

The Presence and Priorities of God – Text: Haggai 1

1. God's Presence

a. We all need God with us

- i. God's people in Haggai's day were the same.
- ii. The LORD says: I am with you.

b. Haggai could be saying one of two things:

i. Remember I am with you.

- We can forget God's promises.
- We can think we're on our own.

Is there an alternative?

ii. Now I am with you – in a way I wasn't.

- God's supportive presence had been taken away.
- They were having a hard time.
- God is involved – not for them, against them.

c. What about for us?

i. It is not true that every hard time in our lives is a sign God is not with us.

- God can lead us into the dark valley and he is still with us.

ii. It is possible our difficulties are because God has turned his face away.

- This is part of God's reality we live in.
- Sometimes we need to change so he will say: "Now I am with you."

d. Why did God's people not enjoy the presence of God?

- There are principles here that are central to the Christian life.

2. They didn't have the priorities of God.

What are my priorities – really? Are they God's?

a. God's priority for them – build the temple.

- i. They had started – with enthusiasm.
- ii. They had challenges.
- iii. They gave up.
 - They weren't against building the temple.
 - Just – not yet!
 - Their priorities for themselves were not God's priorities for them.

b. Is God and what he wants your priority?

- i. It should be!
 - Not as an optional extra
 - Not as one priority among our own.
- ii. When you first became a Christian:
 - You were full on for Jesus.
 - God's priorities were your priorities.
 - But priorities shift.
- iii. This is something that needs to be worked at in our lives – constantly.
 - In co-operation with the Holy Spirit.
 - There's work to be done by us!
 - It's not in our own strength.
- iv. How easy it is to be like the people in Haggai's day.
 - Start enthusiastically.
 - We don't work at getting God's priorities central – and keeping them there.

This is what the LORD Almighty says:

Give careful thought to your ways.