

Putting God first

If any of you Christian people are tempted to put off some service for God which lies upon your heart, I pray you to remember your Lord's words, and to imitate his prompt action, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Charles Spurgeon

Priorities:

Why are they so hard to get right? Personally, I think it's because we so often selfishly seek our own desires. Or, we give in to the tyranny of the urgent rather than focusing on the more important but quieter eternal matters. The Jews who returned from exile to rebuild Jerusalem failed to make God's house a priority, and they suffered because of it.

"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, this remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house." Haggai 1:9

The cause of their neglect was busyness. The result of their neglect was loss – loss of material things, prosperity, satisfaction, comfort – and God says they were unclean because of their failure to put him first.

Haggai confronted the leaders and the people with their failure and they listened. He may be the only prophet who actually saw the Israelites respond to his message. The people resumed their work on the temple and completed it. It was nowhere near as grand a building as the first temple, but that was not God's plan. He said this temple would be more glorious than Solomon's temple, and it was, because of the one who glorified it.

"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty." Haggai 2:6-7

Jesus glorified the second temple when he taught and ministered in it, making a way for God's peace as Haggai prophesied. Among his teachings was an important one about priorities:

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
Matthew 6:33

Jesus said not to be anxious about material things like food, clothing, and shelter. Don't worry about the future. Instead, put God first in your thoughts and actions and he will take care of all those things, "All this and heaven too".