

## **Sermon Notes and Discussion Questions: Life in the Spirit - We Need Spiritual Awakening & Renewal**

In 605 B.C. the first group of Jews were exiled to Babylon and by 586 Jerusalem was completely destroyed along with the temple within it. For almost 70 years the Jewish people lived as exiles in a strange land. In 539 Babylon fell to the Persian king Cyrus the Great. In 538 the Jewish people were allowed to return to the land. The people had been through a rough time and their need for spiritual renewal was great. There are some great lessons to be learned about spiritual awakening from their experience as they returned to the land.

The Promise:

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Seeking spiritual renewal will require God's people to:

### 1. Expect opposition

Ezra 4:1-2

Sometimes opposition comes willing to help  
Opposition has ulterior motives  
Opposition seeks to discourage the work

As God has done a work in your life, how has opposition come?  
Have you seen opposition come as willing to help?

### 2. Make time; Hag. 1:2. (Humble & Pray)

Prioritizing your life requires humility and prayer.

Why do you think the people said the time has not yet come?  
When have you said the time has not yet come?

### 3. Consider your ways; Hag. 1:3-4 (Turn from your ways)

What are some of the immediate effects of neglecting our relationship with God?  
What are some possible long-term effects?  
What things are you currently pursuing that do not satisfy?

4. Don't just sit there, do something! Hag. 1:7-8 (Expect God)

Sometimes it will be hard  
Sometimes it will require work  
Sometimes it will push you

When has following God, pushed you to do something hard?

5. Consider Now! Hag. 2:18-19

God wanted the people to mark the date down. From the day when they laid the foundation of the temple, things were going to be different. Through their renewed energy and obedience, God brought restoration and a newfound purpose. After all the mess, sin, destruction, and confusion, God remained faithful, and their work in the temple and in the fields would again yield results.

Spend a few moments discussing priorities. Ask the group to come up with a list of the many things vying for their time. Which of these "priorities" are important and why? Which are not?

Think about your typical day. What does it reveal your priorities are? Where does time with God fall on the list?

If we are going to see spiritual renewal in our land, God's people must rely on His Spirit and rebuild the temple of their hearts.