

Building...Something Matthew 16:18

Introduction:

We, humans, like to build physical things.¹

A constructor builds houses, appliances, furniture, and toys.

A civil engineer builds bridges, roads, and tunnels.

A seamstress builds clothing.

A shoemaker builds or repairs shoes.

Maybe loosely, a cook or chef builds a meal.

We build legal systems that share documents, agreements, policies, and procedures.

We draw people together in common purpose through “celebration, ceremony, ritual, and tradition, which help people to remember their values, to appreciate, and to cooperate.”²

Some of us build our bodies and we all build relationships and friendships.

A man and a woman build a family.

A family builds a home.

Our homes build a society where we access and share creativity, ingenuity, and problem-solving.

Peoples work together to build nations.

When setting out to build something physical, builders consider the materials, the tools, the design, the use/purpose, the location, the measurements, and the skills needed to build.

If building something nonphysical, like relationships, friendships, faith, creativity, a home, or a sense of community, we should consider the foundation, the structure, the purpose, and the design.

In the church, Christ is the living foundation, the cornerstone, the chosen one, the judge, and the light (1 Peter 2:4-12).

In the church, each believer who lives in the light of Christ is a living stone in the structure of a spiritual house, a royal priest, a chosen person, and a stranger on earth.

In the church, our purpose is to “offer up spiritual sacrifices (committed lives that love and serve the Lord) acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5); we are to “proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light” (v. 9).

In the church, Christ is the design, pattern, or example for us to follow (1 Peter 2:21); we have been called to be copies of Christ.

We are building...something.

God built the first woman, Eve, from a part of the first man He created (Genesis 2:22).

God built His people after calling them out of Egypt by multiplying them, nurturing them, and bringing them closer to Him.

¹ Carpenter, Eugene E., and Philip W. Comfort. *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew Words Defined and Explained*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000.

² Christopher Kindig, “4 Building Blocks of Community,” February 25, 2019, accessed April 15, 2023, <https://www.ic.org/4-building-blocks-of-community/#:~:text=Through%20this%20exploration%2C%20and%20building,Invisible%2C%20Spiritual%2C%20and%20Creative.>

God built the city of Jerusalem and a Temple in Jerusalem so He could dwell among His chosen nation (2 Samuel 7:8-17).

“Then it will be, [God said to Jeroboam through Ahijah in 1 Kings 11:38] that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.”

Unfortunately, Jeroboam sinned against God by building two gold calf idols and setting them up to be worshiped.

He appointed non-Levites to serve as priests and instituted his own religious festival which he did to keep his people from returning to Jerusalem and sacrificing in the Temple (1 Kings 12:25-27).

A successful family is one built by the Lord and protected by the Lord as Solomon noted in Psalm 127:1.

“The Bible has many references to the building or rebuilding of altars, temples, houses, and whole cities. The term is sometimes used as a metaphor for God’s activity among his people (1 Pt 2:4–8).”³

What are we building?

I. Are we building the Lord’s church?

Jesus responded to Peter, in Matthew 16:18, saying, “...you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

The rock Jesus spoke about is the rock-solid foundational belief and confession that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

God’s anointed king, the Messiah, has the authority to build.

Jesus told His eleven disciples (the apostles), “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

We belong to Christ; we are His church—the called out.

Colossians 1:18 says of Jesus, “He is also head of the body, the church...”

“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24), so that they now “walk (or live) by the Spirit,” (v. 16) being “led by the Spirit” (v. 18), carrying out love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control (vv. 22 and 23).

“[We] belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God,” as Paul instructed the Christians (1 Corinthians 3:23), and we will be tested regarding our service for Christ (vv. 11-15).

In our service for Christ, are we building the Lord’s church?

II. Are we building each other up?

Paul urges the mature believer not to please himself but to build up the faith of weaker Christians, when he wrote in Romans 15:2, “Now we who are strong ought to bear the

³ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “[Build, Building.](#)” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 385.

weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.”

That which “was written in earlier times was written for our instruction” giving us examples where many endured and encouraged others (Romans 15:4).

Have we given of ourselves for the salvation of another soul?

What investment have we made in the spiritual life of another person?

Considering the impending return of the Lord, we should be helpful to one another—building one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11), also warning, encouraging, assisting, and showing patience with one another (v. 14).

To prevent apostasy in ourselves, believers are to build on the Word of God, pray in the power of God, and remain in the love of God while waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 20 and 21).

To deter apostasy in other believers, strong Christians should make every effort to rescue those who are going astray; “And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh” (Jude 22 and 23).

Do we educate weaker Christians to help them grow in faith?

Are we building each other up so that when we stumble, we do not fall?

Are we actively working to prevent apostasy in ourselves and deter apostasy in other believers?

Are we building each other up?

III. Are we building for us or the Lord?

In the Corinthian church, some members were zealous for specific spiritual gifts.

Paul reminded them that it is better to be a blessing to the church than to have a personal experience (1 Corinthians 14:12).

He explained, “One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church” (1 Corinthians 14:4).

Paul had the gift for speaking in tongues but notice how he viewed this gift.

He wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:18 and 19, “I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.”

Edification, the building of believers, occurs where there is communication and understanding.

The same gift, speaking in tongues, viewed from different perspectives resulted in a different emphasis.

Making application of this, to build for us means that we do so for our benefit, for the immediate church, or for what we expect to experience in our lifetime.

Some believers are not looking to grow the church, they simply do not want the church to die on their watch.

These builders want the church to maintain its condition and may build new areas of service to meet their immediate needs only.

They plan for what is just ahead of them.

On the other hand, to build for the Lord means there is a focus on future generations in the Lord’s body with long-term consideration.

Children are taught to be leaders, who are developed by instruction and practice (Proverbs 22:6).

Older women teach godliness to the younger women (Titus 2:3-5).

The men teach so they may entrust (put the church into the care or protection of) “faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

Are we building this congregation for ourselves or the Lord?

Application:

Our challenge is to build relationships with others and to build the Lord’s church.

Jesus must build our family homes (Psalm 127:1) and our faith home (the church Matthew 16:18) if we desire for Him to build our future home (John 14:1ff).

To build the Lord’s church we must be disciples who make disciples.

Church leaders must apply themselves to “equipping...the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ,” and saints must fulfill the “work of service” (Ephesians 4:12).

The credit for growth and progress belongs to the Lord because He is behind everything.

“...Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:7).

We are servants (1 Corinthians 3:5), servants who sow and water the spiritual seed, for God alone can cause the crop to grow.

In this, we are God’s fellow workers (1 Corinthians 3:9), in Christ Jesus (Romans 16:3, 9, and 21) working with the truth (3 John 8).

If we do not work together, we will segment and separate.

Yet, as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1, there must be “no divisions among [us]” (v. 10).

Conclusion:

We are building...something.

Are we building the Lord’s church?

Are we building up each other?

Are we building for us or the Lord?

If we are building the Lord’s church, the process begins with us building our lives upon the rock (Matthew 7:24).

We hear the words of Jesus (Matthew 7:24) and believe them (John 8:31 and 17:8).

We act on His words, repenting of our sins and confessing the belief “that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31).

We submit to the authority of Jesus, being baptized in His name (Acts 2:38).

If we are building the Lord’s church, we build up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

We pray for one another, help one another, and encourage one another.

We warn each other about temptations and wrongdoings.

We strive to avoid apostasy and steer others away from deception, drifting, and departing the faith.

If we are building the Lord’s church, we should build it for the Lord; we build it to stand until the Lord returns (Matthew 16:18), so He may “hand over the kingdom to [our] God and Father” (1 Corinthians 15:24).

Work to build the Lord's church!