

Haggai Pt 4: From This Day On

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Haggai / Haggai 2:10–19

Introduction: Religious Activity Is Not the Same as a Healthy Soul

Here's a question worth sitting with: Can you be busy doing religious things and still be spiritually sick?

The people in Haggai's day were rebuilding the temple. They had obeyed God's call. They were back at work on the most sacred building in their world. By any outward measure, things were going well.

But God stops everything to ask the priests a pair of strange questions about holiness and impurity. And the answers to those questions cut right to the heart of what was actually going on with the people.

This lesson is about the difference between religious activity and genuine covenant faithfulness. And it ends with one of the most hopeful lines in the entire book.

Part 1: The Priestly Exam

Two Strange Questions

Haggai 2:10–13 records a brief exchange between Haggai and the priests:

Haggai 2:10–13 BSB

¹⁰ On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Haggai the prophet, saying,

¹¹ “This is what the LORD of Hosts says: ‘Ask the priests for a ruling.

¹² If a man carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and it touches bread, stew, wine, oil, or any other food, does that item become holy?’ ” “No,” replied the priests.

¹³ So Haggai asked, “If one who is defiled by contact with a corpse touches any of these, does it become defiled?” “Yes, it becomes defiled,” the priests answered.

Two questions. Two very different answers.

Question one: Can holiness spread by contact? You're carrying consecrated meat. That meat touches your bread. Does the bread become holy?

The priests say no.

Question two: Can impurity spread by contact? Someone who is ritually unclean touches food. Does the food become unclean?

The priests say yes.

The Principle

Holiness doesn't spread easily. Impurity does.

This is not just a quirk of Old Testament ritual law. It's a statement about the nature of sin and holiness. You can be near holy things your entire life. You can carry sacred objects. You can be surrounded by worship and Scripture and community. None of that automatically makes you holy.

But sin works differently. It contaminates. It spreads. It taints the things it touches.

Part 2: The Punchline

What God Is Really Saying

Haggai takes those two answers and turns them into a diagnosis:

Haggai 2:14 BSB

¹⁴ Then Haggai replied, “So it is with this people and this nation before Me, declares the LORD, and so it is with every work of their hands; whatever they offer there is defiled.

This is the gut-punch of the lesson.

The people are rebuilding the temple. They're offering sacrifices. They're doing the religious work. But God says: everything you're doing is defiled. Not because the work itself is wrong, but because the people doing it are not right before God.

The holiness of the temple project hasn't rubbed off on them. But the defilement of their hearts has rubbed off on their work.

The Uncomfortable Truth

This raises a hard question for anyone in a religious community.

You can attend church every week. You can serve, give, and show up for every event. You can be deeply involved in the most sacred activities your community offers. And none of that automatically makes you spiritually healthy.

Being around holy things doesn't make you holy.

What God is after is the heart. He's asking: are you genuinely aligned with Me? Are you walking in faithfulness, or are you going through the motions while something deeper is out of place?

Part 3: The Pattern They Missed

Look at What Happened

God then walks them through recent history:

Haggai 2:15-17 BSB

¹⁵ Now consider carefully from this day forward: Before one stone was placed on another in the temple of the LORD,

¹⁶ from that time, when one came expecting a heap of twenty ephahs of grain, there were but ten. When one came to the winepress to draw out fifty baths, there were but twenty.

¹⁷ I struck you—all the work of your hands—with blight, mildew, and hail, but you did not turn to Me, declares the LORD.

God is telling them to look back. Before they resumed building, their lives were marked by chronic shortage. Harvests came up short. Wine production fell flat. Crops were hit with blight, mildew, and hail.

This wasn't bad luck. God was behind it. He was trying to get their attention.

And notice the painful line at the end: "yet you did not turn to me."

The frustrations were there. The signs were there. But the people never made the connection. They never stopped to ask why life felt like a treadmill. They just kept grinding forward without ever turning back to God.

Echoes of Deuteronomy

This is the language of Deuteronomy. Moses had told Israel centuries earlier that covenant faithfulness would bring blessing, and covenant neglect would bring exactly these kinds of consequences. Drought, crop failure, and frustrating labor were built into the covenant as warning signs.

God wasn't being cruel. He was being consistent. He was doing what He said He would do, trying to call His people back.

The tragedy is that it took a prophet to help them see what should have been obvious.

Part 4: The Turning Point

From This Day On

Now comes the turn. And it's a significant moment in the book:

Haggai 2:18–19 BSB

¹⁸ Consider carefully from this day forward—from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, the day the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid—consider carefully:

¹⁹ Is there still seed in the barn? The vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yet yielded fruit. But from this day on, I will bless you.”

God marks a date. The twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. This is the day Haggai is speaking. This is the day everything changes.

Look at the honesty in this verse. The seed is still in the barn. There's no visible evidence of blessing yet. The harvest isn't in. The fruit trees have produced nothing. From the outside, nothing looks different.

But God says: from this day on I will bless you.

Not "from this day on, once you see results." Not "from this day on, after things improve." Just: from this day on.

The Weight of That Promise

God is drawing a line in time. On one side of the line, there is drift, defilement, and chronic frustration. On the other side, there is blessing.

And the line isn't drawn by impressive religious performance. It's drawn by genuine turning. By coming back to God. By choosing, on this specific day, to be aligned with Him.

This is Deuteronomy 30 language. Moses told Israel that the choice between life and death, blessing and curse, was real and available. You can turn back to God and He will restore you. That's not a formula. It's a covenant promise from a God who keeps His word.

Part 5: The Mirror

Religious Busyness vs. Real Faithfulness

Most people in a church community are not in open rebellion against God. They're not walking away from faith. They're showing up. They're involved.

But Haggai is asking a harder question: Is your heart genuinely aligned with God? Or are you carrying holy things around while something deeper is out of place?

Maybe there's hidden sin that has never been brought into the light. Maybe there's bitterness toward someone that you've never resolved. Maybe there's an area of your life where God has been gently but consistently saying, "This isn't right," and you've ignored it.

And maybe, like the people in Haggai's day, life has felt like a treadmill for a while. You're working hard but never quite getting ahead. You're striving but never quite satisfied. You keep putting more in but getting less out.

That's not always a spiritual problem. But sometimes it is. And Haggai says it's worth stopping to ask.

The Invitation of "From This Day On"

Here's what makes this passage extraordinary: God doesn't ask the people to fix everything before He blesses them. He doesn't give them a long list of things to clean up first. He draws a line and says, from this day on, things are different.

That's the character of God. He's not waiting for you to earn your way back into His good graces. He's inviting you to turn. And the moment you turn, the line is drawn.

You may not see the harvest immediately. The seed may still be in the barn. But the promise is real. And it starts today.

Part 6: A Dated Turning Point

The Significance of Specificity

One of the striking things about Haggai is how specific the dates are. God keeps marking exact days. The first message came on a specific date. The obedience of the people is recorded with a specific date. And now this promise of blessing is tied to a specific date.

That's intentional. God is saying: this matters. What happens on this day is real. This is a moment in history, not

just a feeling.

There's something important in that for us. Genuine repentance and genuine turning are not just vague spiritual impressions. They can be specific. They can be located in time. You can look back and say, "That was the day I stopped running. That was the day I turned back."

What Is Your Date?

Haggai ends this section with a challenge, even if it's not stated explicitly.

What would it look like for you to draw a line? Not a vague resolution to do better. Not a general sense that you should probably make some changes. But a real, specific, dated turning point.

From this day on, I will stop hiding this sin.

From this day on, I will pursue that reconciliation.

From this day on, I will stop letting fear make my decisions.

From this day on, I will trust God with this area of my life.

God said it to a community in 520 B.C. He can say it to you today. From this day on, I will bless you.