

Guard Your Heart Series II.
Text: **Proverbs 4:23/Haggai**
"Apathy the Evidence and Cause"

Intro:

Good evening and welcome to restoration Life. This past Sunday we spend quality time introducing this message series that started with the importance of guarding our hearts.

The main points were:

1. We all have a heart condition
2. The significance of our spiritual heart condition
3. The heart attack or what attacks the heart

We concluded with **Philippians 4:6 – 7** *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

1. Tonight I want to expose the devil in the details of his attack on our hearts.

a. The idiom "the devil is in the detail" is expressing the idea that whatever one does should be done thoroughly; i.e. details are important.

Looking at our theme text: **Proverbs 4:23** *Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*

- And the devil is a detailed strategist that would love to see you with an apathetic heart Condition.

b. The word Apathy is not found in translation of scripture but I can assure you that it's Spirit and fruit is found throughout the bible.

Apathy: is most commonly defined as a lack of feeling, emotion, interest, or concern. It is a state of indifference, or the suppression of emotions such as concern, excitement, motivation and/or passion.

- An apathetic individual has an absence of interest in or concern about emotional, social, spiritual, philosophical and/or physical life and the world.

Helen Keller

We may have found a cure for most evils; but we have found no remedy for the worst of them all, the apathy of human beings.

Eleanor Roosevelt "So much attention is paid to the aggressive sins, such as violence and cruelty and greed with all their tragic effects, that too little attention is paid to the passive sins, such as apathy and laziness, which in the long run can have a more devastating effect."

c. But what are the evidences and Causes of Spiritual Apathy:

- What are some of the underlying causes of this spirit of indifference, this spirit of apathy towards the God's plan, for people that God put in our lives, the state of our nation, our ministry, our Testimony?

2. To study this out we are going to look at the Book Of Haggai.

a. In this series we'll see how relevant his message is for the Church today.

- Written some 2,500 years ago and intended to address a specific situation at that time, Haggai's message is timeless in its relevance.
- Why, because the spiritual issues and problems that he had to deal with in his day tend to recur in every generation of the Church.

3. A little History: Haggai is one of the shortest books of the Bible and is included in that body of Biblical literature that is known as the Minor Prophets.

- He is one of the prophets of the Restoration, the other two being Zechariah and Malachi and what we mean by that is he ministered to the people of God after their return from exile in Babylon.
- Haggai was one of the last prophetic voices to be heard before the coming of Christ.
- Unlike most of the prophets Haggai had the joy of seeing his ministry produce positive results among the people of God.
- There was a great spiritual awakening, a spiritual revival under

his ministry.

- It shows us what can happen when God's Word is faithfully preached and when God's Spirit begins to work in the hearts of God's people.

My Hope: It is my hope and prayer that as we study this out together, God the Holy Spirit will work in each of our hearts and help us guard our hearts against Spiritual apathy.

4. The two themes that dominate the message of this book are Spiritual Apathy and Spiritual Awakening.

- Tonight we begin with Spiritual Apathy.
- We will consider The Evidences, The Causes, the Consequences and The Cure to Spiritual Apathy.

5. The Evidences of Spiritual Apathy

- Haggai was sent by God to minister to a people who had fallen into a state of Spiritual apathy.
- What were some of the signs, what were the evidences that such was the spiritual state of the people at that time?

Well the first evidence was that

I. God's Work Was Being Neglected:

a. Now in order to see this we need to understand something of the historical context of Haggai's message. In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar invaded and overthrew Jerusalem.

- The city was raised to the ground and the temple was completely destroyed. God's people were taken into Babylon as captives and there they remained for seventy years.
- The exile was God's judgment upon the people for their sins. It was a time of great sorrow for God's people.
- A time when they felt cut off from God and could no longer worship him as they had formerly done. Their mood is summed up in...

Psalm 137:1-4

1 Beside the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept as we thought of Jerusalem. 2 We put away our harps, hanging them on the branches of poplar trees. 3 For our captors demanded a song from us. Our tormentors insisted on a joyful hymn: "Sing us one of those songs of Jerusalem!" 4 But how can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a pagan land?

b. However although God punished them by means of the exile, he did not abandon them.

Hag 1:13 NKJV 13 Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, spoke the Lord's message to the people, saying, "I am with you, says the Lord.

- In Ezra we can read how The people of God became discouraged, their initial zeal faded, they no longer had any heart for the work and the temple lay unfinished.
- They started rebuilding the temple but when faced with constant opposition they eventually caved to the pressure and gave up what should have been priority and focused on just themselves and their own personal needs.

c. **Here's the problem:** The work of rebuilding the temple should have been their top priority.

Matt 6:31-34

31 "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' 32 These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. 33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

34 "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

- That was the primary reason why God sent them back to Jerusalem.
- God's work had been abandoned and with the passage of time the people became more and more apathetic towards the work.

d. This then was the first evidence of Spiritual apathy among the people – God’s Work was being neglected.

Application: And this is one of the first signs, one of the first evidences of spiritual apathy in the life of an individual believer or in the life of a congregation of God’s people – the work of God is neglected.

My Point: Just as God had a great work for the people to do in Haggai’s day, the work of building His temple, so too he has called us to undertake a great work for him, a building work, a work of raising a holy temple to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:24

No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

1 Corinthians 10:33

Even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

Application: The temple that we are called to raise is not a temple made out of bricks and mortar but a temple that is composed of the living stones of men and women, boys and girls who have been saved by the grace of God.

e. The temple of the Old Testament was a type of Christ and of his Church.

- Do you remember what Jesus said in **John 2:19** “Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.”
- And how it goes on to say that “the temple he had spoken of was his body” And here on this earth the Church is the body of Christ and as such God’s spiritual temple in this world.

1 Peter 2:5-6 NIV

5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

f. Peter is using the analogy there of the temple.

- Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone around which all the other stones are built.

- As each sinner has an encounter and confession Jesus Christ as savior another brick is added to that spiritual House that God is raising in this world.

g. The apostle Paul uses the same temple analogy on a number of occasions in his writings.

Ephesians 2:19-22 NIV *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

In **2 Corinthians 6:16** he likens us the believer to the temple of God when he says, *"what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols. For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said I will live with them and walk among them and I will be their God and they will be my people."*

- And one aspect of the work to which you and I, both individually and corporately, are called by God in our day and generation is the work of building up this spiritual temple;
- Of seeing the lost in sin being saved and added to the Church.
- Now of course we cannot save anyone. We cannot add anyone to the Church as such, but we can be and we are meant to be instrumental in doing so by reaching out to sinners with the good news of the gospel.
- This is the means that God has ordained by which people will be saved.

Romans 10:13-15 *"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on the one they have not believed in and how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard. And how can they hear without someone preaching to them...faith comes by hearing the message..."*

My conviction as a Christian is this... I believe with everything that is within me that every believer in Jesus Christ should be engaged in

someway in the building of God's people.

Phil 2:1-13 NIV 2 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

h. There are things that you could do.

- The real question is, are you interested enough to do them?