

Minor Prophets, Major Message

2. There's hope, if you're faithful (Haggai 2.1-19)

Welcome (10 mins)

What spreads most easily in your house - cleanliness or mess?

Worship (10 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYjhGeAIG6k>

Word (30 mins)

Setting the scene

It's been a month since Haggai's first word to his people. It's now the seventh month - a time of festivals (Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles) each of which require a period of not working as well as fasting and sacrifices. (you could read Lev. 23.23-43). Haggai's second message comes to him on the first day after Tabernacles is finished.

Q) Why did the Lord choose this point to speak? When are we at our most attentive to God?

Verses 1-5 talk about disappointment and promise. The people are told 3 times to 'be strong'.

Q) Why did they need this extra strength to build God's house? What could 'be strong' have meant to them?

Q) What does God promise in v4-5? What effect does this promise have?

Q) How easy or difficult do you find it to trust God's promise of his faithful presence? What difference does it make to you when you are able to trust?

The pandemic has been described as one very real way in which God has been 'shaking the nations'. We tend to think of shaking as a bad thing, but look at the result in verses 7-9.

Q) In what ways has the experience of the past 18m shaken our church in a way that means the present is better than the former?

Two months later the Lord speaks to Haggai again with a plea for the people to think carefully about their assumptions.

Q) What is the gist of v12-15?

Note: The idea is that unholiness (defilement) is contagious and spreads without us needing to do anything in particular, whereas holiness (consecration) does not. That is the personal responsibility of each person and the nation as a whole, hence the law.

Q) Why is the Lord reminding the people of this at this point? What action might they have thought would automatically make them holy again?

Note: being back in the holy land didn't make the people holy, only faithfulness and obedience would do that. v15-19 is a description of the result of this unholiness.

It's so easy to trust in a holy work to make ourselves holy, or assume that status because of our association with church.

To finish, read Hebrews 10. 8-14 as a prayer and reminder of where our holiness is won.

Witness (10 mins)

Pray for those who are still being shaken by the pandemic. Think of those known to us and our community, and also the nations.

Pray in lament, and hope that one day God will fill his house with Glory from all this.