

Build the House, and I Will Take Pleasure in It (Haggai 1:8)

by Timothy Tow

The sermon emphasizes the importance of building God's house and giving cheerfully, according to God's commandment, in order to receive greater blessings and abundance in all things.

Scripture: Malachi 3:10

Topics: "Stewardship", "Tithing"

Description

Timothy Tow preaches on the importance of heeding God's call to build His house, drawing parallels to the repetition of the message in Haggai to the Jewish returnees in Jerusalem. He emphasizes the need for a willing and obedient heart in giving to the Lord's work, highlighting the principle of tithing as a commandment from God that comes from the heart. Through examples of blessings received by faithful givers, he encourages the congregation to sow bountifully and cheerfully, trusting in God's promise of abundance and provision for those who give generously.

Transcript

Text: Haggai 1:3-8

The story is told of Dr Harry Ironside, Pastor of Moody Memorial Church preaching at a certain church on the topic, "Ye must be born again." When invited by the same Church one month later, he preached on the same topic, "Ye must be born again." When asked by someone in the congregation after the service why he spoke on this topic a second time he replied, "Because, ye must be born again!"

Last month I spoke to you at the Chinese Service, "Build the house, and I will take pleasure in it." This month I am speaking to you on the same subject, "Build the house, and I will take pleasure in it." If you ask me why, my answer is you have reacted little to my last message, so you need to hear it again.

The repetition of the message in fact came from Haggai the prophet to the Jewish returnees to Jerusalem after 70 years' exile to Babylon . They started out enthusiastically to re-build Solomon's Temple and finished the foundations after one year. Opposition from the enemy resulted in the rescinding of the Emperor's decree to build the Second Temple . This caused a stoppage of the work for 15 years.

At last the Emperor's decree to build was reinstated. So the Jews could start work again. Being inured to a selfish life of luxurious living and beautiful homes, the Jews became inert to the prophet's call to build. Hence, his repetitious calling and warning to the Jews. Thus the prophet warned in his second sermon that those who took the Lord's call lightly would end up putting their earnings into a bag with holes. Conversely, if they would start building His house, He would take pleasure in it. He would certainly bless them.

My sermon to you last month seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. You seemed to think you could take it easy and give your portion when our rebuilding of Beulah House into a 12-storey Beulah Tower is about to complete. This is a great mistake. The cost of the 12-storey structure would run into \$20 million. To give at that late hour would be like starting to build the bomb after war is declared. To win the war we must be well prepared before it starts. You must realise if we are to pay the bills on time, we must bring into the Lord's treasury \$100,000 a week from now.

Moreover, as we are too crowded in this FEBC Hall with an attendance of near 200, we will have to shift to the new assembly hall of FEBC on the ground floor of the new Beulah Tower. We will have the first privilege. How can we then sit tight and let the English congregation go it alone? Let us bring to the storehouse henceforth, and proportionately, week after week.

How shall we do this? Not by what liberal churches do, like the holding of funfairs, food fares, garage sales. What we bring must come from the heart according to God's commandment. After Haggai there arose the last prophet of the Old Testament, Malachi. When the Lord's storehouse was empty, he commanded the Jews to bring in the tithes, the sacred tenth of their income. Some people think tithing is legalistic, so Christians give as they are moved. This is not correct. While Jesus chided the Jews who put a premium on tithing but neglected love and mercy, he did not therefore stop their tithing. He upheld in Luke 11:42 that tithing is not to be left undone. Jesus paid tithes surely if he would pay the Temple tax with Peter (Matt 17:27).

Now, the regulation on giving the tithe has attached to it the promise of greater blessings. Malachi the prophet says, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal 3:10, 11). Do you believe God's promise? That He will "open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"? Moreover He "will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground." Here we see a double blessing.

A sister of Life Church wrote a poem on tithing from a lesson she had learnt. She received a bonus and she should have given part of the bonus to the Lord. When she neglected to do that, her car met with an accident. The repair bill cost more than the bonus. Having learnt this lesson she started to tithe faithfully. Not long after she had a double promotion. She received much more than the tithes she gave. How true this is.

During our buying over of Beulah House which required \$5 million in 6½ months, many, apart from their tithe, loaned to the Lord. The Lord blessed them so much that they converted their loans into total gifts. Now, have they become the poorer?

A sister who had loaned the Church \$5,000 for ten years to this day has not asked for payment. When it was announced we would build the New Beulah Tower , she turned up the next day and presented the Church a cheque for \$10,000. She must have experienced in the meantime abundant blessings, not only materially but spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (II Cor 9:6-8). Amen.

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