

# Coach House Church **BEACONS**

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## WHY TAKE 15 YEARS?

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29TH JUNE 2020

Imagine being given an instruction or asked to do something and then taking 15 years to get round to it. It must be pretty frustrating to be waiting for the end result, especially if the way had been made for the job to be done in the first place.

I'm Andy and I have to confess that I purchased some plastic trays a number of years ago with the intention of building some sort of water feature in the back garden. Melanie and I were genuinely excited about the project, but the issue was that it was down to me to do it... and I failed to bring the idea into reality ... Until recently.

The lock down and restrictions of the last few months gave me the time and the inclination to make good on my plans and to construct the water feature. It actually didn't take long to do at all, literally a couple of hours and the job was complete. I had the tools, the parts and the time... And it all came together beautifully... If only I had done it when I first got the parts and the idea and we would have been able to enjoy the sound of running water through the garden for a number of summers before this one.

There must be plenty of occasions when we fail to realise the benefits of not putting off doing something, whether physically... or more importantly spiritually. If God gave us an instruction it will be for benefit...either God's, ours or someone else's. ... but we will never see it until the instruction is followed.

Imagine if Jesus hadn't followed the plan laid out for Him and decided to do something else which didn't end in His sacrificial death? We would never have benefited from His righteousness, mercy and grace. We would still be lost.

So, what is this 15 year I mentioned at the start of this Coach House Beacon? Well, the bible tells us of the work of the prophets Haggai in the Old Testament. The book is are only small and can be found towards the end of the Old Testament.

We probably need a little bit of background to make sense of what is going on.... So here goes.

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## God had a plan, man ignored it, God still had a plan.

Broadly speaking we can see how God provides for His creation right from the first book of Genesis, right the way through the old and new testaments and the provision is still in place for the future as revealed to us in the book of Revelations , right at the end.

Man's disobedience causes us all kinds of pain and diversion from God's intentions for us. We often blame God when things go wrong , but actually it is our attitude and disobedience or Sin , which is the real reason that things don't go as well as they should. When Adam and Eve got things wrong, God chose Noah and then Abraham and finally the people of Israel to reveal His plans and love for this world.

The people of Israel didn't follow the instructions given to them, instructions that would have brought benefit to them, and instead they were taken into captivity by their enemies as punishment. The City of Jerusalem was destroyed and the most important place, the temple , was also laid in ruin.

Because God has a plan and He keeps His promises, the people of Israel were allowed to return home and to rebuild the temple. Now we are gradually coming out of Lockdown and we are excited by the prospect of normality returning, so we should be able to identify with the people of Israel returning to their normality.

The problem is that for 15 years after starting to rebuild the temple, the people got side-tracked, put off, dissuaded and eventually devalued the task assigned to them. They stopped and didn't start again. Other things became more important.

God sent Haggai to basically ask them why they were spending all their time, effort and resource on their own things rather than building the temple to honour their relationship with God.

They looked good, but their relationship with God was reflected by the importance they placed on rebuilding the temple.... Listen to what God said to them through Haggai in Chapter 1 verses 4 to 6

***“Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in ruins? This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: Look at what’s happening to you! You have planted much but harvest little. You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!”***

You see, the reason for rebuilding the temple wasn't in order to show how great they were, but to show how much God was central to their existence. His mercy had kept them safe; His grace had been poured out on them.... And still they turned to themselves and got their priorities wrong.

15 years? You would have thought that after 70 years of captivity at the hands of their enemies, that the sense of freedom and purpose would have driven them on to worship God fully.

History, both in the Bible and present day, shows us that God is often pushed back in our thinking and often ignored in society. So how can we receive benefit if we don't follow the instructions? The story presented to us in the book of Haggai, gives us some good news though...

They received the call; they responded with action and began to rebuild the temple.... Eventually! If only they had responded immediately, they would have had 15 years in which they could worship fully, engage with God fully and be blessed by God fully.

God is very patient with us, even when we are disobedient, but we cannot expect to receive the fullness that God has for us, if we are not following the instructions. That much should be obvious to us. As we start to come out of lockdown, as we start to return to normality, I wonder what we think our priorities are? Is it our work, our family ... or is it being obedient to the call of God in our lives?

For the past 12 weeks I, and my trusted team have been restoring, rebuilding and preparing Gods house, 'the Coach House' ready to worship and 'open' again....not

with a view to returning to what we had, but with a vision to have the building reflect the position God has in our lives.

We want people to see how much God is central to all we do and we want the building to reflect the love and hope we have in Jesus...and we want others to see it and experience this for themselves. God is good to us, but how we show this to others is really important. If we don't honour God, how will others?

What will people think about God based on the first experience of His building we present to them?

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**Let us be found doing the things that bring honour to God rather than our ourselves.**

My prayer as we start to move back in normality, is that we won't be satisfied with anything less than giving God the best of us. Submitting to His plans for us , worshipping Him with everything we have.

Let us not be side-tracked or distracted by things that do not matter.

God is and should be the focus of our lives... To the benefit of us and to the benefit of all who we meet and reach with the Good news of Gods salvation through Jesus.



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