***The Living Temple***

**Worship Series – Week 5**

***A Neglected Temple***

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**SEach worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. It is recommended that the headings of each section of the service be included in the bulletin. |

**Announcements and Offering**

***Putting First Things First***

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| **Drama: There is no drama for this week.** |

**Call to Worship:**

The Book of Haggai, second shortest in the Old Testament, has a potent message. It tells us to *put first things first* in our lives. It was written to people, like us, who would have told you that God must be first. They believed that; we believe that. But, they had drifted into a way of life where their intellectual belief in the supremacy of God was not reflected in the way they were living. They gave lip service to the priority of God, but in fact they lived with other priorities. God sent this prophet to help His people get their priorities in line with what they knew they should be.

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***Never Give Up!***

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| **HC#165 – Never Mind, Go On!** | HC-165 | HCD15-T15 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#189 – Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing** | HC-189 | HCD17-T19 |
| **HC#185 – You Never Let Go** | HC-185 | HCD17-T15 |
| **HC#183 – My Life is in You** | HC-183 | HCD17-T13 |
| **HC#178 – Speak, O Lord** | HC-178 | HCD16-T18 |
| **HC#261 – How firm a foundation** | HC-261 | HCD25-T11 |
| **HC#264 – Jesus shall reign** | HC-264 | HCD25-T14 |
| **HC#271 – I’ll stand for Christ** | HC-271 | HCD26-T11 |

**Responsive Scripture:**

**Leader:** The Jews did not obey God so He sent them into Babylon, exiled in 587 B.C. King Cyrus, king of Persia, beat Babylon in 537 B.C. and sent the Jews home to Judah. He told them that they should build their temple again. The Jews made an altar and foundations for the temple but then they stopped because their enemies made it hard for them to build. For 17 years, they built their own houses but did not finish God’s temple.

**All:** *In the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai, saying “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘This people says, “The time has not come, even the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt.’ ” Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, “Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?”*

**Leader:** The people got caught up in the routine of life—farming, building houses, raising families, and that sort of thing. They got used to life without a temple. Even their

Leaders, Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest, had gotten used to things as they were. Into that scene, God raised up Haggai and two months later Zechariah to proclaim His message to this returned remnant.

**All:** *Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, “Consider your ways! “You have sown much, but harvest 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 purse with holes.” Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Consider your ways!*

**Leader:** *“Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,” says the Lord. “You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?” declares the Lord of hosts, “Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.*

**All:** *Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce. 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 produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands.*

**Leader:** *Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him. And the people showed reverence for the Lord.*

**All:** *Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke by the commission of the Lord to the people saying, “‘I am with you,’ declares the Lord.” So the Lord stirred up the spirit…and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God.* (Haggai 1:1-14, NASB)

**Leader: God will grant true blessing when we put His house first.** In short, Haggai is saying, ‘Give God the supreme place in your life.’” Or, as Jesus put it, “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

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| **HC#89 – Knowing You** | HC-89 | HCD7-T19 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#175 – The Heart of Worship** | HC-175 | HCD16-T15 |
| **HC#151 – Fairest Lord Jesus** | HC-151 | HCD14-T11 |
| **HC#146 – Here I am to Worship** | HC-146 | HCD13-T16 |
| **HC#126 – My Desire** | HC-126 | HCD11-T16 |
| **HC#58 – Praise You** | HC-58 | HCD4-T18 |
| **HC#47 – As the Deer** | HC-47 | HCD3-T17 |
| **SB#255 – I’m set apart for Jesus** | TB-246 – Aurelia | HTD3-T3 (3 vs.) |

***A Willing Heart***

**Leader:** The world says: “Be sure you get what’s coming to you.”

**All: The WORD says: “Life doesn’t consist of what you possess.” (Luke 12:15)**

**Leader:** The world says: “Spend and accumulate goods.”

**All: The WORD says: “Give and you will develop character.” (Philippians 4:17)**

**Leader:** The world says: “Wealth is a person’s security.”

**All: The WORD says: “Refuge in God is our security.” (Isaiah 57:20)**

**Leader:** The world says: “You deserve the best.”

**All: The WORD says: “God deserves the best.” (Malachi 1:6-14)**

**Leader:** The world says: “Give so that you may obtain favor from others.”

**All: The WORD says: “Give because you have received favor from God.”**

**Leader:** The world says: “Seek your own gratification

**All: The WORD says: “Offer to God your gratitude.” (Colossians 3:16)** .”

(*Hymns for the Family of God,* 646)

**Tithes and Offerings**

***“I Will Dwell With Them”***

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| **HC#136 – We All Bow Down** | HC-136 | HCD12-T16 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#166 – We Fall Down** | HC-166 | HCD15-T16 |
| **HC#156 – Enter In** | HC-156 | HCD14-T16 |
| **HC#58 – Praise You** | HC-58 | HCD4-T18 |
| **HC#47 – As the Deer** | HC-47 | HCD3-T17 |
| **HC#199 – I Stand in Awe** | HC-199 | HCD18-T19 |
| **HC#186 – When I Look into Your Holiness** | HC-186 | HCD17-T16 |

**Prayer**

O Lord, our God, I praise you for fulfilling your promise to return your people from exile. Yet how quickly their priorities changed. And isn’t it the same with me today? I fret and run after earthly needs and temporal wealth, and neglect that which is important to you—the heavenly task to which you have appointed me. Lord, teach me to be faithful in my care for your temple. Straighten out my priorities so that I will seek first your kingdom and your righteousness. Then, as you have promised, all these other things will be given to me as well. Father in heaven, I dedicate all that I am and All that I have to your kingdom purposes, and I trust you to take care of my needs.

(*The NIV Worship Bible*, page 1269)

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Message – The Neglected House**

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| **HC#173 – In This Quiet Moment** | HC-173 | HCD16-T13 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#186 – When I Look into Your Holiness** | HC-186 | HCD17-T16 |
| **HC#160 – I Surrender** | HC-160 | HCD14-T20 |
| **HC#130 – Lead Me, Lord** | HC-130 | HCD11-T20 |
| **SB#255 – I’m set apart for Jesus** | TB-246 – Aurelia | HTD3-T3 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#708– I want the gift of power within** | TB-496 – Mozart | No CD |

**Benediction: (Congregation in unison)**

*Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise,
   in the city of our God, his holy mountain.*

*Within your temple, O God,
   we meditate on your unfailing love.
Like your name, O God,
   your praise reaches to the ends of the earth;
   your right hand is filled with righteousness.*

*For this God is our God for ever and ever;
   he will be our guide even to the end.* (Psalm 48:1, 9-10, 14, NIV)

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| **HC#198 – In Jesus’ Name** | HC-198 | HCD18-T18 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#76 – Shout to the Lord** | HC-76 | HCD6-T16 |
| **HC#112 – The Potter’s Hand** | HC-112 | HCD10-T12 |
| **HC#109 – Total Praise** | HC-109 | HCD9-T19 |

***The Living Temple***

**Worship Series Sermon – Week 5**

***The Neglected House***

**Text:** Haggai 1:1-15

One of the recent reality shows that has appeared on television is called “Clean House.” It features families who have messy, cluttered houses. A television crew comes in and helps them make sense of their lives. At first, the experts meet with the family and tries to understand what led them to this level of clutter. They discover priorities – what’s important to the homeowners and how this has affected them.

Next, they work with them to get rid of stuff. As the families sort through their belongings, they have three piles to work with: Keep, Sell and Pitch. Typically, once they sort through the stuff, there is too much in the “Keep” pile. At that point, the owners are presented with options. For instance, “you can keep one of these framed pictures, but you must throw one of them away.” Or, “you can keep one of these cat sculptures, but you have to sell the other two.”

That’s the time that people squirm. They want the clean, ordered house, but they aren’t sure they want to pay the price along the way. They want a home that is presentable and respectable and comfortable, but they can’t make the tough decisions they need to make that dream a reality. Maybe they think that the end result isn’t worth the pain. Or they can’t handle the change.

But whatever the reason, if they don’t make changes, they can’t have a clean house. If they don’t make the difficult decisions, their life will be just the same.

It was a similar story when the children of God returned from exile. They came back after 70 years of being away, and they found the place in a shambles. Their homes, their city, the Temple, were all broken down after decades of neglect. God was especially concerned about the condition of the Temple. As you remember from the last few weeks, God wanted the people to build a Temple so that he could dwell among them. Now, it was time to make the difficult decisions needed to put everything in order in a broken Temple. But they had some hang-ups. Similar to those on the television show, they weren’t sure they could make the tough choices in order to get God’s house back in order. God had some words of challenge for the people that he gave through his prophet Haggai.

Do we have those tough choices when it comes to building God’s house? So far, we have discovered that the Temple can be a building, and it can be a person. Jesus was God’s temple, and you and I can be the Temple of the Holy Spirit. But today, we discover that the body of Christ is the Temple of God.

After all, the body of Christ is something that is put together in order for God to dwell among his people and for him to make a difference in this world through us. Could the corps where we worship be the Temple of God? And I don’t mean the building. I mean the people. Look around, and you will see the Temple of God. Yes, we are each God’s temple, and he lives in each of us. But we as a group are the house of God. Each of us is like a brick in the wall, together creating a tremendous structure that can make a difference in the world.

But how are we doing? If we are a brick wall, how strong are we? How much do we support each other? How much of our time are we investing in making sure that this house – this spiritual house – stands firm and makes a difference in the community? How much of our resources are set aside to helping the Temple to grow?

In this passage, I see three problems that can lead to a neglected temple. As we explore them, we might see an area in which we can improve as a congregation. We might get a sense of urgency in fixing things and putting our house in order. We might take a moment to stop looking at ourselves and our individual needs and look at the potential in building the Kingdom of God in our community. We might see a different priority in putting our resources to work in building God’s house.

Let’s take a look at the problems that God pointed out through Haggai in chapter 1. As we consider these, let’s think about how they apply to us today, and what we may need to do in order to really build God’s Temple in the way he wants us to.

The first problem God pointed out was Procrastination. The people were putting off the repairs to the Temple. Verse 2 says,

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “These people say, ‘The time has not yet come for the LORD’s house to be built.’”

Are there any admitted procrastinators here today? Why do we procrastinate? Maybe it’s because the task seems too big. Maybe it’s because we don’t really have a plan to get where we think we ought to be. Or we don’t know what we are looking for. Or we’ve been putting it off so long that what we meant to do doesn’t even matter anymore.

Someone once said, “Tomorrow is the busiest day of the week.” And if we keep putting off building God’s house, we will never get done. We will never get to enjoy God’s richest blessings and the joy of being a part of his growing Temple if we don’t get involved today.

Maybe you have sensed God urging you to give more, to get more involved, to invite your friends and neighbors to be a part of the temple. But you have put it off.

What are you waiting for?

* I’m waiting to finish school
* I’m waiting to get married
* I’m waiting until I have another child
* I’m waiting until next fall.
* I’m waiting until something goes on sale.

The biggest problem with procrastination is that it means a missed opportunity. Every time we put something off, we delay receiving God’s blessings. We miss out on the goodness of God and the joy of getting involved in building his kingdom.

Here are some keys to fighting procrastination: First, we need to decide what goal we are going to reach for. We need to agree on what success looks like. That way, we have a clear goal and a better chance of reaching it. Second, we need to break a huge project into manageable tasks. There is an old riddle: “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.” Eventually, the project will be done, and we will be ready to talk about the next big step. Third, we need to stop talking about it and start doing. Take that statement that we made, “I always meant to . . . “ and turn it into “I’m so glad I started to . . . “ In fact, there is something each of us has been lazy about in building God’s Temple right here. And it’s time to get building.

The second problem God pointed out is Selfishness. God pointed out to Haggai that the people were neglecting God’s house but living in fancy homes themselves. In verse 4 God says,

“Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?” (Haggai 1:4)

We all have things we hold onto. Like toddlers in a sandbox, we yell out, “Mine!” And we end up being isolated from each other and from God. In “The Great Divorce,” C.S. Lewis tells a story of people who live one by one in different houses. As time goes on, and each time the narrator looks, it seems like the houses are farther and farther apart. Lewis was trying to describe what Hell might be like – being content to be separated from each other but not aware that the distance between us and God is growing and growing until we are completely isolated.

God had a different plan for his Temple. God’s idea for his Kingdom is a community of people who were generous with each other. Because of their unity and calling, they are stronger together than they are when they are on their own. A church that stands stronger than any human-inspired organization because God himself is part of it. Remember, the purpose of the Temple is so that God can dwell with his people.

In the Kingdom of God, there is no room for selfishness. Now that doesn’t mean that we can’t take care of what belongs to us. It doesn’t mean that we can’t enjoy what we have. It just means that as we enjoy those things, we keep it in perspective with what’s important for the Kingdom. After all, there are things you enjoy that show a certain creativity and passion that God has given you – internal drives that can make you a crucial part of building his Temple, the church body, stronger and more effective.

So we know that Procrastination is a problem, and so is Selfishness. The third problem God revealed was Priorities that were out of balance. In verse 9, God talks about the hopes and dreams of his people. He says,

“You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the LORD Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. (Haggai 1:9)

Some people have said that you can tell what someone’s priorities are by looking at where they spend their time and their money. Is your priority football, or scrapbooking, or grandkids, or shopping, or video games? Or is it something less honorable, something you don’t let people see? Why are you busy with your own house, and God’s house remains in ruin?

A woman bought a parrot to keep her company but returned it the next day. “This bird doesn’t talk,” she told the owner.

“Does he have a mirror in his cage?” he asked. “Parrots love mirrors. They see their reflection and start a conversation.” The woman bought a mirror and left.

The next day she returned; the bird still wasn’t talking. “How about a ladder? Parrots love ladders. A happy parrot is a talkative parrot.” The woman bought a ladder and left.

But the next day, she was back. “Does your parrot have a swing? No? Well, that’s the problem.” Once he starts swinging, he’ll talk up a storm.” The woman reluctantly bought a swing and left.

When she walked into the store the next day, her countenance had changed. “The parrot died,” she said. The pet store owner was shocked.

“I’m so sorry. Tell me, did he ever say a word?” he asked.

“Yes, right before he died,” the woman replied. “In a weak voice, he asked me, ‘Don’t they sell any food at that pet store?’”

Sometimes our priorities are the fun things, even some very important things. But we have forgotten the most important of all. God wants us to build a temple, a place for him to dwell among his people. What’s more important than that?

And in some ways, his temple has come into disrepair. It has been neglected, and it shows. God is pointing out that our priorities might be out of order.

God’s Temple is in need of repair, of rebuilding and restoration. Even though our own congregation needs some building up, maybe it needs to start with you allowing God to help you rebuild God’s house right in your own heart.