

Application

A. I need to ask you, which word is God's word for you today? Is it **"stop"**? Do you need to change priorities and put Christ first? Will you do that? Or is God's word to you **"look."** Is he asking you to look up and see the signs of life and his hand in your life. Is God telling you to shed off that discouragement and anticipate great things?

It could be that you have become impatient with God and he is asking you to **listen**. Listen for his voice. Listen for his direction. Listen for the blessing he is bringing into your life. What if God's only word for you today is **"wait"**? Would you do it? Would you believe in him enough to know that prophecy is being fulfilled in our day? Can you see why it is so important for us to be aware of the times and know that God is about to do something great?

B. I want to challenge you today to step out boldly for God. Christianity is a minority movement, and yet, the possibilities of affecting change in our community are amazing. Jesus changed the world with 12 men (only 11 of whom worked out). Are you willing to be a change agent?

Malcolm Gladwell in his book *The Tipping Point*, shows how human organizations change when certain factors reach a "tipping point." He gives documented evidence that it takes only six children in a school to start wearing a certain brand of sport shoe and soon a hundred will join them. The "tipping point" is only six.

C. Imagine what will happen when a group of us stop and make God our priority. What if six of us looked with fresh spiritual eyes for signs of God's activity? A few of us begin to listen to the blessing he offers and live as if we believe it. What if all of us end up so full of faith that we can endure anything the enemy throws at us because we are convinced Jesus is at work, here, now!

"Stop, Look, and Listen"
Haggai

6/20/10

RMBC
Pastor Dennis

Introduction

A. Recently I remembered the days when I water skied. I was never an expert but I could get up on one ski. Three basic things you need to know to water ski:

1. Stay behind the boat. Skiing doesn't work well if the skier tries to be in front. The skier can't lead the boat.
2. Ski the same direction as the boat. Bad things happen when you try to go a different direction than the boat. I have stories.
3. Hang on to the rope or you'll go nowhere fast.

B. Those same lessons are important for the Christian life. Trying to get ahead of God doesn't work; going your own direction only leads to problems; letting go of God's leading takes you nowhere fast.

C. Sometime in the 5th century B.C. a prophet named Haggai spoke for the Lord to a people who were going nowhere fast. They had let go of the rope, the life-line which was God's will for them, and they were getting more discouraged by the day. God gave Haggai four messages that are recorded for us. In summary the messages were stop, look, listen, and wait.

D. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are the "post-captivity" prophets who delivered their messages after the people of God began returning from 70 years of captivity – just as God had told them it would happen.

Haggai's messages center around the rebuilding of the temple, the place of worship. It is important for us to see the double meaning of the temple. In Haggai's day it was the physical temple but it also represented the relationship of God to his people. Today we are the temple of God – individually, but especially corporately. What lessons can we learn from Haggai's sermons?

First Message: Stop 1:1-15 (Given September 1-24)

A. In 1:2-6 we read the heart of the first message (read). Clearly God is calling these people to attention and action. He calls them to stop what they are doing and start doing what is right. Specifically, they have built their own fine houses but neglected the house of God. Their houses have fine paneling and furnishings while God's house is in shambles.

It's not so much that they built their homes first, but now that they are comfortable they are excusing their inactivity with the excuse that it's not the right time. They are neglecting the work.

B. The real issue is the people's priorities. What is first in your life? Who comes first on the scale of attention to detail – you or God? That's a question for any age. That's especially a question for an age of affluence like we have experienced for most of our lifetime. A few of you remember the Great Depression, most of us remember several recessions, so what has that taught us?

C. Our attention to detail always gives testimony to our priorities. Two teens were arrested and taken to jail. They were told they could make one phone call which they did. About an hour later a man showed up asking for these two thieves by name. The attendant asked, "So, are you the lawyer?" To which the man answered, "No, I'm the pizza delivery guy." Actions prove priorities.

D. The N.T. answer to the question of priorities is found in Jesus' words in Matthew 6:33. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well." What an exciting principle by which to live! It's one we can apply to finances, relationships, leisure, careers, retirement, everything. Christ at the center, Christ first, everything else following; everything!

Second Message: Look 2:1-9 (Given October 21)

A. Follow as I read 2:1-5. Let me try to paraphrase what was going on here. As the temple rebuilding got started there was a buzz of excitement as things started moving. Then some old timer walked up and said, "You call this a temple? Man, you should have seen the old temple, now that was something to look at. The silver and gold was something else. This thing? Eh!"

B. What happens when people tend to look at the "good ole days?" We get discouraged. We begin to think, "You know, the old man is right. We don't have enough money to build. Things are really slow around here. Why the church might even be dying. We better slow down and think about this." And the work stops, people quit volunteering, stop giving, the grass looks greener down the road, and the church gets stuck.

C. What amazes me is how positive and uplifting God's message is at this point. It's as if he is saying, "Look up! Don't get down in the doldrums. Who are you dealing with here? I am the Lord! I made a covenant with your great grandparents and I will keep it. I will be glorified. You ain't seen nothing yet!"

D. I can almost hear the Apostle Paul say to the Philippians, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength. . . And my God will supply all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13, 19). We need that word too!

Third Message: Listen 2:10-19 (Given December 24)

A. The people were encouraged and motivated by Haggai's second message, but two months later, as they fell into discouragement again, God sent them another word of encouragement, 2:10-19.

According to the Law of Moses, if you got into a situation and were not sure what to do, you were to go to the priest. The priest was like a bridge between God and his people in that day. If we move that into our day we have the Word of God. When we don't know what to do we can go to God's Word where we find hundreds of principles applying to thousands of real-life situations.

B. One writer I read suggests that the issue at this point was impatience. The people wanted instant results. They were used to instant gratification. If they didn't have the money in the bank they could always use a credit card – I want it now. Does that sound like anyone you know? How easily we can become discouraged when things don't quite go our way or don't move along quite quickly enough.

C. At times like that God whispers to us, "Do not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time you will reap a harvest if you do not give up. Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers." Galatians 6:9-10.

Are you feeling frustrated or impatient with God today? Take heart knowing that God's people down through history have been exactly where you are. Go to the Word. Find the principle and the promise. And by all means, don't give up. That's God's word to you just as he said here in vs. 19, Listen, "From this day on I will bless you."

Fourth Message: Wait 2:20-23 (Given December 24)

A. On that same day the people received one more word of encouragement. This time it was a promise of what would take place if they would be willing to wait in faith. (Read 2:20-23)

B. Without going into much detail I believe this prophecy has already been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. I bet you didn't remember that Zerubbabel is listed in both genealogies of Jesus – Matthew 1:12 and Luke 3:27. A signet is the sign of authority and Jesus has been given all authority – he is the son of Zerubbabel, the son of David, the Son of God.

C. One day he is going to exert his authority on all nations. There is going to be a shaking of the heavens and the earth as King Jesus comes to reign. Are you willing to wait for that day. As you wait will you work to build God's temple – his church?

June 20 -- Haggai

Teacher: Pastor Dennis

Central Message: Consider your ways – are you honoring the Lord?

Verse to Highlight: “This is what the Lord Almighty says: Give careful thought to your ways.” Haggai 1:7

Sermon Title: “Stop, Look, and Listen”

Outline of Haggai:

- First Sermon – Reproof: Chapter 1
- Second Sermon – Encouragement: Chapter 2:1-9
- Third Sermon – Blessing: Chapter 2:10-19
- Fourth Sermon – Promise: Chapter 2:20-23

Introduction

Spiritual lessons from skiing:

Stay behind the boat (God). Let him _____

Go the same direction as the boat (God). _____ him

Hold on to the rope (Jesus). He is your source of _____

Haggai: a post-_____ prophet

O.T. temple: where God was _____

N.T. temple: where God _____ in us and in the _____

First Message: Stop 1:1-15

The issue of _____

Remedy: _____

Second Message: Look 2:1-9

The issue of _____

Remedy: _____

Third Message: Listen 2:10-19

The issue of _____

Remedy: _____

Fourth Message: Wait 2:20-23

The issue of _____

Remedy: _____

What is God’s word to you today?

Stop

Look

Listen

Wait