

THE BIG IDEA: Things won't last when God's not first.

The Take-Off

Thanks for coming back. Really, many may not have, but I believe that God is building a culture here that hungers for truth even when that truth is uncomfortable.

Like I said last week, there's not much more uncomfortable than talking about money in church!

Last week we spent time in Malachi talking about how God desires kingdom partners more than business partners and that our goal in this month-long series is to close the gap between the Father's generous heart and the children's less-than-generous habits.

One of the stats that really stood out to me was the realization that if we all simply did what God asks in our giving, we'd have an additional \$250k per year to do kingdom work with RIGHT HERE.

Yes, we recognize that many churches don't always do the right things with the resources they're given, and so sometimes our response to that is, "I'll do what I think is best with my money."

But God speaks very clearly about what he wants us to do with HIS money, and that is to bring it to the storehouse so that there may be food in it (i.e., resources with which to bless and serve people).

Full disclosure: we want to always be a place that is open and transparent about how we do that, and so on our giving page you'll find our 2019 Budget - our plan for how to funnel the resources being brought to the storehouse

This morning, we're going to be in a little known book 2 down from Malachi

Haggai is a 2 chapter message from God to his people through a prophet named Haggai

While you're finding it, let's talk about first things

Some of us in the room are natural born rebels, right?

If someone says things have to go one way, we're more inclined to prove that we can find another way!

But even the most "rebellious" among us have to admit that there are many times that order is NON negotiable!

You must put the key in the ignition and turn it before you can drive the car.

You must have gas in the car before you put the key in and turn it.

First things first.

What about the coffee many of us enjoyed this morning? You've got to turn the Keurig on before you put in the K cup.

But someone had to grow the bean that made the grounds that went into the pod that led to the coffee in your mug.

There is an order to things, and getting them backwards could be disastrous.

What if you pulled the cord on the parachute before jumping out of the plane? See what I mean?

This morning we're going to (hopefully) learn this as we walk through the message God gave in Haggai

What we'll find is that **until God's first, things won't last**, and when it comes to our possessions, this is HUGE!

We'll look at parts of the whole book, but let's start by reading **Haggai 1:1-11**.

1. Misplaced priorities lead to misplaced blessings

- a. Just to have an idea what's going on, it's been 18 years since the Israelites had returned from exile
- b. v. 2 / "the people" ("this people" NIV) not MY people / strong rebuke / they weren't acting like his people
- c. vv. 3-4 / clear rebuke about priorities
- d. Why had they shifted priorities from God's house to theirs?
 - Opposition from enemies led to discouragement
 - Now complacency and procrastination had set in
- e. v. 5 / "Look!" "Consider" "Examine" - an intentional Hebrew word about considering what is misplaced so that it can be replaced
- f. This is the "Dr. Phil" moment - look at how things have turned out "How's that working for you?"
- g. v. 6 / they still have a harvest, food, drink, clothes, and wages
- h. BUT THEY CAN'T KEEP THEM
- i. More month than money!
- j. God's response to their "incorrectly positioned" (misplaced) priorities? v. 9 / "I blew it (blessing) away"
- k. The blessings were still there but they were "temporarily lost" (another meaning of misplaced)
- l. **Misplaced priorities lead to misplaced blessings.** Why?
- m. v. 9 / because until God's first, things won't last
- n. What happened next should fill us with hope!

2. Fix the leak and find a fountain

- a. v. 12 / there was a remnant and they obeyed
- b. I believe that there is a remnant in this church, in this city, in this region who is going to hear the message calling us to a life of first things and is going to get to work reordering - realigning - God's way
- c. They began to work on the house of God / they put God first
- d. There is a principle of priority in the kingdom - a life of first things that God blesses
- e. A few examples:
 - Ex. 20:3 / God first
 - Matt. 6:33 / Seek the kingdom first
 - Acts 1:8 / Jerusalem first
 - 3 John 1:2 / Prosper the soul first
 - 1 Timothy 3:5 / Minister to the family first
 - Luke 12:34 / Heart follows treasure
 - John 14:15 / Actions follow heart
- f. This is the point: fix the leak and you'll find a fountain
- g. They reprioritized and instead of leaking God's blessings, chapter 2 shows that they carried God's glory, blessings, and authority
- h. This is the fountain that Jesus promised in **John 7:38** - "out of them will flow rivers of living water"
- i. Why? So that thirsty souls can be refreshed by the overflow.
- j. Put God first and things will last - that's the promise of a life of first things

The Landing

As I studied this, I couldn't help but think about a game that our school used to play every field day.

I want to close showing you how it's the perfect illustration of how to fix the leak and why

[Leaky pipe]

Why does God want to fix the leak? Because he wants us to carry as much of who he is to others who need him, and if we don't lay the foundation here, then we'll be empty by the time we get there.

A life of first things fixes the leaks that come from neglecting the things of God and begins to live expecting the fullness of God

Let's pray.