnant. Brethren, if we are the remnant, we had better not be an apathetic people to getting done what he wants done with his house.

We cannot set by and satisfy ourselves by patting ourselves on the back with one hand that we are of the remnant at all. It is the case that as we look at ourselves as the remnant, we had better be taking the things from the mountain that God has given us. We had better be using them in the way that he has given us to use them, and we had better be building his house as rapidly as we can to finish it like he wants it finished.

It is the case, brethren, that we have had our minds too tainted. We have become tainted with humanism, materialism, secularism, hedonism, and I-ism. That's what's stopping us.

Somebody said to me, I said, Brother, I don't understand all those words. Let me explain it to you, please. I created the last word and stuck it in there because it typifies everything else we're talking about.

Brethren, we have become so selfish in our materialistic world to get, to have, and to be greater than our neighbors and the things that we possess that we have filled our houses up to the cost of the church of our Lord. You answer this question. We are among the most affluent people of the world.

Then why can we not take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world? It is because we have substituted, and we have substituted our own self-satisfaction for satisfying God. We have substituted the wood that he gives us. I don't mean to be unkind, and I'm hitting David Dalton as much as I'm hitting anyone else this morning.

Brethren, for too long we have left our evangelistic work up to the mass media. We have left our mission work up to organizations rather than bringing it home to the local congregation. We have allowed the church to say it not like he wants it and accomplish these things from within.

And it is time for us to come to task and do these things. You know, we've allowed a lot of things to get into our house. We take care of our jobs, our recreation, our relaxation, our families, our friends, our retirement, our luxuries, our comforts, all before his house, before his house.

Can he be any more satisfied with us than he was the remnant at Gadsday? Brethren, I do not believe for a moment that this is not something that we cannot effectively turn around and do as he wants it done. But I do believe that our consciences must be pricked if we're going to be different. We have got to become more concerned with the Lord's church than we do the church buildings.

We have got to be more concerned with the actuality of worship than the perception of attendance. We have got to be more concerned about our giving and talk about it not in terms of dollars and cents, but in terms of sacrifice of love in life. We have got to turn and instead of just having things that physically contemplate or fulfill our minds, we have got to get to thinking spiritually.

Preachers instead of tickling ears, we have got to take the word that tears and rends the heart. That may mean that I move, but it's better to rend the heart and move than it is to tickle the ears and stay in a place where God's kingdom, God's house. I would like to read a statement from Jesus, Matthew 16, verse 24.

Jesus said unto his disciples, Any man will come after me. Let him deny himself, take up his cross, follow me. Let him deny himself.

For whosoever will save his life, that means you can have it like you want it in this life, shall lose it. Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. What is a man profited that gains the whole world, builds his house, has all of his material goods, is technologically advanced beyond all peoples of the earth, has so much he has to have his storage building on every corner? Or what shall a man give in exchange? Brethren, we have got to stop the vicious circle of in the body, trading with the world, taking the things of the world instead of the things of God.

We must consider our lives. Don't even dare to glorify the lesson or the delivery. Just rend your heart.

And there are today any number of us that need our hearts rend by the compulsion of the truth in bringing us from building our things to building the house of the Lord. Brethren, until we are ready to give our lives wholly and completely to it, we will never accomplish it. Because he only supplies the wood to those that are willing to give the time to go to the mountain.

This morning, if you are not a child of God, you can't even go to the mountain. And there is a house, his New Testament church, 1 Timothy 3.15. You can be a part of it. Contrary to whatever anyone may say, there is no greater house on the face of this earth than his house, his church, his kingdom.

And our desire this morning is for you to be a part of it by submitting yourself to his will, believing in Jesus Christ with all your hearts, confessing that belief in Christ upon repentance of sin and being baptized, Galatians 3.26.27, to be his child in his household, in his family. And this morning, if God's Word has torn your heart because of your material life, you need to be right with him, too, as we stand and as we sing.

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