Haggai Series 3
Together We Can Finish What God Entrusted Us
January 22, 2016

I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
Prepare a couple of simple, fun and delightful icebreakers to help your group warm up. Help your cell group members to lay aside their busyness and tiredness and prepare their hearts to come before God.

II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.
Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead the cell group members to worship God. The worship leader would encourage members to come before the throne of God to seek God’s face, and lead them into God’s presence. During this time, the cell group leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for the following prayer items:

A. MISSION ORGANIZATION: ______________, and their needs are: ______________
(Please contact the church if you don’t know the needs of the mission organization.)

B. CHURCH MINISTRY:
- 1/23 Men’s Breakfast @ 9am in E5
- 1/31 & 2/7 Healing Team Training
- 2/3 Bi-Weekly Prayer Meeting @ 7:30pm in Fellowship Hall
- 2/6 Chinese New Year Celebration @ 6:30pm in Fellowship Hall
- 2/17 Bi-Weekly Prayer Meeting @ 7:30pm in Fellowship Hall
- 3/4 Worship Night

C. New comer: ______________ Confirm new comers’ name before the meeting.
   For sick members, friends or relatives: ______________ Please discuss how you may show your care to them.

III. WORD, 45 mins. Through sharing and discussing God’s word, the group applies it to their daily life.

A. Sharing the message from last Sunday’s sermon: (It would be helpful if you could listen on-line once again)
   1. What is the key message from last Sunday’s sermon? How did God speak to you through the message?
   2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

B. Topic of the week: Together We Can Finish What God Entrusted Us

   Verses: Haggai 2:10-23
   Memorizing Verses: Then Haggai said, “‘So it is with this people and this nation in my sight,’ declares the Lord. ‘Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled. (Haggai 2:14)

Preface:
Prior to July 21, God spoke to the Jews at the time through the prophet Haggai to resume construction of the temple project. After the 21st, when they were working on the construction of the temple, God spoke again to encourage them to be strong and do the work. On September 24, God spoke twice. Why did God speak twice, when the Israelites were in the middle of working really hard? This is because even though on the outside they were working really hard, but on the inside, they still didn’t know God’s heart and had shortcomings. Therefore, God patiently spoke to the people he love again and again so they could build the glorious temple with the right mind-set, attitude, and heart.

1. You need to be holy when building the temple (Haggai 2:10-14)
   A. The whole congregation needs to pursue Holiness (2:10-12): Consecrated meat refers to holy sacrifice. When anything touches God’s sacrifices it would become holy (Lev. 6:27). If the fold of the garment touches the consecrated sacrifice it would of course become holy. But what if the garment touches something else, would it become holy? The priest answered “No, it won’t become holy.” To become holy, one has to be closer to God, and have a personal relationship with God. You can’t become holy by transference. Building the temple was a beautiful thing. However, it can’t sanctify them unless they first seek the Lord. Your sanctification doesn’t make other people sanctified unless they are seeking the Lord for themselves. Building the temple belongs to the whole congregation. We must pursue holiness and be sanctified before we can build the glorious house of God.

   B. The whole congregation needs to flee away from sin (2:13-14): Anything that touches the dead becomes filthy and defiled. It is very hard to become sanctified, yet it is so easily to be defiled. We cannot build the glorious house of the Lord with unclean
hands. Therefore all who participate in the building of the temple must flee from evil and sin.

2. Building the temple with devoted hearts to God (Haggai 2:15-19):
   A. God’s people were not blessed because their hearts didn’t turn to Him (2:15-17):
      “This day” refers to September 24. Prior to this day, the people of Judah who returned from exile, laid the foundation for the temple, but because of the enemy’s attack, they stopped building the temple for sixteen years. After that, God spoke to the people through prophet Haggai and they again returned to work on building the temple. By this time, they had already been working for more than two months. But “this day” God wanted them to think about how He dealt with them before and after the work started. They found that their situation didn’t improve that much and God was still dealing with them. They received only half of what they deserved, not even half. What happened? How come God’s blessing could not descend upon them? God told them it is because “yet you did not return to me.” (2:17).
   B. God will bless His people when their hearts turn to Him (2:18-19):
      When God asked them a second time to consider how things were prior to “this day”. It was because God wanted them to really think about it again, and know that turning their hearts to God is the most important thing in building the temple. God will remember and count our work only if we turn our hearts and be devoted to Him.

3. God wants the leaders to be in total obedience, before building the temple (Haggai 2:20-23)
   A. God will take away all obstacles (2:20-22):
      This was the second time God spoke on September 24 to political leader Zerubbabel. It’s very obvious that the leaders must have had a great amount of pressure, during the time of construction. Yet God had promised to deal with those whose countries and forces that wanted to destroy the work of building the temple, because it would affect the Jewish people’s courage. When the people of Israel re-started the building work, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates, the officials of Trans-Euphrates, sent a letter to King Darius, asking to stop their construction. However, the contents of the letter obviously show that this is the hand of God that “shakes” the nations. Because unlike last time, the tone of the letter wasn’t as strong as the previous (Ezra 5:6-7). Later, God even moved King Darius’s heart to give an order to tell them not to prevent the Jews from building the temple. From this change of the situation, we can see that God really is a faithful and wonderful God. He first moved Cyrus King of Persia to allow them to return and build the temple. Later, He touched King Darius, who then ordered that no one could prevent the Jews from rebuilding the temple. God really shocked the nations to accomplish the task.
   B. God gave leaders power and authority to choose (2:23):
      God said to Zerubbabel that God will make him His signet ring. The signet ring represents the authority. In other words, God chose Zerubbabel to become a representative of God to execute His authority. Therefore, God will be responsible for Zerubbabel to the end. Sure enough, according to His word, God removed all obstacles for Zerubbabel and helped him finish the great work of building the temple in a short amount of time (Ezra 6:15). Church pastors, zone pastors, and cell group leaders are all God’s chosen leaders. God will give them authority and make them strong so together they can accomplish the work and plan that God has entrusted to them.

Discussion (please choose the topic according to the needs of the members):

1. If someone has been calling your name, what does it mean?
2. When the Israelites were building the temple of God, What kind of questions did God want them to ask the priests? How did these questions relate to the building of the temple?
3. Why did God’s blessing not come upon the people of Israel when they were working so hard on the construction of the temple? Did you have a similar experience, when you were working hard for the Lord yet you did not receive blessings from God?
4. What were the pressures and challenges Zerubbabel experienced while building the temple? How did God encourage him? How can we encourage and help our leaders to accomplish the work that God has entrusted to them?
5. From the passages of what you read today, what are the basic elements when building the temple (Please refer to subtitles 1-3)? Which one do you think we should pay attention to?

Prayer:
Dear Abba Father in heaven, we thank You and praise You because You show us how weak we are through our environment. Meanwhile You have been using compassion and grace to lead us. We are like the people in the time of Haggai that on the outside we work very hard for the Lord but on the inside we are very weak. Lord, please help us to know You more, and be like Mary who touches Your heart, and in Your time of need, breaks the alabaster jar of perfume to serve You. Holy Spirit, please lead us to better understand the Word of God and be obedient to Your leading, so that God’s will be fulfilled through us. Thank You for hearing our united prayers together before You. We pray in the precious name of the Lord, Amen!

4. WORK (Pray for each other), 10 mins.
Please break into group of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.