

Panelled Houses

READING
Haggai 1
Matthew 6

Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses, while this house lies waste?

The average house in Australia now costs a million dollars. That's a LOT of money. Even if you make a reasonable income of \$100,000 a year, you can't save much of that. Let's say you manage to save \$20,000, but most people would be lucky to save \$10,000. So that's 100 years to save up to buy a house. Which by then of course, will be even more expensive. That's so discouraging.

So Australians usually go into massive debt so they can buy the house now, to be paid off over the next 30 years. Just to buy a house as somewhere for them and their family to live. But then a massive chunk of their income, goes to service that debt. Mostly in interest payments to the banks. At rates which thankfully at the moment are quite low, but which could easily be around 8% a year in the next few years.

It seems that most of us work hard just to have enough to pay for our house.

And our houses are getting way fancier than they were when I was a kid. It seems that now, having a pool is kind of expected, media room, air conditioning, en suite, walk-in robe, double garage, pool room/teen retreat... No simple 3 bedroom houses these days. They're fancy, with Italian tiled floors, flash kitchens, walk in pantries, and big BBQs. They're built to impress.

They remind me of the "panelled houses" that Yahweh spoke to Haggai about.

Then Yahweh's word came by Haggai, the prophet, saying, "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses, while this house lies waste? Now therefore this is what Yahweh of Armies says: Consider your ways. You have sown much, and bring in little. You eat, but you don't have enough. You drink, but you aren't filled with drink. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm, and he who earns wages earns wages to put them into a bag with holes in it." This is what Yahweh of Armies says: "Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, bring wood, and build the house. I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified," says Yahweh. "You looked for much, and, behold, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says Yahweh of Armies, "Because of my house that lies waste, while each of you is busy with his own house. Therefore for your sake the heavens withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on that which the ground produces, on men, on livestock, and on all the labor of the hands."

So, if you own one of these million dollar houses, let me ask you two questions.

#1. How much have you spent building your house?

#2. How much have you spent building God's house, the church?

I would also like to ask you question #3 (have you given Yahweh a tithe from the capital gains you've made on your house? Or are you keeping all that for yourself too?). But that's a question for another time.

There's nothing wrong with having a nice house. Unless you kept all the money Yahweh gave you for building his kingdom and spent it on your own house while his house is in ruins.

Do you find yourself like the first group? Sowing a lot, reaping little? Working hard, but never got enough money? Feels like no matter how hard you try, the money goes out faster than it comes in?

Yeshua said, *"You shouldn't be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we be clothed with?' For the nations seek after all these things, and because your heavenly father knows that you need all these. But first, seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*

Build God's house first. The church. Seek his kingdom first. Make that the priority for where you spend your money. Then, if there's any left over, spend that on yourself and your house. God promises you that if you do that, then you will be less worried about money, less anxious about your life, and ... you will also have all the things you need.

How is your panelled house?

Is it right?