

## 5. God Motivates with Reminders (Zec 1:1-6).

### a. Jewish forefathers had rebelled against God.

- 1) Centuries earlier, Israel rebelled against God and Moses and spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness.
- 2) During the Judges, they had repeated their cycle of **Prosperity > Sin > Slavery > Repentance > Deliverance**.
- 3) They had rebelled against Isaiah's warnings.
- 4) They rejected Jeremiah's preaching.
- 5) As a result of their rejection of these and many other prophets, God was sore displeased with them and sent them into captivity (Zec 1:2).
- 6) This reminder was to motivate God's people to repent and obey God in rebuilding the temple.
- 7) When the devil tempts you and me to think that a little disobedience and sin won't hurt, we must remember Israel's history and our own.

### b. If we turn to God, He will turn to us.

- 1) That has always been God's policy.
- 2) The Psalmist wrote, (Ps 145:18) "**The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.**"
- 3) It is still God's policy today. (Jas 4:8) "**Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.**"

**Conclusion:** How did God motivate His people to rebuild the temple? He used the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah to motivate them with *rebuke*, with *encouragement*, with *chastening*, with *promises*, and with *reminders*.

Have you gotten slack about doing what you know God wants you to do? Perhaps you have become lazy about fleeing temptation, Bible reading, prayer, your marital role, child-rearing, dressing modestly, tithing, witnessing, obeying and honouring your parents, or some other issue. If so, let God's five motivations move you to action. It is not enough to know right; we must do right to please God. James 4:17 says, "**Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.**"

**Song:** I Surrender All - 394

# God's Motivation

19 May 2024 PM – Text: Ezra 5:1 (Haggai & Zechariah) – Topic: Obey

**Introduction:** On the farm, we often had a difficult time getting the cows to cooperate. Cows can be VERY stubborn. To motivate them to go when they did not want to go, we had an electric prod. It was a battery-operated tool about the size of a large torch that gave the cow a mild shock or sting. That sting motivated them to move!

When the Jews stopped building the temple, God did not use an electric prod to motivate them to obey. Instead, He sent them two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah to give them a motivating message (Ezra 5:1).

**Transition:** This evening as we examine how God motivates His people to obey, I want us to see how these motivations apply to us as well.

## 1. God Motivates with Rebuke (Hag 1:1-15)

### a. It was wrong to put self before God (Hag 1:1-4).

- 1) God sent Haggai to rebuke Judah's leaders for not completing the temple Cyrus sent them back to Canaan to rebuild. Instead, the opposition discouraged them, they quit, and began seeking their own welfare. They were living in cieled (covered, completed, or weatherproofed) houses while the temple lay in waste.
- 2) They were not putting God first in their lives.
- 3) This rebuke is a challenge to us as well. It is not right to serve ourselves and neglect God.

### b. They must consider their ways (Hag 1:5-11).

- 1) Work as hard as they may, they could never make ends meet. They were always in need. Since they stopped putting God first, He was no longer blessing them.
- 2) Take a good look at your life. Are you lacking God's blessing? (Hag 1:6)
- 3) Haggai reminded them of what they must do to please the Lord (Hag 1:7-8).
- 4) Because they were not obeying God, He was working against them (Hag 1:9-11).
- 5) When we disobey what we know God wants, He will work against us as well.

c. **They heeded Haggai's rebuke (Hag 1:12-15).**

- 1) The people wisely listened and obeyed the preaching of Haggai and feared the Lord (Hag 1:12).
- 2) Consider two principles for us in this section.
  - a) God will be with us when we obey (Hag 1:13).
  - b) God will enable us to do hard tasks (Hag 1:14).

**2. God Motivates with Encouragement (Hag 2:1-9).**

a. **God promised to be with them (Hag 2:1-5).**

- 1) God's message for Judah was **"Be strong for the LORD of hosts is with you."** The phrase "LORD of hosts" means that He is the sovereign of the armies of heaven.
- 2) God will be with us if we draw near Him. (Psalms 145:18) **"The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth."**
- 3) We need not fear doing God's difficult will.

b. **God wants to pour out His blessing (Hag 2:6-9).**

- 1) He promised glory and peace (Hag 2:6-7).
- 2) God is able to use us greatly even after we have failed Him if we will return to Him and obey.

**3. God Motivates with Chastening (Hag 2:10-19).**

a. **God withheld their crops (Hag 2:10-14).**

- 1) Living in Israel and worshipping God did not make God's people acceptable because they were disobedient.
- 2) A sick child cannot catch "health" from contacting a healthy child; but the healthy child can become sick. The principle of transmission really only works one way far more than both ways. <sup>Guzik</sup>
- 3) Being a Christian and attending church will not secure God's blessing for you if you are not obeying God.

b. **God blessed when they obeyed (Hag 2:15-19).**

- 1) Before Judah obeyed their supplies did not last and their crops were diseased (Hag 2:16-17).
- 2) From the day of obedience, God promised to bless them (Hag 2:18-19).
- 3) God will bless you if you obey God in every area of your life. Partial obedience may bring partial blessing, but God's full blessing is reserved ONLY for those who fully

obey Him. That is what He wants for you.

**4. God Motivates with Promises (Hag 2:20-23).**

a. **God is stronger than the superpowers.**

- 1) Judah was nothing but a small group of helpless Jews set free from 70 years of slavery.
- 2) God assured them that He was stronger than the strongest nation.
- 3) When we obey God, we are on the victory side. (Rom 8:31) **"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"** (1John 4:4) **"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."**

b. **God assured Zerubbabel that He chose him.**

- 1) God had work for Zerubbabel to do. God chose him to be the leader of this great task of rebuilding the temple.
- 2) Haggai assured him of God's calling. Perhaps he was beginning to question his ability to lead in this huge task.
- 3) When we begin to feel that we don't have what it takes to do the job God has for us to do, we must look to God's promises for encouragement.
- 4) Do you recall God's promise to Israel in Isaiah 41:10? **"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."** God is able to do the same for you and me.
- 5) After listing the trials of the heroes of the faith, Paul wrote, (Heb 12:1-2) **"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."**