

THE BODY OF CHRIST

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“He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away” (Luke 1:53)

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6)

Do you want to know God better? Do you want more in your relationship with Him? If we want God to show us more of Himself, the prerequisite is that we must be hungry. We must **want** to know Him more. We must **want** to go deeper with Him. If we are content where we are in Him, if we are satisfied with the little we have, we are like the rich who he will send empty away. But if we are **hungry** for Him, He will fill us with good things. He will not force us to walk closer with Him, to know Him better. But if we desire this, this is what we will receive.

I am sure you know what it is like to feel physically very hungry. When you physically feel very hungry your focus becomes the desire to find food. It is difficult to concentrate fully on other things because you so desperately want food. This is how we need to feel about God! We need to want Him so much that our desire for Him eclipses our desire for everything else.

Are you hungry for Him today? Are you hungry for more of Him every day? If you are hungry, He is going to fill you with good things. If you are not hungry, your experience of God will be limited.

However, I have good news for you. He can give you a hunger for Himself! Do you **want** to be hungry for Him? Then just ask Him, “Lord, make me very, very hungry for You”. And in His own time and His own way He will make you hungry. And then He will fill you with good things as you seek after Him!

Now for those of us who are hungry, or who are asking God to make us hungry, I want to give you some instruction.

Let’s read Haggai, chapter 1.

¹ *In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,*

² *Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, **The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.***

³ *Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,*

⁴ ***Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?***

⁵ *Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.*

⁶ *Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.*

⁷ *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Consider your ways.***

⁸ **Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.**

⁹ *Ye looked for much, and, lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.*

¹⁰ *Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.*

¹¹ *And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.*

¹² **Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD.**

¹³ *Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.*

¹⁴ *And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,*

¹⁵ *In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.*

What was the problem that the people of God had at this time?

They were all busy building their own houses and making their own houses pleasant and nice. They were saying that it was not yet time to build the house of the Lord.

What was God's response to them through the prophet Haggai? He called them to build the Lord's house. He encouraged them that God was with them in this.

Did the people listen to God? Yes, they did. They put things right in their own hearts and they began to build the house of the Lord.

Now, we know that the house of the Lord is no longer a physical building made of physical bricks. It is a spiritual building made of spiritual bricks.

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5)

We are the stones and **we** are the building.

But God's message to us is the same as his message through the prophet Haggai. We are too concerned with building our own houses and not concerned enough with building the house of the Lord. Our lives need to revolve around God and His desires. His desire is to raise up His body- a body of people who together are a testimony to His reality and His truth. So our lives and our attentions should be focused primarily on our part in the building of that spiritual house.

What is your part in building this spiritual house? Well, over time God will show you more and more of what your part is. But today I want to show you some of your role.

We have spoken for some weeks on the fact that our lives are founded on fellowship with God. We have talked about what that fellowship means. The impartation of Divine Life, the interchange of love and of communication. The next important ingredient is fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. God wants us to be in each other's lives, serving each other and being served by each other. As we have said, church is not about going to some building at 11am every Sunday morning. But what it **is** about is fellowship with our brothers and sisters. Which does involve meeting together to seek the Lord, to get to know each other, to love one another.

²⁴ *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*

²⁵ *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. (Heb 10:24-25)*

The Christian life was not designed to be lived alone. In fact, basically it cannot be lived alone. Do you want to know God better? Do you want to fulfill His plan for your life? This is only going to work in the context of your fellowship with God **and** with each other. As the poet John Donne wrote, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (1 Cor 12:27)

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Eph 4:16)

If you are born again, you are part of the body of Christ which is made up of all believers on the face of the planet.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers... And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart (Acts 2:42, 46)

The believers would meet every day, would continue in the teaching of their leaders, would enjoy continual fellowship with each other, worshipping and eating together as they sought the Lord together as one body.

So, are you hungry today? If you are not hungry, are you going to ask God to make you hungry?

What does your life revolve around? Work? Family? Your plans? Or God? God's plans? If you are willing to let your life revolve around God, fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ is going to be a major part. From this day forward, is your life going to be focused on the building of God's house? We have to take the time to build the kingdom. You may need to rearrange your life a little to permit yourself to build God's house, to enter into closer fellowship in the body. But this is what God wants and as we do that, God is going to bless us as individuals and more importantly, as a body.

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