

# Haggai

by David Ravenhill

---

*The book of Haggai emphasizes the importance of rebuilding the house of God and prioritizing God's work in our lives, despite the challenges and procrastination that we may face.*

**Duration:** 50:20

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Obedience To God", "Prioritizing Faith"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience and prioritizing God in our lives. It highlights the consequences of disobedience and the blessings that come from aligning with God's will. The message focuses on seeking God first, walking in obedience, and experiencing God's presence and favor through right priorities.

---

## Transcript

He's got caffeine instead of blood flowing through his veins, you know. And his presence is what? Fullness of joy. Praise God.

Okay, tonight I want to take you on a little bit of a journey. So bear with me, I'm going to do a little bit of teaching and then we're going to lay it on you a little later on. But most of you are aware that the Bible is made up of 66 books, right? 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

And the latter part of the Old Testament is made up of what we call the prophets, the prophetic books. And those prophetic books are divided into two categories, not biblically they're not, at least the Bible doesn't say so, but we've come to refer to them as the major prophets and the minor prophets. And that, in a sense, is a little bit misleading because when we think of the minor prophets, we tend to think of them as having less importance.

Is that right? You know, those of you who are baseball fans, I'm not. I grew up playing cricket. And so, you know, when you backslide you end up playing baseball.

It's just a corrupted version of cricket, but no. But you know that in baseball you have the two leagues. You have the minor leagues and you have the major leagues.

And the minor leagues, of course, sort of, you know, nobody pays that much attention to them unless you have a home team that is popular, but it doesn't make the evening news. And if somebody plays in the

minor leagues, it's no big deal. But if he graduates from the minor leagues to the major leagues, then it's really something.

His salary, you know, triples or quadruples or whatever it is. And, you know, he's on television and he's got a name and everybody knows who he is. Well, I think we've tended to look at the minor prophets in the same way, that they are less important.

In other words, the major prophets like Ezekiel and Jeremiah and Isaiah and so on that contain, you know, numerous chapters, 50, 60 chapters, and then the minor prophets, some of them only, you know, one chapter, and even then you've got to stretch it to make it one type thing. But really it has nothing to do with the importance of the writer. Nothing whatsoever.

It has everything to do with the fact that it is a message from God. You could say that there's the long-winded prophets and the short-winded prophets. That would be a better way of putting it.

I won't say male and female. That would be wrong. But I'll get in trouble.

But, you know, some people just write and write and write. And just because it's long doesn't mean it's more important. In fact, sometimes the shorter message is more important.

You know, if you're drowning, you don't begin by, you know, my name is David Ravenhill, I was born in 1942, and I grew up here and there and so on, and then finally at the end of the thing, and by the way, I'm drowning, I need help. You know, chances are it's just help, you know. And it's that short message that is just as vital as some great big long one, you know.

And one of those minor prophets is a man by the name of Haggai. And we want to look at the message of Haggai tonight, and we'll get there in a little while. Now, so you're not embarrassed, the easiest way to find Haggai is to find the book of Matthew, go back three books.

You go to Malachi, Zechariah, and then you go to Haggai. Okay, those three books. Or you go to Malachi and you go back two books, and you'll find there basically one page, this little book of Haggai.

Now, before we can understand that, and it's only been lately that I've really sort of got into this book, and at least it's challenged me, and I want to share with you the message of this book, because I really do feel it's an incredibly important book. Profoundly simple, if I could put it that way. Now, we need to go back.

This morning we were talking about the Passover, and we went through all 18 points. Tonight I've only got eight, so you can see how rapidly I've improved. So we will get through.

But we've got to go back to the children of Israel in the years of bondage and servitude in Egypt, and God had made them a promise. The promise was that one day I'm going to get you out of here. One day I'm going to give you your own land, and when you have your own land, you're going to have your own houses and vineyards and olive trees and all the other goodies, and God sort of laid it on all the things that he was going to give them.

Just multiple blessings, material blessings, in fact. You know, houses he said that you don't have to fill. Not all derelict ones that you found on HGTV that have to be revamped and redone, you know, flip-a-flop things, but these ones, they don't need anything done whatsoever.

You can just move right in. The granite countertops are already there, and the Armstrong tiles are on the floor, and a huge shower for enough for half of the church to get in, and that sort of thing. And God promised them that, and he promised them vineyards and olive trees and so on, but then he also put with it a warning.

He says, when that day comes, beware, number one, lest you forget me. Let me give you the reference there, Deuteronomy 6, verse 10-15. I've reduced it down here in my notes, so let me just read you sort of an abbreviated version.

Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land to give you great and splendid cities, vineyards and olive trees. Then watch yourself, lest you forget the Lord. You shall fear only the Lord your God.

Now that doesn't mean fear in that cringing, fearful way, but you shall revere him, you shall honor him. In other words, really, you shall obey him. And then it says, you shall not follow other gods.

That was the warning. Do not follow other gods, for the Lord your God is a jealous God. That's not an evil jealousy.

That is a godly jealousy. God is a God, the jealous God. It says, otherwise the anger of the Lord will wipe you off the face of the earth.

That's a pretty strong warning, don't you think? God is not going to tolerate idolatry. He's not going to tolerate sin and so on. Yes, he's a God of blessing.

He's a God of abundance. He wants to lavish us with all of those things, but there's also a warning, don't you dare forget me. Don't go after other gods, otherwise I'll have to obliterate you from the face of the earth.

The tragedy is that Israel failed to respond to that warning. They knew it. It was sort of embedded, if you like, in their minds, and yet they went after every conceivable sort of God.

All you've got to do is pick up your Bible and read through the book of Kings, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Chronicles, and just about every other king went into idolatry, took the nation into idolatry, erected high places to various gods, brought in Baal worship, caused the children to pass through the fire. In fact, let me just read you a little summary here in 2 Chronicles chapter 33. This one king, here is what it says about him.

Let me see. Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the Lord according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord dispossessed before the sons of Israel.

He rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah, his father, had broken down. He erected altars for the Baals, made Asherim and worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them. He built altars in the house of the Lord in which the Lord said, My name shall be in Jerusalem forever.

For He built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. You know, the Bible repeatedly talks about how they provoke God to anger. You know, this is God's house and He is actually bringing in false worship right into the house of God, not in the surrounding area, that was bad enough, but right into the courts of God.

Verse 6, He made His sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-Hinn and He practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery, dealt with mediums and spirits. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord provoking Him to anger. Then He put the carved images of the idols which He had made in the house of God and He goes on and on.

Now, you know, that's just one king and there were numerous kings that did equal evil, if you like, in the sight of God. Psalm 106, we have a little summary and I think this is a great psalm. If you're not familiar with it, there are different places in the Bible where you have an entire summary, if you like, of the nation of Israel and what they went through.

And this basically is one of those. Psalm 106, but one portion here, verse 34, They did not destroy the people as the Lord commanded them, but they mingled with the nations. They learned their practices, served their idols, which became a snare to them.

They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons and they shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan. And then it says, And they became unclean in their practice and they played the harlot in their deeds. Notice they did not destroy the people.

Now, in the New Testament, of course, we don't get a chance to go out and destroy our neighbors in that sense, but we destroy them in the sense that we do not associate with the things that they associate with. We don't mingle with them. If you mingle with somebody, you know, you want to learn why do you do that and what's that all about and so on.

And then the next thing you want to do, you want to practice it. Well, could I try that? And so on. And that's what the children of Israel did.

They disobeyed God, mingled with the nations, learned their practices, and pretty soon they're involved in every type of idolatry and so on. And God, during this whole period of time, is incredibly patient with the children of Israel. And yet in His patience, He is being provoked.

I remember reading in the book of Revelation God spoke to me many, many years ago. He said, Don't misunderstand My patience as My permission. In other words, sometimes we may be involved in some sort of sin, and yet we can still speak in tongues and we can still praise God and we can still do this and we think, well, I guess God doesn't think much about that sin after all.

I can still speak in tongues. I still seem to have peace in my heart. And so it's no big thing.

Now, don't misunderstand God's patience as God's permission. It is not. It's His patience.

He's waiting for you. And so God, again, was patient during this time, but it says repeatedly they provoked Him to anger, and so eventually God has to take drastic measures. I remember listening to a man, some of you may be familiar with him, I don't know if he's alive or dead these days, by the name of Bob Mumford.

Bob Mumford used to be part of what they call the Fort Lauderdale Five, a bunch of teachers, great, great teachers at that. But Mumford used to say, If God can't get your attention by tickling you with a feather, He'll hit you over the head with a two-by-four. Mumford had these ways of expressing doctrine that most people knew.

In other words, God will begin by tickling you with your feather, trying to get your attention. But if He can't get your attention that way, He finally has to, as we would say, lower the boom. And so that's what God does.

And if we go back to 2 Chronicles 36, right at the end of Chronicles basically, and verse 15. Okay, find it. And the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers.

Now, notice God is sort of summarizing all these years that have gone by in which His own people have gone into idolatry and they've provoked Him to anger time after time after time. And so it says again, the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them. You could say that word was a warning, which it was, again and again by His messengers because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.

But they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His word, scoffed at His prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people. Notice the contrast in verse 15 and verse 16. Because He had compassion on His people, verse 15, verse 16, until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people.

In other words, these are the same people. One minute God is compassionate. The next minute His wrath arose.

He has slowed to anger. But they finally, because He sent messenger after messenger. We do that with our kids, don't we? I'm warning you.

Once, twice, three times. Some people have it up to about 12 now. It used to be once with me when I grew up.

And then we stretched it to three and now we turn a blind eye. God doesn't do that. But anyway, it says, until His wrath arose upon His people until there was no remedy.

Wow! Now that's the same God that lives in the New Covenant as He did in the Old Covenant. God doesn't change. I am the Lord and what? I change not.

With Him there's no variableness. There's no shadow of turning. You know, we can still provoke God.

Even though we're under another covenant, thank God it's the covenant of grace and so on, but God is still slow to anger. Isn't that right? All you've got to do is read the book of Revelation and see that He hasn't... I've told people and convinced that most people think that God got saved between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Those 400 years of silence, God went through anger management classes.

And He emerged in the New Covenant now, a much more easygoing, friendly God with a constant Joel Osteen smile on His face. But my Bible doesn't say that, at least in the book of Revelation it doesn't. He gets a little stirred up.

Okay, so we go down to verse 21 now. We're in 2 Chronicles. Verse 21, it says, To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah that the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths and all the days of desolation it kept Sabbath until the 70 years were complete.

So Jeremiah, of course, was the prophet that came along. And finally he said, listen, if you guys don't shape up, you're going to be shipped out. And God had sort of finally reached the... it was sort of the last

straw and God had to take drastic measures.

He's waited. He's pleaded with them. He's sent messenger after messenger, meaning He's sent prophet after prophet.

They've mocked the prophets, turned a blind eye to everything that God said, continued on in their rebellion. And God says, okay, I'm finally going to have to turn you over to the adversary if you like. And so they go, according to the word of Jeremiah, they're put into bondage, into captivity in Babylon.

And 70 years go by. At the end of those 70 years, God raises up an ungodly man by the name of King Cyrus. And it says there in verse 22, the end of the 2 Chronicles, Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stood up the spirit of Cyrus, the king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord, the God of the heavens, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth.

And he has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among all of his people, may the Lord his God be with him and let him go up. So God moves upon this king and he says, I want you to build me a house in Jerusalem.

And at that time he releases those that were held captive. And there's about 50,000 that return at that particular time and they come into Jerusalem and they commence rebuilding the house of God. Now most of those that return, I don't know, we don't know the exact percentage, but most of them would have been born in captivity.

I mean, unless you were over 70 years of age, you don't remember anything. I mean, if you were 80 years of age when you returned, you were 10 years of age when you were taken captive. And chances are you don't recall very much at 10 years of age.

And so the bulk of these people don't know that much, but all they know is they're no longer bound, they're free, they are returning now back to their own country, but they have a commission. And that commission is that they have to build the house of God. Because God stirred up this man for one reason.

One reason alone to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. Let's pick it up now in the book of Ezra, which is the next book on the same page. And verse 1, Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all of his kingdom and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus, the king of Persia, The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth.

He's appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him. Let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel.

For he is the God who is in Jerusalem. At least in his mind, he saw God as the God of Jerusalem. We know, obviously, he was not just the God of Jerusalem.

He's the King of all kings and the God of all gods and so on and so forth. But nevertheless, God raised this man up and so he releases all these captives, if you like, to go back. And they initially were successful in rebuilding the house.

But then rumors were flying a little bit that these guys are not doing the right thing and so on and so forth. We can't get into all of that right now. And so they stopped building the house of God and about 13 years went by.

And then God raises up this prophet by the name of Haggai. And Haggai basically prophesied, at least according to the records that I've read, for just about two to three months. Didn't have a very long ministry, but nevertheless it was an effective ministry.

God raised him up for a particular period of time. God does that. In the book of Revelation, it talks about the angels that God had appointed for the year, the month, and the day.

Can you imagine? God appointed. Imagine an angel in heaven that's been there for eons or whatever, waiting and he knows, listen, there's one day. One day I've been appointed for.

I don't know if they played golf in the meantime or what they did, but when that day came, okay, go do that. It's interesting, isn't it? In the fullness of time. God is a God that knows all about the fullness of time.

But this is God's time now to rebuild the house. Now they begin, and like I say, discouragement comes in and they stop building. And this man comes along, Haggai, and he begins now to minister to them.

So let me begin with point number one, is their mission. If we can go back now to this little book, if you can find it again. There it is.

Their mission was very, very clear, very, very simple. Their mission was to rebuild the house of God. Rebuild the house of God.

In fact, there was one verse. I meant to keep your finger there. Let me just go back to 2 Chronicles for a moment and highlight it once again where God said He had, well, I'll just read it to you.

He had compassion on His people and on His house. Those were the two things God was concerned about. He was concerned about His people and He was concerned about the temple.

Keep that in mind now because there will be a test if you like. But their mission then is to rebuild the house of God. That's what God wants.

They knew clearly. And Ezra said to them, go up to Jerusalem and rebuild the house of God. So they had a clear mandate of God's purpose in their life.

The second thing is their procrastination. How many of you are procrastinators? You know, well, one of these days. After all, it's Thanksgiving and after Thanksgiving comes Christmas and this is not the time to start a diet, but when the New Year comes, I'm determined to lose 20 pounds or whatever it is.

You know, we procrastinate, don't we? And the children of Israel were great procrastinators. Notice in verse 2 now we're in this little book. Verse 2, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, This people says... In other words, this was what they were saying.

The time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt. They convinced themselves this is not the right season. In other words, we will let ourselves off the hook.

We don't have to fulfill the will of God and the purpose of God, this mandate that God has given us. It's not the right time. Now some people say that it was because some of them had confusion as to whether the 70 years were completed or not.

I don't know. The Bible doesn't bring that out, but you know, scholars sometimes have got more bright ideas than the Bible. Anyway, we don't know.

What we do know is this. They were putting off what was to be a priority in their life. And many times there are priorities in our Christian life that we find excuses for.

You know, one day I'll get more serious about prayer. One day I'll start tithing. One day I'll do this.

One day... You know, we know what we should do, but we don't do it. We don't respond to it. We have some sort of an excuse.

This is not the time. After all, tithing is under the law. This is under that.

And we have all our doctrinal reasons why we shouldn't do this and that and the other thing and so on. And so they had the same thing. In other words, the will of God was not important to them.

It was a secondary thing. They put God basically on the back burner. This is not going to be the thing that is going to consume our energy, our time, our money, and so on.

We are committed to other things. Now, my purpose in looking at this book is not to look at what happened in the past, but it's to apply it to the present because the Bible says these things that were written a fortim were written for our instruction. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

The Old Testament is just as vital in many ways as the New. There's lessons to be learned here. In other words, when the Spirit of God saw fit to move upon these holy men of God to write, He was not just trying to make it impossible for you to read through the Bible in a year type thing.

No, He recorded it for a distinct reason. All Scripture is profitable. It's there for correction.

It's there for reproof. It's there for training in righteousness and so on. In other words, when we approach this little book here, we shouldn't look at it just in a historical setting or perspective.

We should say, Lord, how does that apply to my life today? And so looking at it that way, we have a priority in our life from God and that is that we are to what? Seek first the kingdom of God. Seek what? First. Not second, third, fourth.

That's what they came to do. That was their mission was to accomplish the will and the purpose of God. But they procrastinated and they put it off.

Now, I said to you that God was concerned about two things. He said He was concerned about His people and His house or His temple. Now when we come to the New Testament, that concern has not abated.

The fact is those two now become one. God no longer dwells in temples made with hands. But now we are the temple of God and not only are we the temple of God, we're the people of God.

So we're both of those things and that's what God is concerned about is the building of this house. In other words, my spiritual house has to become a priority. And is that what I am focusing on or am I focusing on

other things? Jesus said, I will build My church.

I will build My church. That was His number one concern. It's still His number one concern.

He wasn't talking about bricks and mortar. Hebrews says, whose house we are. I will build a people so that I can dwell in the midst of them.

God wanted a people in the Old Testament where their entire life revolved around the presence of God. He was in the midst of them. I mentioned that this morning.

That word, midst, if you go through your Bible, is used many, many times. Jesus was in the midst, in the midst, in the midst. In other words, right in the center, right in the middle.

God is not to be out there on some peripheral place, but He's to be the very center of our lives. And Israel, their life was to revolve around the presence of God. God says, I want to come down.

He said to Moses, I want you to build Me a house, basically, right in the middle of where My people live so that I can dwell among them. God wants to dwell among us. He wants to be relevant in every aspect of our life.

And so, this is what God is doing here. Alright, the third thing is their substitution. In other words, they had a priority.

They knew exactly what that was. It was a mission that was very, very clear. It wasn't complicated.

Go back to your home and build a house. Concentrate on finishing My house. Instead, notice verse 3 and 4. It says, Then the word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in paneled houses while this house lies desolate? In other words, God says, Listen, you guys have got fixated on your own homes.

One translation says they're sealed houses. My translation says they're paneled houses. In other words, they had focused on one thing as a priority, their own house.

And God's house, again, was on the back burner. God's house was no longer important to them. And isn't that true today? You know, we get house proud.

We will spend hours and hours on our natural house, and yet we'll give God maybe two hours a week. You know. And we spend more time on cutting our grass than that sometimes, don't we? But we get distracted.

We end up with substitutes. We end up with things that we get focused on, and that becomes our priority. And somehow again, the priorities that God intended us to be focused on, we don't focus on.

And we put it on the back burner. We forget about it. And we think, well, I've sort of done my dash.

I was in church this morning. I went to church on Sunday night, which I don't normally do, and so on. You know, God, you should be really proud of me this week.

I mean, that's sort of the attitude that we have. So it's easy to become distracted. So God is warning the children of Israel here now.

Their examination is the next thing. Verse 5, Therefore, thus saith the Lord, consider your ways. Short, little message, but a very powerful word.

Listen, I want you to take stock of what you're doing. When we consider something, we weigh that thing carefully, don't we? If we're going to buy a new car, we weigh up. Do we need a car? Do we need a pickup truck? We're going to drive X number of miles.

What can we afford? We consider something. And God says, listen, take time to really examine your ways. The New Testament says examine yourself to see if you're in the faith.

One of the things, and I imagine I've said this before, one of the things I dreaded in school were the exams because the exams reveal how much you've really attained or how much you've really been listening and so on. The Bible says examine yourself. God is saying to the children of Israel here, listen, consider your ways.

Sit down and take an inventory, if you like, of what you're doing, why you're doing it, and so on and so forth. What is your motivation and so on. Very short sort of a message, but a very meaningful message.

The next thing is their privation. Their privation. You can look that word up in the dictionary if you don't know what it means.

But anyway, God shows them that the very things that they are focused on are not materializing. The very things that they have made a priority are just not working out the way they think they should. And it's interesting.

Notice in verse 6. Now how many of you believe that if you sow bountifully, you will reap bountifully? And if you sow sparingly, you will reap sparingly? Okay, now I'm going to disprove that. Got you to agree first. Now notice what it says in verse 6. You have sown much.

What does that mean? They sowed bountifully. But you harvest little. So there goes that theory.

Now I know it works in one dimension, but notice they had labored. They put everything into this one thing. Their own life, their own interests, their own purpose, and so on.

That was the thing that they were focusing on. And as a result, it says you harvest little. Then it says you eat, but there's never enough to be satisfied.

You drink, but there is not enough to get drunk. Now God was not condoning drunkenness here. He's just saying that you have so little that even if you wanted to get drunk, there isn't enough drink to get drunk.

Because there just aren't enough grapes in the harvest to make enough wine to get yourself drunk. So He's not advocating drinking there. He's just simply saying, listen, even though you've sown and you've pruned and you've done all the things that you think are necessary, in other words, you've put everything you can into this thing and you've got very little out of it.

It says you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough. And He that earns, earns wages to put it in a purse with holes. In other words, at the end of the month, you have nothing left.

At the end of the month, you open your purse and you think, my goodness, I've got two weeks before I'm going to get paid again and I'm out of money. Now how many of you can identify with that? Okay. Because

we're going to rectify that hopefully if you like.

So in other words, nothing is working out the way they thought it would. There's a very simple truth in this little book and that is if you do it God's way, it works. If you do it your own way, it doesn't work.

And it doesn't matter how much you put into it and how disciplined you are and how much you sow and so on. It will never, ever, ever produce the fruit you're looking for because you're doing it contrary to God's way. This little book should be called Spiritual Economics 101.

It is such a basic message in this book, but it is a profound truth in it at the same time. It really is. And it certainly stirred me as I began to read it actually just a couple of weeks ago and I started making these notes.

Hopefully try and improve it a little bit as time goes by. But Jesus said what? Seek first the kingdom of God. In other words, if you put my priority first, all these things will be added unto you.

What were all those things? They were very practical things. In fact, let's go to Matthew 6 for a moment just in case you're not familiar with this portion of Scripture. It's only a couple of pages over.

Matthew 6, verse 31. Do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we clothe ourselves with? But seek ye first the kingdom of God. And it's verse 33.

And His righteousness, and all these things. That was what they were after. They needed enough clothes.

They needed enough food. They needed enough drink, but they didn't have it. There wasn't enough vintage for them to get drunk.

There wasn't enough wool for them to make their clothes. And so on. And Jesus said, listen, if you put it in My order, all those things will take care of themselves.

And it's a lesson that is so basic, and yet how often we try and do it in our own strength. We reverse the order. We think I've got to do this.

I've got to do that. When I get time, I'll give God a little bit of my time, but I can't afford it right now. I've got a house payment.

I've got this payment. I've got that payment. The kids need shoes and this and that.

I've got to get two jobs. You know, we get all caught up with a wrong priority, and we wonder why at the end of the time we're so frustrated. Things are not working out the way we think they should.

And so here is again the word privation here. Alright, the next thing is their admonition. Verse 8. In other words, an admonition, a word from God to them, a word of warning.

Go up to the mountain and bring wood and rebuild the temple. In other words, change your priorities. Get yourself in alignment with My Word.

Stop what you're doing. Stop focusing on your panel houses and all the other things. Make My house a priority.

And when I say My house, I'm not talking about a building. I'm talking about our spiritual alliance. You see, we have to build this house.

How many of you know you can build this house? Praying in the Holy Ghost, what? Building yourself up. He that speaks in tongues, He edifies. He builds Himself up.

We can train ourselves. Study to show ourselves approved under God. In other words, we can concentrate on God's house.

We can make God's house a priority. You know, instead of watching the news, we can begin to read our Bible. Instead of doing this, in other words, we can focus on the house of God.

Not only the house of God individually, but the house of God corporately because we are the house of God individually with a dwelling place of God, but corporately we're living stones. We come together. That's what the house of God is all about.

And you go back into the New Testament and you see what the New Testament house of God was like. It was a number one priority. Every single day they gathered together for prayer, for the breaking of bread, for the disciples' doctrine and training.

All of those things. Fellowship. Acts 2, verse 42.

It was a continuous thing. It was a lifestyle that now we've whittled way down to on a Sunday morning for an hour, on a Sunday night for an hour, and so on and so forth. This was a daily.

In other words, the house of God was the number one priority. They were there encouraging one another, praying for one another, fellowshiping with one another, feeding one another, and all of those things. I mean, that was the concentration that they had in the early part, if you like, of the New Covenant.

But here is this admonition now. He says, Go up and rebuild the house. Go and get some wood and bring it down.

In other words, my house is to come before your house. My needs before your needs. My will before your will.

And then he says this, My house, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified in it, says the Lord. Okay, go up to the mountain. Verse 8, Bring wood, rebuild the house, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified, said the Lord.

Let me ask you a question. I've asked myself this question. Is my house pleasing to God? Jesus said, I do only do the things that please the Father.

And Paul said, I have as my ambition, whether at home or abroad, to be pleasing to the Lord. Does my house please God? Does the condition of my house please God? Or have I got alters, if you like, in the house of God? This is Manasseh. He had idolatry right in the house of God.

Do I have certain things that I idolize and those things become more important to me than the Word of God and prayer and so on? Whether it's sport, do I spend more? In other words, I don't have any problem watching five hours of television, but I have a difficult time spending five minutes in prayer. Then there is a wrong priority. Somehow we focus on the wrong things and then we wonder why the rest of our life is sort

of unraveling, why our life is sort of coming apart.

Isn't that right? And so this is the situation that God is dealing with here. Deprivation. You do all these things and then they're admonition.

Go up and rebuild the house of God that I may be glorified in it. And then the next thing is their opposition. Their opposition.

God begins to explain to them now that He is standing in opposition to everything that they do. In other words, I am the one that is responsible for your impoverished condition. I'm the one that's responsible.

Now that sounds very mean, doesn't it? And you may disagree with me, but notice what God says. Verse 9, You look for much, but behold, it comes to little. When you bring it home, I blow it away.

Oh, what a meanie. I thought this was the God of love and compassion and mercy and longsuffering and patience. Boy, I've been working hard, Lord.

I'm not slothful. I haven't been sitting in my hammock for the last two weeks. I've been out there tilling the ground.

I've been working my fingers to the bone, as we would say. And God says, when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why? He declares, Lord, because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.

I mean, this is such a simple little book in a lot of ways. Wrong priorities. You're focused on the wrong thing.

He doesn't say it's sinful in the sense. He doesn't say, you guys are watching porn every night or you guys are committing adultery. No, you're just simply focusing on the wrong thing.

And they are necessary things. You're laboring. The Bible says, six days thou shalt labor.

There's nothing wrong with work. But their motivation was, if I do that, I will get something for myself. And it was this selfish attitude rather than giving themselves to God and to the work of God and so on.

All the thinking about it is themselves. And God says, listen, I'm the one that blows it away. Verse 10, Therefore, because of you, the sky has withheld its dew.

The earth has withheld its projects. And I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, and on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, and on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, on all the labor of your hands. God says, listen, I call for the drought.

I did all of that. I mean, it's a pretty strong word here. Again, very, very simple, but nevertheless, very, very important that we get a hold of this truth.

He says, Because my house is desolate. Because my house is desolate. All right, the next thing is their submission.

Did I say eight things? Maybe it's nine. Maybe it's ten. Anyway.

Verse 12, Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shittil, and Joshua, the son of Jehoshaphat, the high priest, with all the remnants of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet as the Lord their God had said to them. And the people showed reverence for the Lord. This entire book now changes.

It hinges on one thing, obedience. Notice it says, Then the people obeyed the voice of the Lord and they showed reverence for God. In other words, you honor me with your lips, but your heart is far from me.

Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things that I say? You know, so often we do that. We can sing our songs and have great gusto and so on and so forth. But are we walking in obedience? Paul said that his mission, if you read the first few verses there of the book of Romans, is to bring about the obedience to the faith.

Obedience to the faith. Peter uses the word as obedient children. I would love if it was possible.

Obviously it's not. If it was possible to obliterate the word Christian from our vocabulary and instead put in the word obedient child. And so you would say to somebody, instead of asking them, Are you born again? Are you saved? You'd say, Are you an obedient child? And that changes things.

Because am I obedient? Or does God have to tell me a dozen times and then I go my own way anyway? They chose to obey the Word of God. But once we obey the Word of God, my father used to say many, many times as I grew up, you know, the Christian life is so simple. Trust and obey.

That old song. There's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey. I mean, it really does boil down to those just basic things, doesn't it? If I walk in obedience to the known will of God, I'm going to be pleasing to God.

This house is going to bring pleasure to God. Many times we have a false sort of trust in the love of God. The book of Malachi, and I'm sure you've heard me say this before, the book of Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, God is complaining about the condition of the children of Israel, but He begins by saying, I love you.

That's the way He opens. I love you. And then a few verses later He says, But I'm not pleased with you.

In other words, it's possible to love your children and yet not be pleased with them. Isn't that right? What brings pleasure to a parent? Obedience. You know, your kid still gets dinner.

I mean, you still love the child and so on, even though He brings displeasure to you. What brings pleasure is obedience. And God is looking for obedience in our life.

The children of Israel make a choice here under the prophetic word that comes to them. They listen to the voice of God. They obey the voice of God.

They show reverence to the Lord. And once we do that, once we begin to take seriously, as we read the Word of God, and we say, Lord, I read this morning to love my enemies or whatever it is. I'm going to do that.

I'm going to forgive those that I have ought against. Once we start walking in that obedience, we find that everything else falls into place. But if we have a life of disobedience, everything will unravel around us ultimately.

And so they obey the Word of the Lord. And then the last thing is, I called it their companion in verse 13. Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people saying, I am with you, declares the Lord.

I am with you, declares the Lord. We can either have God's presence or God's resistance. That's really what this book is about.

You can either have God's presence through obedience or God's resistance through disobedience. If we choose to disobey, God will fill our purse with holes. He will send the storms and the mildew, whatever it is, call for a drought on our spiritual lives, so to speak.

Not because He's a meanie, but because He brings corrections. Those that He loves, He chastens. Because ultimately, He's looking for obedient children.

Ultimately, He's looking for a house that will bring pleasure to God. And if the house of God corporately begins to walk in obedience, listen, that's God's ultimate intention for the nations round about. They will see again the glory of God.

They'll see the nature of God. They'll see the love of God displayed, the mercy of God displayed, all of those things. Why? Because we've chosen to walk in obedience.

But if we don't, we will find opposition every single step of the way. Again, not because God despises us but because He wants to bless us. But ultimately, He'll do everything He can and then He'll have to lower the boom.

And He did that with the children of Israel. If you don't believe God isn't a patient God, all you've got to do is read through again Chronicles and Kings and so on. Time after time after time, God sends prophet after prophet after prophet after prophet.

And all they do is despise them and stone them and so on and so forth. But God finally has to take the drastic measures. But this little book sums up so much in such a simple way.

And it basically boils down. Am I prepared to put God first in my life and walk in obedience to what He tells me to do? And if He does, then we have the presence of God. And then we go to chapter 2 and verse 19.

Just one final word here. Is the seed still in the barn, even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree? It is not born fruit. Yet from this day on, I will bless you.

In other words, go back to verse 17, I smote you with every work of your hands, with blasting, with wind, with mildew, with hail, yet you did not come back to me, declares the Lord. In other words, God has done everything He can, but now they finally come back. They've made, they've consecrated their lives.

We will revere you. We will obey you. And God says, not only will I be with you, but He says, I'll bless you from this moment on.

If you want the blessing of God, it comes through obedience. It comes through establishing right priorities in our life. And I believe that this book is just as relevant today.

The principle of this book is just as relevant because again in the New Testament, seek first, put me first, and all these things will take care of themselves. We don't have to strain. Some of you no doubt tonight,

you've got all sorts of worries about mortgages and this and that.

The other thing and so on. And you're doing everything you can to rectify that situation, but it's that simple. Somehow God is on the back burner.

And when we put God as a priority, all of a sudden we find our money goes further, things don't break down as much, and so on. And that's true, and I'm sure we've got people here that could testify until midnight of God's faithfulness. I know I can.

Of just simply putting God first. Of giving God a tenth or more of your money. Boy, my wife can find a dime on the floor and take a penny and give it to the Lord.

She is a fanatic when it comes to that sort of tithing. She's even taught me in that area. Not that I would withhold from the Lord, but you put God first.

You put these principles first and God will bless. Let's just bow our heads. I don't want to just close tonight without asking you to consider...

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/rmLO1mPwrhM.mp4>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-ravenhill/haggai/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**