

The Response of His People

Haggai 1:12-15

Introduction

Last week we thought about the call of the Lord, what that is and how we might begin to explore our response to it.

Today we read the brief account of the people of Judah's response to God's call, both how they felt and what they did.

Today there are three movements within the reading.

Fear

'The people feared the Lord'

Fear in this context is not from physical power. It's not the school bully that still has your knees knocking 50 years later. Fear here is the fear of the supernatural presence of God, most often hidden but sometimes revealed through word or action.

I had a painful neck once, I had arrived at church to preach, and had done a good job of covering up the neck pain. Then one of the congregation approached me and said, "you've got a bad neck can I pray for you". God's presence was no longer hidden; I felt both relief and fear at the sense of God's presence.

Remember Peter's realisation that he was in divine presence, when he first encounters Jesus miraculous ability. **"When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!'"** (Luke 5:8 NIV))

It is normal for the 'fear of the Lord' to well up inside, the ultimate other is in our midst. But it cannot end in fear, that is why assurance must always follow.

Assurance

For the people of Jerusalem, the prophet Haggai who had challenged them now brought the word that they needed to hear next.

'I am with you'

Do you remember Jesus' immediate words to Peter after his realisation that the man in the boat with him was no ordinary man **'Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid'.**

As we respond to God, we may be initially moved by the fear of the Lord, but we need to hear God's assurance, 'I am with you'.

Work

'they came and began work, on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God'

Finally, the process of call and response in this scenario ends in action. Sometimes God calls us to stillness to wait, at other times we are called to action. The people were called to action – we are being called to action.

- What is God calling us to work at in our individual lives?
- What about as a community?

In part we know, God has called us to build 'the hub' - this is evidence of the response, we have worked together to get it to the place that it currently is.

It's a space dedicated to God, a place where the local community might discover the love of God and maybe learn to love God too.

Conclusion

But it's not finished; it still needs us to give from what we have been given, the hub and all that happens within it, that can be an expression of our love to God.

'Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.'

Yes, we will in word and action.