

It's Time to Consider Our Purpose

It's Time #2 - Pastor Gary Combs - January 19, 2025 - Haggai 1:7-11

INTRO: Good morning church! We're continuing our series today called "It's Time!" We're going through the book of Haggai. Our theme comes from...

Haggai 1:2; 2:4-5 (ESV) "These people say the **time** has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord... Yet now **be strong**... **Work**, for I am with you, declares the Lord... My Spirit remains in your midst. **Fear not.**"

I hope you stopped by our It's Time table today to pick up our Journey Guide. Over the next weeks we're inviting you to go on a spiritual journey together with and this is your journey guide. You'll want it to take sermon notes in every Sunday, you'll want it for your daily devotions and for your weekly CG gatherings.



Trans: In last week's sermon, we saw the prophet Haggai asking the people of God to "Consider their Priorities." God had brought them out of Babylonian exile and back to Jerusalem in order to inhabit the land and rebuild His Temple that they might be a light to the nations and bring glory to Him. But they had gotten their priorities out of order, putting their house ahead of His house, His Kingdom. Now, having addressed their priorities, the Lord calls them to "Consider their Purpose." That's our message title today: "**It's Time to Consider Our Purpose.**"

Need: Isn't purpose one of the most basic questions we ask ourselves? "Who am I? Why am I here? What's my purpose?" Some look around them and find purpose from the external sources. This is the traditional approach: My family and my community give me my identity and purpose. The post-modern approach is more common today: I look within to find my identity and purpose. But both of these approaches, the outward and the inward, fall short. They both lead to false identities and meaningless lives without real purpose and fulfillment.

What about you? Do you know your true identity? Do you know what the French call your "raison d'être" or your "reason for being?" Are you living the "abundant life" that Christ promised to those who follow Him?

Trans: In Rick Warren's bestseller, *The Purpose Driven Life*, the first line in the first chapter reads, "It's not about you." That's what the Lord was saying through the prophet Haggai. The reason you're feeling empty and unfulfilled is because you've made it about yourselves, instead of living out your true purpose for which I designed you.

BODY: In the book of Haggai 1:7-11, God challenged His people to consider their ways to bring them into alignment with God's ultimate purpose for their lives. We can consider our ways to bring them into alignment with God's ultimate purpose for our lives. How can we bring our ways into alignment with God's ultimate purpose for our lives? The text gives three steps for bringing our ways into alignment with God's ultimate purpose for our lives.

Read text: Haggai 1:7-11 (ESV) ⁷ "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. ⁸ Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the LORD. ⁹ You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. ¹⁰ Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. ¹¹ And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors."

WE CAN BRING OUR WAYS INTO ALIGNMENT WITH GOD'S PURPOSE:

1. By living for God's pleasure.

EXP: (7-8) Circle the word "pleasure" (8). What gives God pleasure? What pleases God? A: Living for Him and for His house and kingdom. Ironically, living to please God first, rather than yourself or others, is actually the path of true happiness, joy, and contentment.

"**LORD of Hosts**" (7) (אֲדֹנָי, *śābā'*) - Yahweh of armies, host (of angels); of the whole creation.

"**Consider your ways**" (7) (חַשְׁבוּ, *śûm*) (imperative) - to put, place, set, appoint, make; set your heart upon.

"**Go up to the hills**" (8) (עֲלֵה, *ālā*) (imp.) - to go up, ascend, climb. God is calling them to difficult work.

"**Bring wood**" (8) - to bring back, carry back cut lumber.

"**Build the house**" (8) (בְּנֵה, *bānā*) (imp.) - to build, rebuild, establish.

"**I may take pleasure**" (8) (רָצָה, *rāṣā*) - to be pleased with, be favorable to.

ARG: Paul described his "aim" in life was to "be well pleasing" to God.

2 Corinthians 5:9 (NKJV) Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

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Who does God take pleasure in? Those who fear Him, who revere and honor Him above others.

Psalm 147:11 (NKJV) The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.

ILL: Maybe you have trouble understanding the fear of God? For me, I remember how I feared my Dad's displeasure. The worst punishment I can remember hearing from him was, "I'm disappointed in you."

APP: Consider your ways. Whose applause do you seek? Whose approval. Do you seek God's pleasure? What about our church? What's our church's purpose? "Go, bring, build" sounds a lot like "Go, baptize, teach" in the Great Commission!

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV) ¹⁹ **Go** therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ **teaching** them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

God's house is the Church. We are the church and we are commanded to make disciples by GOING ("go"), BRINGING them in ("baptizing") and BUILDING them up ("teaching") to be like Jesus.

Does our church please God? Are we going out to bring them in and build them up? Are we willing to stretch and get out of our comfort zones when it comes to our time, talent, and treasure, so that we live individually and as a church in a way that pleases God?

Trans: The first step to bringing our lives into alignment with God's purpose is by living to please Him!

2. By working for God's glory.

EXP: (8-9) Notice the 2nd part of the purpose clause in v.8: "That I may be glorified." Does your life and work bring glory to God?

"**I may be glorified**" (8) (כָּבֹד, *kāḇaḏ*) - Lit., "to be heavy, weighty." Glorious, honorable.

The first purpose of man in the Westminster Shorter Catechism is found in its famous Question 1:

Q: What is the chief end of man?

A: Man's chief end is to **glorify** God, and to enjoy Him forever.

"**Looked for much**" (9) (פְּנָה, *pānā*) - You looked for more and more, but instead...

"**Came to little**" (9) (מָעַט, *mā'at*) - you found less and less.

"**Brought it home**" (9) (בָּאוּ, *bō'*) - "to bring in." What little you brought home...

"**I blew it away**" (9) (נָפַח, *nāpāh*) - Lit., "to blow hard, scatter." ... God blew away.

"**My house lies in ruins**" (9) (הָרַב, *hārēb*) - parched or ruined:—desolate, dry, waste.

"**Why?...Because...**" (9) - God reasons with His people, explaining the reason for their lack of fulfillment.

"**Busies himself**" (9) (רָוַץ, *rūṣ*) - Lit., "to run swiftly." "You stir not a foot about my house, but you run with greatest earnestness about your own." (*Poole*)

ARG: **Why did God make us? Why are we here? For His glory!**

Isaiah 43:7 (NLT) "Bring all who claim me as their God, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them."

We are called to work for Christ, nor for ourselves, nor for others, but for Him! He rewards us.

Colossians 3:23-24 (ESV) ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

ILL: Have you ever heard the quote, "It's amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit"? But so called "glory-hogs" do the opposite. They seek the spotlight, take credit for others' work, and undermine team efforts. In the NFL, such players are often remembered as much for their antics and public feuds as for their on-field performance. Their clashes with teammates and coaches usually create such

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turmoil in the locker room that multiple teams part ways with them despite their abilities. But players who you hear giving the glory to God and credit their teammates are usually the most successful and often play on the winningest teams.

APP: Consider your ways. Do you live and work for God's glory? Or are you a "glory-hog?" You want the credit? You want the applause? What would it look like for you to start living and working, so that God gets the credit? Do you work "heartily" for the Lord's glory?

And as a Church, does our church glorify God? We're not trying to make Eastgate Church famous. We want to make Jesus famous. This is why we collaborate with other churches in our city. This is why we are part of a group of pastors and churches called Christ Together. It's also why we're willing to sacrifice as a church to plant other churches in the surrounding region.

Trans: So we bring our lives into alignment with God's purpose by living to please Him and second by working for His glory!

3. By relying on God's provision.

EXP: (10-11) Since they were living for their own purpose, their own pleasure and glory, God's provision was affected. His blessing on them dried-up as He "called for a drought" (11) on them.

"Withheld dew" (10) (כָּלָא, *kālā*) - to restrict, restrain, withhold, shut up. Dew, night mist.

"Earth has withheld its produce" (10) (יָבֹֿל, *yēbûl*) - produce, fruit, produce (of the soil)

"I have called for a drought" (11) (חֶרֶב, *hōreb*) - dryness, desolation, drought. From the same root as 'hārēb' in v.9. God is comparing the ruin of His house to the drought on their house and property.

"On all their labors" (11) (עֲמָלָה, *ʿēḡīlā*) - toil; hence, a work, produce, property (as the result of labor):—labour, work. Everything they put themselves into was fruitless.

ARG: **Jesus taught us to seek God's Kingdom first and to rely on His provision.**

Matthew 6:33 (NLT) Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

Do you understand the Kingdom principle of sowing and reaping?

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NLT) ⁶ Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. ⁷ You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." ⁸ And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

ILL: Have you heard me talk about the Art of Flow? One hand open to God and one hand open to give?

APP: Consider your ways. Do you rely on God's provision? Those who rely on God's provision have surrendered their time, talent, and treasure to God and cheerfully and sacrificially give back to God and others.

What do we mean when we say IT'S TIME to surrender and sacrifice for God's purpose?

- It means you are ready to follow God's purpose to reach people who are far from God.
- It will be a gift that requires life change, and demonstrates you are putting God's purpose above all other spending, saving, and giving priorities you may have over the next 3 years.
- To make that kind of decision is why we are spending many weeks on this spiritual journey because in the natural we want to say "No," but we need the Spirit to birth His will in us, creating His response in us.
 - So, it's not a quick conversation, but a prayerful and unified with you and your spouse.
 - The first number that emerges won't be your final number, it will grow as you trust God.
 - It will feel like a wrestling match with God on what he wants to do through you!

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- A word to those of you who have never really given significantly to the church or any other charity.
 - Go on the spiritual journey, Don't count yourself out.
 - Test God in this commitment season of 3 years, Set aside your fears and trust God in this. Remember what the Word says... Giving to God is the one place He invites us to "test" Him:
 - Malachi 3:10 (ESV) Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.
 - God created you to be blessed and to be a blessing, Joy in generosity awaits you!

CONCLUSION: That's why we're taking this spiritual journey together...

THE IT'S TIME SPIRITUAL JOURNEY COMMITMENT:

- Attend all 8 Sundays of the series and bring your It's Time Journey Guide with you to take notes.
- Do the 6-week (M-F) devotional starting January 13th through February 21st.
- Attend a weekly Community Group to discuss the It's Time Haggai study.
- Pray our It's Time prayer: "Lord, what do You want to do in and through me?"
- Respond to God's leading on **Commitment Sunday, February 16th**, and by faith, make a sacrificial, 3-year financial commitment that is over and above your current giving.

We were created as God's image-bearers that we might live to please Him to bring Him glory. This is our identity and our purpose. Will you decide to bring your life into alignment with God's purpose by...

- (1) Living for God's pleasure?
- (2) Working for God's glory?
- (3) Relying on God's provision?

Let's pray.

After prayer and normal decision instructions (Yes, Guest, Communion, Giving, Prayer), say...

Remember how God asked His people if they knew "Why" they were living in a drought, a dry season? Why they were empty and unfulfilled? It was because they'd forgotten why they were there, their purpose.

Our purpose as a church is to go and make disciples of Jesus, inviting them to "come as you are and be forever changed by the love of Jesus."

Did you see the "life change" stories on the back of your bulletin? Who needs a story like that? I want you to take the Impact Card you found in your seats this morning and take some time and write down the name(s) of someone who needs a relationship with Jesus.

That's why we're willing to surrender and sacrifice. This is our purpose church!

So while you're writing down those names, we've asked our children to do the same while in their classes this morning. So kids, please come on down and help us begin this season of prayer for people that are far from God to come near.

Then as the children leave, everyone else, you're invited to the front to respond to God as He leads.

Let's respond to the Lord now.