

THE DANGERS OF NEGLECT PRT II

This morning, I want to do part 2 of the message I preached last week, titled **THE DANGERS OF NEGLECT**. I am not going to rehash the entire message, but it suffices to say that neglect poses great danger to your progress and advancement. We defined neglect as the failure to give something the attention, care, maintenance, or action that it requires.

- If you were not here, please go to our website and listen to that message. Having looked at the dangers of neglect, the big question we must answer is this: “How does one overcome neglect?”
- It’s a good thing that we have identified the presence of neglect, but it would be greater if we were able to overcome it.
- Again, the Bible has all the answers; we do not need to consult psychology books for answers; we just need to open the pages of the Bible for answers to all life questions.
- The story we are dealing with pertains to the Jewish exiles, who got back from Babylon for the sole reason of rebuilding the temple.
- They began building the temple, and as they had just finished building the foundations, opposition arose from their enemies, resulting in a work stoppage.
- We discovered that the enemy was responsible for stopping the work, but neglect sustained the stoppage. Instead of going back to continue with the building work, God’s people turned their attention to building their own houses, thereby neglecting the construction of God’s house.

Haggai 1: 7 This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. 8 Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored,” says the Lord.

- Whenever we miss the mark, God, in His love and tenderness, comes around us to point us back to the mark.
- God does not leave them to continue in their error but comes alongside and raised the prophet Haggai, who appealed to them in the following manner:
 - Give careful thought to your ways (NIV);
 - Consider carefully your ways (BSB)
 - Set your heart to consider your ways (LSB)
 - Pay close attention to these things also (NETB)

1. Apply yourself to self-examination

- In other words, think about your way of life in relation to the great God you profess to belong.
- It was a call for God’s people to stop ignoring the abnormal and start calling it abnormal.
- Is it normal to engage in a transactional relationship with God when you talk to Him only when you need something...you don’t do that with your best friends.

THE DANGERS OF NEGLECT PRT II

- Is it normal to have both bitter and sweet water coming out of the same well?
- Is it normal to use the same mouth to curse and to sing praises to Jehovah?
- Is it normal for our children To be parented by the internet.
- Is it normal for us to be late for the corporate gathering of God's people.
- Is it normal for to live the same life as those who don' follow Jesus.
- That is when Jeremiah rises to admonish God's people to do something about the situation.

Lamentations 3:40 Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Jehovah.

Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. 24See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the way everlasting

- This was a call for God's people to search God's word and to apply it to their hearts – when you search your heart, and you search God's word, it will point to you how far or how close you are to God.
 - To the church at Ephesus Jesus called them to consider their ways in Rev 2:5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.
 - When you sincerely search your heart and God's word, the result is a desire to realign, leading to repentance.
 - We look intently into the glory of God as manifested in Jesus, and as we do that, we are convinced to become more like Him.
 - God was saying to them that when they reconsider their ways, they will realize that they ought to have been about their father's business: "8 *Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house*"
 - In our introspection, we must keep our eyes on Jesus – the greatest example of serving God (Hebrews 12:2).
 - As young as 12, Jesus understood what His life was all about
- Luke 2: 49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"*
- Jesus did not allow physical tiredness to sway Him from His mission. At the well of Jacob, Jesus was tired but when an opportunity presented itself to minister to a troubled soul, He set His heart on it.

John 4: 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her,

THE DANGERS OF NEGLECT PRT II

“Will you give me a drink...34 “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

Haggai 1:12 Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him.

- Most of the time, it is not a lack of knowledge that results in neglect; it is mostly what we do with what we know.
- God was gracious to send them a prophet, and today God is gracious to send us His word, but that grace goes to waste whenever it is not met with the correct response.
- The turning point was not the presence of the word; it was this statement: *“the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God”*.

2. Obey the word you know

- You will become aware of your areas of neglect, but those areas will remain neglected if you are unwilling to obey.
- Obedience is aligning my actions with God's instructions because I trust His authority and His wisdom.
- Obedience is about alignment and resetting one's course. There will never be change if we are unwilling to obey.
- They introspected; they looked at their ways and took to heart the word of God and decided to change the direction they were heading.
- It's not the amount of Word we receive that matters; it is the amount of Word we obey and choose to live by.
- As James 1:22 emphasizes, biblical obedience is not merely hearing the Word but doing what it says. And in John 14:15, Jesus connects obedience directly with love: “If you love me, keep my commands.”
- Our love for God is measured by our level of obedience. When we proclaim our love for God, it must be accompanied by a disposition of obedience, a surrendered posture, and a willingness to receive correction.

Haggai 1:12b And the people feared the Lord.

- Obedience to something is directly linked to the weight and value you place on it.
- After hearing God speaking to them, a deep sense of God's awe fell upon them. In other words, the community rediscovered God's weight and honor that is due to Him.

THE DANGERS OF NEGLECT PRT II

- They considered what He had put them through and how He graciously spoke to them, and the awe of God came upon them.

3. Rediscover your reverence for God.

- Their fear of God was stronger than their desire for their own comfort.
- We must discover the deep awareness of who God is—His holiness, greatness, authority, power, and goodness.
- This awareness must produce awe, respect, humility, worship, and obedience toward Him.
- We truly fear God when our reverence for Him becomes visible in the way we live – this is how we overcome neglect.
- The fear of God is not just how we feel about God; it is how seriously we take God.
- When Joshua died, he left a community without a leader, with no one pointing them back to God. The result was that they lost the fear of God and went after their own lusts.

Judges 21: 25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

- The absence of the fear of God results in people doing their own thing; they don't listen to anyone's advice since they cannot even stand the voice of God.

Haggai 1:14 So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

- A shift of priorities is a battle that rages at the heart level, or can I say, at the spirit level.
- Yes, they needed to introspect, yes, they needed to obey God's word, and yes, they needed to fear God, but that was not enough.
- Here, we see a component that had nothing to do with them but needed God's direct involvement: *"So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel"*
- God needed to intervene by bringing a spiritual component to their assistance.
- All they needed to do was to avail themselves to God's workings.

4. Allow God to awaken you

- Sometimes, we neglect things because we are under the spirit of slumber and laziness. In other words, there is a need for an awakening job in your life.
- The Hebrew word translated "stirred up" is עור (‘ûr, pronounced roughly "oor"), meaning to awaken, arouse, incite, or move someone to action.
- The picture is of something that was dormant or inactive being awakened into activity.

THE DANGERS OF NEGLECT PRT II

- When Scripture says “the LORD stirred up the spirit” of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people, it means that God awakened within them the desire, courage, motivation, and resolve to do what He had called them to do.
- For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good purpose (Phil 2:13).
- We respond to God’s word in obedience, and God responds to our obedience by stirring us up.
- You see, to overcome neglect will require a partnership between humanity and divinity. Nothing will change unless both are involved.
- Sometimes humanity puts effort in without the working of the Spirit, which results in mere striving without progress.
- Neglect was overcome by the collaboration of introspection, obedience, Godly fear, and stirring of the heart.
- What was the result: *Haggai 1: 14... They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God,*
- God’s people went back to the starting line, and the construction project commenced again. The house was built, and God promised to find pleasure in it.
- When we make up our minds to serve God, in turn God finds pleasure in our service.
- Neglect can be conquered, and when it is overcome, people will reconnect with God and with the calling of God over their lives.