

Minor Prophets, Major Message

1. You've forgotten God (Haggai 1.1-15)

Welcome (10 mins)

What's the most interesting or impressive house you've ever been in?

Worship (10 mins)

Spend some time thanking God for things enjoyed and experienced over the summer. Speak these things out loud 'thank you God for..' Or ask each person to write one thing on a big piece of paper, or post-it that's then put in the middle.

Pray for particular openness of heart and mind as we begin this new series listening to the messages of old.

Word (30 mins)

Set the scene:

This series will cover Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi in 6 weeks. These are the last three of the 'minor prophets', so called because the books are largely quite short, but the messages contained are pretty major! These three are writing after the Israelites have returned to Jerusalem from 70 years in exile. The big question they answer is 'how do we live now we're home', but the answers are not very comfortable! Encourage your group to be open to both reassurance and warning, and to remember we live under grace and not covenant law.

Read Haggai 1.1-15

Q) What stands out here on first reading? How do we feel about what we've just read? Shockers and Blockers.

note: you don't necessarily need the answers.

Q) The people have been back in Jerusalem for 18 years but the Lord's house 'remains a ruin (4)' Why do you think this is the case?

note: nothing wrong with looking after our homes! Balance and priorities wrong here. Temple was THE home of God, therefore THE identity of his people.

Q) How else would you describe the life situation of these people? (See 6-11)

Q) Can you resonate with this sense of futility and unproductively?

Q) Why, for these people, is this the case? (See Lev 26.18-20)

This not what God wants for them! **Read** Isa 55.1-2

Haggai, like all the prophets, delivers a hard message to his people. Much later Jesus laments over Jerusalem because 'Your people have killed the prophets and have stoned the messengers who were sent to you' (Luke 13.34)

Q) Have you ever felt rebuked or corrected by God? How do you tend to respond to being challenged?

Q) What is the result of Haggai's hard word on this occasion? (See 12-13)

Verse 14 talks about God 'stirring up the spirit' of the leaders and people. But it's interesting that this sense of spiritual stirring and awakening comes only after they have 'obeyed the voice of the Lord their God' (12)

Q) If you are hungry for spiritual stirring, could it be that God is asking you to put something right in your life first?

Witness (10 mins)

The people are encouraged to 'Give careful thought to your ways.'

Give some thought together now about any areas of our worshipping life together that feel like they might be 'in ruins' or need rebuilding. **Pray** for our church community.