Part 1 **Haggai:**

The Time is Now!

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TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

A publication of DISCIPLE, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

The Back-Story: Babylon was the most magnificent city in the Ancient Near East. Seventy years before Haggai preached, the Babylonians overran Judah, destroyed Jerusalem, burned the Temple, and carried the inhabitants into exile. Seventy years later the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland, but all those years of ease and affluence in Babylon, coupled with lukewarmness in their relationship with God, made the prospect of returning to the burned-out remains of their homeland an unattractive option for all but a remnant. The rag-tag group of returnees began rebuilding the Temple, but when opposition arose from the neighboring peoples, construction stalled. For sixteen years it remained merely an outline of foundation blocks, so God raised up the prophet Haggai to deliver a hard-hitting message to the people—*and to us!*

- **Read Haggai 1:1-6.** Sometimes we forget that God ***sees right through*** our rationalizations! What **assertion** did the Jews make (v. 2)? What **basis** did they give for that assertion (v. 6)?

  To what did God appeal in order to reveal that their excuse didn't hold water (v. 4)?

  Which of the following statements could you hear yourself making?
  - ☐ "I'd ***love*** to give more to the church..." (but vacations and vehicles ***made it*** into the budget.)
  - ☐ "I'd ***love*** to serve more at church..." (but the gym and entertainment ***made it*** into the schedule.)
  - ☐ "I ***love*** corporate worship..." (but an honest look at the calendar ***reveals a different story***.)

- **Read Haggai 1:7-11.** Verses 9-11 reveal "leanness and lack" in an ancient agrarian context. What forms might similar leanness and lack take in our 21st century urban context?

  Have you ever experienced "hard times" such as that? If so, to what cause do you trace it back?

  In Israel's case, what was the ***source*** of the leanness? ***Who*** "called for the drought" (v. 11a)?

  In Israel's case, what was the ***reason*** for the leanness (see v. 9-10)?

  In Israel's case, what was the ***remedy*** for their leanness (see v. 7-8)?

- **Read Haggai 1:12-15.** Here we see **two** responses—***the people's*** (v. 12) and ***God's*** (v. 13). In Haggi's day, how did the people respond? What might a similar response look like in our day?

  God's response was to "be with them"—but what exactly does that mean? Let's see! On what day, in what month, did God say: "I'll be with you" (v. 15)? ***That day*** was _____

  Now, look ahead to Haggai 2:18-19. "From ***this day*** onward..." ***This day*** was _____

  What was the blessing that God would bring (v. 19)? ***How*** can provision come ***before*** harvest time?

  What might supernatural provision look like in the church age? (Matthew 6:25-34; 2 Corinthians 9:6–11)

Haggai Chapter One

1 In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month,
the word of Yahweh came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel,
governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,

2 "Thus says Yahweh of hosts, 'This people says,
"The time has not come, even the time for the house of Yahweh to be rebuilt."'"

3 Then the word of Yahweh came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

4 "Is it time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses while this house lies waste?"

5 So now, thus says Yahweh of hosts,

"Set your heart to consider your ways!

6 You have sown much, but bring in little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied;
you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough;
and he who earns, earns wages to put into a bag with holes."

7 Thus says Yahweh of hosts,

"Set your heart to consider your ways!

8 Go up to the mountains and bring wood and rebuild the house of God,
that I may be pleased with it and be glorified," says Yahweh.

9 "You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; and you bring it home, and I blow it away.
Why?" declares Yahweh of hosts, "Because of My house which lies waste,
while each of you runs to his own house.

10 Therefore, because of you the sky has restrained its dew and the earth has restrained its produce.

11 And I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil,
on what the ground brings forth, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands."

12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest,
with all the remnant of the people, listened to the voice of Yahweh their God and the words of Haggai
the prophet, as Yahweh their God had sent him. And the people feared Yahweh.

13 Then Haggai, the messenger of Yahweh, spoke by the commissioned message of Yahweh
to the people saying, "'I am with you,' declares Yahweh."

14 So Yahweh stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah,
and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant
of the people; and they came and did work on the house of Yahweh of hosts, their God,

15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.

Sermon Summary (Key Text: Haggai 1)

The book of Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament and is only quoted once in the New Testament (Heb. 12:26), but this small book is packed full with beautiful truths concerning the people of God. Haggai wrote this book in 520 BC. The primary theme in the book is the rebuilding of the temple, which was destroyed in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar. The word of the Lord comes to Haggai five times throughout the book and all within about four months.

As you read the opening verses God speaks through Haggai directly to two people, Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest. This is key as you see God talking to the political and religious leaders of His people. God begins by calling out the leaders of His people. As you read through these verses three things become very evident about God's people.

First, the people have a problem! Verses 1-2 teach us that the people did not think it was time for the Lord's temple to be rebuilt. They would say, "The time has not come!" When they returned from exile into the land they faced opposition from the surrounding nations and quit trying to rebuild. This led them to begin making excuses for not building God's house. They were making excuses instead of being obedient!

Second, the priorities of the people are backwards. In verses 3-6 the people were occupied building their houses while the temple lay in ruins. They slowly began to elevate themselves over the Lord and this leads to Him disciplining them. Haggai says, "Think carefully about your ways." He sounds very much like a parent saying to their child in the midst of wrongdoing, "What are you doing?" Since they were putting their wants over God he explains that everything they do is worthless and never enough.

Lastly, the people of God are not fulfilling their purpose. In verses 7-11 it is made clear that their purpose is to glorify Him (v.8), but they were too busy glorifying themselves (v.9). When the people of God get their priorities wrong the Lord will discipline them. God is a loving Father and desires for us to fulfill our purpose. Verse 10 says, "So on your account." This explains the very reason for everything going wrong. Everything was failing due to the fact they are occupied with their house and not God's. The funny thing is when we think we are in control and begin building our kingdom and don't care about the things of God, He disciplines us and shows us He is in control! The people of God made excuses, prioritized their wants above God's commands, and did not fulfill their purpose. We cannot glorify God if He is not first in our lives!

Questions to Consider:

- Are there excuses keeping you from serving God?
- In what ways are you more concerned about your kingdom and neglecting God's?
- Is anything hindering you from glorifying God?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

To the Jews in Haggai's day, the message was clear: God said that the leanness and lack that they were experiencing were directly from him, in response to their selfish, misplaced priorities. How about us—what is the connection between disobedience and deprivation? Let's see...

Monday—Regardless of what some say (Job 4:7), calamity is ***not*** always the result of disobedience.

- Read Job 1:1-8. How is Job described by God himself? What examples of righteousness are given?
- Read Job 1:12-19 & 2:1-8. List all that Job lost.
- Read Job 1:20-22 & 2:10b. Write out Job's response (***in spite of*** *some* ***very bad*** *advice*: 2:9!)

Tuesday—Sometimes suffering is widespread and innocent people simply are swept up in it.

- Read Genesis 12:10. What happened and who suffered?
- Read Ruth 1:1. What happened and who suffered?
- Read Acts 11:28-30. What happened and who suffered?

Wednesday—Sometimes we bring calamity (or blessing) on ourselves.

- Read Galatians 6:8. What two options are presented here?
- Read Galatians 6:7. ***Who*** sees to these outcomes? (ie, This is ***not*** impersonal karma!)
- Read Proverbs 6:1-11. Can ***nothing*** be done when negative consequences are heading our way?

Thursday—God reveals his love for us by giving us abundant warning in the Scriptures.

- Read Proverbs 1:31-33. Upon which path are you walking?
- Compare Hosea 8:7 with 10:12. What do you learn?

Friday—Read Matthew 6:25-34.

- What must we ***not*** do (v. 25, 28, 31 and 34)?
- What must we ***do*** (v. 33)?
- ***Why*** (v. 25b, 26b, 27, 30b, 31b and 32b)?

Saturday—In preparation for worshiping your God together with your church family tomorrow, read Haggai chapter 2.

Haggai told about a time when God "spanked" the Jews for their disobedience. None of us enjoy discipline—but it *is* possible to welcome it because we value and appreciate what it produces.

Read Hebrews 12:1-11. Verse 8 says that God disciplines *only* his sons, *not* the sons of the Devil (John 8:44a). (Whose kids do you discipline?)

Have *you* experienced God's discipline? Has God spanked *you*? If so, how?

So...who's *your* daddy?