

# Consider Your Ways

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of considering God's ways in our lives and being prepared for the return of Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 47:41

**Scripture:** Haggai 1:7

**Topics:** "Spiritual Readiness", "Repentance"

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## Description

The sermon from the book of Haggai emphasizes the importance of considering one's actions before God, focusing on the consequences of neglecting the house of God and prioritizing personal pursuits. It highlights the need for readiness and repentance in anticipation of the Lord's return, drawing parallels to the parable of the ten virgins and the significance of being prepared. The urgency of being spiritually prepared for the imminent return of the Lord is underscored, urging believers to prioritize their relationship with God above worldly pleasures.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to Haggai, the third last book of the Old Testament. Haggai, chapter one, verse six. Consider your waste.

You have sown much and bringing little. You eat, but are not satisfied. You drink, but are not filled with drink.

You close yourself, but there's no wall. And he that earneth wages, earneth wages for a bag with holes. Verse seven, thus say Jehovah of hosts, consider your waste.

Go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house and I will take pleasure in it and I will be glorified, said Jehovah. Chapter two, verse 15. And now I pray you, consider from this day and onward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of Jehovah, before those days were, when we came to a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten.

When we came to the vet to draw out fifty pressure measures, but there were but twenty. I smote you with blessing, blessing, and with milder, and with hail, in all the work of your hands, and you returned not to me, said Jehovah. Verse 18, consider, I pray you, from this day and onward, for the fourth and twentieth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of Jehovah's temple was laid, consider it, is the seed yet

in the vine.

Yea, the vine and the fig tree and the palm granite and the olive tree have not reformed, but from this day will I bless you. Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, as we gather here in thy presence, we do pray that thou will reveal thy mind to us, open our understanding, and bring us into thy very thought, that we may know what is thy thought, and learn to obey thee, and follow thee, and glorify your name.

We commit this time into your hand. It is your time. Lord, pray that I will use this time to bless thy people, enable thy people to understand thy heart, and bring us into that which thou art after, and we are ready to give thee glory.

In thy precious name we pray. Amen. Thank God for bringing us together again this morning.

In the book of Hagia, you find the word consider four times. In other words, God warned us to consider. If you look at the chronological table in the Bible, you will find that in 588 BC, Nebuchadnezzar completely destroyed Jerusalem, city, and temple.

But 50 years later, in 536 BC, Cyrus, the emperor of Syria, he gave orders for the Jews in captivity, that whoever desires to go back to Jerusalem, to rebuild the temple, they are free to do it. And because of this, Zerubbabel and Sheltier and a remnant returned from Babylonian captivity and go back to Jerusalem. Jerusalem at that time was a desert place.

Everything was destroyed. So they had to begin from the very beginning. After they arrived in Jerusalem, they gathered together the next year and started to lay the foundation.

When the foundation was laid, people, some people cried because they have seen the former temple, and other people shouted because they were young people who have never seen the former capital. And the following year, they began to lay the foundation of the temple. But while they were starting to build the temple, their enemies tried to disturb them.

So they appealed to Artaxerxes. And Artaxerxes listened to them and commanded the building of the temple be stopped. So this temple in Jerusalem was stopped for 15 years.

And during those 15 years, what did the remnant who returned did? They built their own houses. They built beautiful houses for themselves, thinking that the building of the temple was not yet time. But then God raised up two prophets, an old man, Agion, and a young man, Zechariah.

And they began to prophesy to the children of Israel, encouraged them to start building the temple in spite of oppositions. Thank God the people listened. So they began to build the house of God.

And the second year of King Darius, of course, they were still surrounded by their enemies. But thank God, they continued to rebuild the house in spite of oppositions through the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. So here you'll find in this book of Haggai, an old prophet, and also in Zechariah, a young prophet.

God raised up these two prophets to encourage the people to complete the building of the house of God in Jerusalem. And here in Haggai, being an old man, he didn't speak much. We find in the Bible there are only two chapters.

But Zechariah, being a young man, he spoke a lot. And when Haggai spoke, there is one word that he repeatedly used, and that the word consider. Consider means think over.

Think deeply. Think well. Think what has happened.

Think what will happen if you obey God. Four times the prophet Haggai used the word consider. Think over.

He said, you build your own house and leave the house of God in desolation. What happened to your life? Do you find your life satisfactory? No. No.

You find that your life was very unsatisfactory. Why is it so? It is because you have left the house of God desolate, and you build your own houses. So the prophet Haggai suggests that they should go to the mountain, get the material, and start the building of the house of God.

Thank God they listened to the prophet, and they started to do it. Now, of course, their enemies were not happy about it. So they accused them before the emperor, Ataxerxes.

Ataxerxes commanded the building of the temple to be stopped. So the building of the temple was stopped for 15 years. During those 15 years, those who returned to Jerusalem, what did they do? They had to do something.

So they started to build their own houses. They built their beautiful houses. When cost it? How? To satisfy their heart.

Because they say the time of building of the temple had not yet come. So God raised up these two prophets to encourage them to rebuild the house of God. And in the book of Haggai, you find four times the prophet used the word consider.

Consider means think over, think deeply, think what has happened and what will be happening. Brothers and sisters, how important it is that we do consider before the Lord. Sometimes we live our lives casually.

We live day by day as usual. But God wants us to consider, to stop, to think, to think over. Brothers and sisters, this is the time for us to consider.

Why is it so? Because we know that the coming of the Lord is imminent. I often say that all the prophecies that go before the coming of the Lord in the Bible have been fulfilled. Every one of them.

There are still prophecies to be fulfilled, but these prophecies are concerned with the coming of the Lord and afterwards, not before. Brothers and sisters, we are living in a very exciting time. We are living in the last days.

We are living in the day when we expect our Lord to return at any moment. We are gathering here this morning. Do you know that it is quite possible that the Lord will come back today? If he will come today, are you ready? Are you prepared for him? So brothers and sisters, it is of utmost importance, we all who are living in the last days, at the time when the Lord shall come at any moment, but are we ready? The children of Israel who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple because Artaxerxes forbade them to continue, so they laid the foundation, but they left it behind, and you have to do something.

So they began to build their own houses, beautiful houses to live in. They say the time of rebuilding the temple has not yet come, but thank God he raised up these two prophets, encouraged them to consider. What should they consider? They should consider because they are building their own houses and left the house of God unfinished.

Therefore, God has not blessed their living. Hezekiah told them, you consider. You did a lot for yourselves.

You tried to have a good life, but because the house of God was left unfinished, what has happened? He said, you brought in more, but you enjoyed less. Go to the mountain, get the material, and start to build the house of God, in spite of the fact that it was forbidden by Artaxerxes. Brothers and sisters, thank God the remnant listened to God.

So they began to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, but as they were doing, their enemies tried to disturb them. At first, the enemies would come and say, we will help you in your building. They say, no, this is our responsibility.

We will do it alone. So the enemy used all kinds of means to disturb them, trying to stop the work of the building of the house of God. But thank God, through the two prophets, God encouraged them to go on.

So here in Hezekiah, you find four times the prophet Hezekiah used the word consider. First, you consider what had happened, because you are building your own houses and let the house of God desolate. He said, you take in more, but you enjoy less.

This is because the blessing of the Lord was not there. Go up to the mountain, get the material, build the house of God, and God will bless you. Thank God the remnant listened to the prophet, and they started to build.

And as you read, you will find the enemies try all kinds of means to stop them. But by the grace of God and encouragement of the prophets, they continue on until the temple was finished. So dear brothers and sisters, here is an urgent lesson for us today.

Why? Because, as I say, we are living at the end of our time. All the prophecies before the coming of the Lord have been fulfilled. You search the Bible, and you will find they are so.

So now what's before us is the coming of the Lord. Our Lord Jesus can return at any moment, but why is He delayed? Not because He doesn't want to return. It is because His bride is not ready.

Brothers and sisters, I remember the story of the grandfather of Hudson Taylor. When he was a young man, he loved the world. He loved dancing.

He loved the enjoyment in the world. But on the day that he was to be married, in the morning he got up. He suddenly remembered, today is my wedding day.

It is a serious matter. So he went to the field and prayed. And as he prayed, he forgot the time.

He prayed and prayed and prayed. When he finished praying, he realized it was already the time of his wedding. Everybody was waiting.

His bride was waiting. They wondered where was the bridegroom. So he hurriedly go and be wed.

And in the evening, before they went to bed, Hudson Taylor's grandfather told his wife, we have to pray. It was a surprise to his new life because this was the way of life they lived before. But Hudson Taylor's grandfather forced her to kneel down and he prayed.

And the result was this family became God's family. God used this family for his own glory. For four generations, the Taylors served God.

And after Hudson Taylor, more generations served God. During the wartime, I was in Chungking and I saw Hudson Taylor's grandson. He was going through the street of Chungking, shouting the gospel.

Brothers and sisters, this family was blessed by God and used by God because his grandfather served God. So brothers and sisters, God wants us at this moment to consider, to think over, to think deeply. We cannot afford to be casual anymore.

We are here this morning. Thank God for giving us opportunity to meet together. But we do not know whether this way, this day will be over and the Lord has come.

Do you think it is impossible? No. It is absolutely possible. All the prophecies precede the coming of the Lord have been fulfilled.

You can search the scripture and you'll find they are so. What's left are the prophecies during the coming of the Lord and after his coming. Brothers and sisters, we are living in a very crucial time.

We cannot afford to be careless. Like the children of Israel, they have left the house unbuilt for 15 years. They build their own houses.

They think that the building of the house of God has not yet come. The time was not ready. But brothers and sisters, is that our thought? Do we think that the Lord will not come yet? We still have time.

We can enjoy ourselves. We can wake up when the time is coming. But brothers and sisters, do not deceive ourselves.

The time is now. The Lord may come at any moment. But the problem is, are we ready? You remember the ten virgins.

They represent the Christians. They all have their torch with the oil in the torch. And they all went out to meet the bridegroom.

That was the attitude of God's people from the first generation onward. We are going to meet the Lord. Why? Because it is possible the Lord may come during the first century.

But as they were waiting, they all died. So these ten virgins in Matthew represents the Christians that have died through the centuries. They couldn't wait for the Lord's coming.

But then suddenly at midnight, there was a cry, the Lord cometh. They all woke up. And that means they all will be resurrected.

But among the ten virgins, ten were wise. They not only have oil in their torch, but they have extra oil in their vessel because they do not know how long, how early the Lord will return. So they are ready.

They are prepared. But the foolish virgin, they thought the Lord will not be coming in their lifetime. They have plenty of time.

So they also have vessel. But in their vessel, they did not put oil. They put other things, things that they thought was precious to them.

But because the Lord delayed, they all fell asleep. And in the Bible, the fell asleep means they all died. That speaks of the Christians from the first century onward.

But thank God, the day is coming. The voice comes. The Lord cometh.

And they all rose up. That means they will all be resurrected. Brothers and sisters, but the wise one, they have extra oil in the vessel so they can replenish the torch.

And they are able to go to meet the bridegroom. But the foolish virgin, they thought they were wise, wiser than the wise virgins. They have other precious things in their vessel.

But you cannot use these precious things to rekindle the torch. They had to go to buy their oil. But they went to the bridegroom.

So the wise virgins, they went into the wedding. And when the foolish virgin came back, we do not know whether they got their extra oil or not. I wonder if they had.

But they came back and found the door was closed. They were barred from the marriage feast. They were cast into outer darkness.

Brothers and sisters, we are all very curious. When you are reading the Bible, I wonder if you ever thought, what is outer darkness? You want to know what outer darkness is. The Bible does not tell so.

It just tells us it is outside of the wedding feast. In other words, it will be outside of the coming of the kingdom of Christ. They will not participate with the Lord in the kingdom of the heavens during the thousand years' rule.

They will be cast outside in outer darkness. I know many people are wondering what is outer darkness. We all have that curiosity.

Of all the books that I have read, I read only one book that told us what he thought the outer darkness was. He was Robert David. But I will not tell you what he said.

Anyway, one thing is sure. Outer darkness is outside of the millennium kingdom of Christ. During those thousand years when Christ shall come and reign over the earth and the overcomers will reign with Christ from heaven, these foolish virgins, they will be outside of that kingdom.

And during that time, there will be gnashing of teeth. Now, gnashing of teeth simply means repent. They will repent that because of the present pleasure, they forfeited their kingdom.

But thank God, this was not the end because the Bible said when they were cast into outer darkness, they will gnashing of teeth. In other words, that's the time they repented. They repented that they were not ready for the Lord's return.

Because of their repentance, thank God, God's grace knows no end. Whom he has chosen, he has called. Whom he has called, he has justified.

Whom he has justified, he has sanctified. So, dear brothers and sisters, if you believe in the Lord Jesus, you will be saved forever. Not only forever, but you will be saved to the uttermost.

Eventually, everyone that believes in the Lord Jesus today will be completed by the grace of God. Because in Romans chapter 8, we are told, whom he has foreordained, he has called. Whom he has called, he has justified.

Whom he has justified, he has glorified. So, every brother and sister will be glorified. And in eternity, as you read Revelation chapter 21 and chapter 22, you find that all the Christians will be crowned and reign with Christ forever and forever.

But during the millennium time, they will repent in darkness. Brothers and sisters, the Lord is coming. He may come today, who knows? We may gather this morning, but this afternoon, hopefully, this room will be emptied.

Everyone will be taken, and no one will be left in outward darkness. That's my prayer. Brothers and sisters, do not think that it is yet far off.

There is time for you to take pleasure for yourself, and there will be time for you to repent and return to the Lord for his return. Brothers and sisters, that is wishful thinking. Because we do not know when the Lord shall return.

He may come at any moment, today, tomorrow, or any time. So, what's proper for every one of us is to be ready at any moment. Brothers and sisters, this morning, I will challenge you with one word.

Are you ready for the Lord's return? Is there anything in your life that stands in the way? If he should return today, you will not be taken, but you will be left in outer darkness. So, may the Lord have mercy upon us. Let us pray.

Dear Lord, how we praise and thank thee that thy return is imminent. Lord, thou hast warned us that thou mayst come at any moment. Do not allow us to be complacent, to love this world for a little while, not knowing that if thou shalt come today, where will we be? Lord, we thank thee that even so, thou who has called us, thou will save us to the uttermost.

Thou who has called us, thou will justify us. Thou who has justified us, thou will sanctify us. Every one of us, oh, what a God you are.

What gracious Savior you are. Lord, enable us to understand your heart and offer ourselves completely to you and allow you to work out your full salvation in each and every one of us. Do not allow us to covet the pleasure of this world just for a few moments and lose that reading with Christ during the thousand years.

So, we commit every brother and sister here this morning into your hand and ask the Lord to have mercy upon us. Wake us up that every one of us will be ready for thy imminent return. The prayer of our heart is come, Lord Jesus.

We await it in thy precious name.

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