

FROM APATHY TO AWAKENING

March 2023

Warm-up: Which people do you know who have accomplished great things for God (either historically or currently)? What was distinctive about their lives? Why was God able to use them in the way He did?

READ: HAGGAI 1 (and 2 if time).

Background: Haggai and Zechariah both prophesied in the period after King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return from exile to their land in 538 BC. They called out the lack of completion of God's house. By 536 BC the people had completed the foundations but then met opposition and suspended the work. By the time of this prophesy in 520 BC, 16 years had elapsed with no more building. The prophesies in Haggai all took place over a 3-month period in that year.

APATHY

Q1: What was God's complaint against the Israelites in chapter 1 and what had they been saying? How would you characterise the state the Israelites were in?

Q2: Why do you think the Israelites had prioritised themselves before building God's temple? Why hadn't they done anything for 16 years? Why should the completion of the temple have been important to them? LEADER'S NOTE: (temple = presence of God)

The Temple had been at the centre of their lives. It provided them with structure and purpose (FORM) - physically, socially, spiritually. It was the place where God met with them and where they could experience his Presence (FIRE).

Q3: What had the consequences of this state of apathy been for them (1:5-11)?

Q4: Can you recall other times that God had to call out the people's neglect of Him? (Judges 2:19, 1 Kings 11:9, Jer 5:23-25, Dan 9:11). What were the consequences?

How do we know that they had become indifferent or apathetic?

Because what you CARE about is revealed in your PRIORITIES and what we make our priorities is revealed in how we spend our time and resources.

Q5: What does God say about apathy and indifference in the church – Read Rev 3:14-20

AWAKENING

Q6: How can we avoid apathy in our lives. In our church? What are the things we can do to stop us sliding into apathy?

LEADER'S NOTE: *putting God at the centre by such things as daily routine of prayer and bible study, meeting with other Christians, being accountable to each other, asking for the Holy Spirit to empower us and rejecting the values of the world about selfishness and prosperity.*

Q7: How can we know that we have the right priorities?

LEADER'S NOTE: *e.g. try writing down how you have spent your time over a week*

Q8: What is God's desire for each Christian?

READ: Mark 8:35, John 10:10 and 16:24, Col 3:1.

PRAY: for each other to have life through Jesus in all its fulness.