



## 26. September 2019 „God at the first place“

### **Hag 1: 1-8**

***In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of Yahweh was addressed through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel governor of Judah and to Joshua son of Jehozadak the high priest as follows, Yahweh Sabaoth says this, "This people says: The time has not yet come to rebuild the Temple of Yahweh." '(And the word of Yahweh was addressed through the prophet Haggai, as follows,) Is this a time for you to live in your panelled houses, when this House lies in ruins? So now, Yahweh Sabaoth says this, "Think carefully about your behaviour. You have sown much and harvested little; you eat but never have enough, drink but never have your fill, put on clothes but feel no warmth. The wage-earner gets his wages only to put them in a bag with a hole in it." Yahweh Sabaoth says this, "Think carefully about your behaviour. Go up into the hills, fetch timber and rebuild the House; and I shall take pleasure in it and manifest my glory there - Yahweh says.***

It is a simple lesson the Lord gives to his people through the prophet Haggai. A lesson which is given throughout the Scriptures and is clearly articulated in the New Testament by Jesus *"Seek first the kingdom of God, then everything will be given to you"* (Mt 6:33).

It is always the time to give priority to God. The people of Israel are wrong to wait with the building of the house of the Lord. Therefore, the Lord shows them what is not fitting in their lives if they do not give the Lord the first place.

It happens in a way how to explain it to a child. People sometimes need the direct experience to come to insight. We know a very good German proverb: "He who does not want to hear must feel." He must feel the consequences of his actions. Unfortunately, it must be added that even this way of teaching through the experience does not always be successfully to reach the insight.

For us Christians, it should be deeply internalized: Above all, it is about God. To give him the honor, to seek him in prayer and to do his will, that is the first and most important thing in our lives.

If we discover confusion and disorientation in our church today, then it is certain that God is no longer be given the first place in these circumstances. It can easily happen that secondary or tertiary things come first: human things before spiritual, ideas instead of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, personal interests before Gods will. On this way a great spiritual disorder arises, as well as in the personal sphere, as in the Church, and even more in the life of politics, which in many countries has made paths into the abyss.

If we correctly identify the ultimate causes of confusion in personal, ecclesiastical, and political ways - and we get the right interpretation through God - then the way of restoring the right spiritual order is also revealed. God must again come first in people's lives. It is not man who is the first subject for man, but God and his immeasurable love for us. If we get to know him more deeply and live from his love then we will be able to love man beyond our human love.

For the personal sphere, this means living a true conversion to God and progressing on the path of sanctification. Jesus made his disciples to the light of the world and the salt of the earth (*cf. Mt 5:13-16*). They should live this way and not be determined by worldly ideas and desires and even strive for material goods. How shall our light shine - and this is the light of God - when it is obscured by personal interests and vanities, We have to ensure - like the wise virgins - to have enough oil in the pitchers (*cf. Mt 25:1-13*). How can we be salt of the earth if we do not persist in the truth of the gospel and witness it even if the whole world rejects it? Will not the salt be stale and the spiritual food worthless?

For the ecclesial sphere, this means above all in keeping with the primary mission of Jesus to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples (*cf. Mt 28:19*), wisely and boldly, and not to establish the church in this world as a part of it. In no other name is salvation, only in Jesus (*cf. Acts 4:12*). There will be no better world in working with secular and political institutions - which is partially correct - if the church gave up its special mission to witness the truth. The proclamation of the truth in Christ is not our possession that we can dispose of, but a holy commission. Therefore it can not be set back, but the church is at the service of

the truth entrusted to her. Secondary and tertiary things should not come to the fore and thus obscure the actual mission.

The political realm also lives from values that are predetermined by God. Godless politics is doomed to failure, for there is no human domain excluded from God. Therefore, those Catholics who are active in politics are called upon to act on the clear prescriptions of the faith and the corresponding order of values, so that political action on this way comes into contact with the truth of the gospel.

So let us not wait with the proclamation and testimony of God, and thus the building of the house of God, until we have fulfilled all human demands and needs, and then turn to the Lord. No, if we turn completely to the Lord, everything will be brought in the right order by the Spirit of God. God at the first place!