

# “God’s Building”

## 1 Corinthians 3:9c; Ephesians 2:19-22

This message was originally entitled “The Church Building.” We will stay in the text in Ephesians for this message. It is a text that develops the phrase found in First Corinthians that states “ye are God’s building.”

Verse 19 serves as an introduction to this passage. The first two words give us what it is related to - “Now therefore.” Going back to the previous five verses we find the relationship between the Jew and the Gentile in Christ - namely, the two being as one in Christ. There is no difference when it comes to salvation and the church between the Jew and the Gentile.

With that in mind, we come to the portion of this passage on the New Testament Church, that being the teaching on the church “building.” Not the structure that we meet in on Sunday and Wednesday, but the building up, or edifying of the church family, the church body, the church members.

There are three things by way of introduction in verse 19 that we need to see:

1. The Gentiles are no longer “strangers and foreigners” in relation to the Jew when it comes to the New Testament way of worship. According to verse 14 the “middle wall of partition” is broken down: The Temple, or Tabernacle, form of worship is no more. What we have now is an equal form of worship. We as Christians are seen as “strangers and foreigners” in this world, but not from each other.

**Hebrews 11:13** These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar

off, and were persuaded of [*them*], and embraced [*them*], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

**1 Peter 2:11** Dearly beloved, I beseech [*you*] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

2. Considering the fact that they are no more strangers, then they must of necessity be the opposite - namely, "fellowcitizens." Not only fellowcitezens with the Jews but with all the saints of all ages. As fellowcitizens they possess the same citizenship as all the other saints, Jew and Gentile. They are a native of the same town.

**Philippians 3:20** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

3. Not only are we all, Jew and Gentile, citizens of the same place, but we are of the "household" of God. We are His children, we are entitled to an equal inheritance as everyone else - no more, no less. This word comes from the same root word as the words used in these verses translated, "built," "building," and "builded."

**Romans 8:17** ¶ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [*him*], that we may be also glorified together.

Considering verse 19 we can see that the one thing God does not want in a church body is a member out of place, out of sorts. That is what would happen if there was a difference in any of us when it comes to salvation. With so much put on emphasizing the oneness in Christ, then we can go on and establish what the *Church Building* is supposed to be.

## **I. ITS FOUNDATION – VS. 19-20**

The word for "built" here is a verb in the past

tense which means to finish the structure of which the foundation has already been laid, to give constant increase in Christian knowledge and in a life conformed thereto. When considering the building of the church, the past action that was completed with the resurrection of our Saviour, and the completion of the Bible as we have it today is the foundation of which the church is built.

We find here two things given as the foundation of the church "building" or growth, upon which we are "built."

***A. The Word of God (particularly the New Testament as it contains the instruction for the church)***

1. The "apostles" - namely, those given to us in the Bible - the 12 Apostles, Barnabas, and the Apostle Paul.
2. The "prophets"
  - a) There are two views of who is being referred to here - the Old Testament prophets, or those referred to as New Testament prophets
  - b) Considering the context here, dealing with the church as the topic of the book of Ephesians as a whole, and the chief cornerstone of the building being Christ, it would seem that, in this verse, it is referring to the New Testament prophets.
  - c) Specifically of those who possessed the prophetic gift or charisma imparted by the Holy Spirit to the primitive churches. Prophets were a class of instructors or preachers who were next in rank to the Apostles and before the teachers (1 Cor. 12:28). Like the Apostles, however, they

did not remain in one place as the teachers did. They seem to have differed from the teachers in that while the latter spoke in a calm, connected, didactic discourse, adapted to instruct and enlighten the hearers, the prophets spoke more from the impulse of sudden inspiration, from the light of a sudden revelation at the moment, as indicated in 1Co\_14:30. It seems that this discourse was probably more adapted by means of powerful exhortations to awaken the feeling and consciousness of the hearers. The idea of speaking from an immediate revelation seems here to be fundamental, as relating either to future events or to the mind of the Spirit in general (cf. Acts 11:27; see Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; 14:29, 32, 37; Eph. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11). Zodhiates

- d) "One who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence his organ or spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration, especially concerning future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation" (Thayer). In other words, those, other than the apostles, who penned the Word of God.

**2 Peter 1:20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

**21** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [*as they were*] moved by the Holy Ghost.

***B. Jesus Christ being the basis of all things - "chief cornerstone." Without this Chief Cornerstone the foundation of the church would be so insecure as to not be able to withstand any pressure. It would be so***

***weak it would crumble at the first hint of trouble. Just as the foundation of a building must have its corners secure so must the church, the "household of God."***

**Isaiah 28:16** Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner [*stone*], a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

**1 Peter 2:6** Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

## **II. ITS FUNCTION – VS. 21**

The word "building" here is a word that means the thing built. It is the finished product of what was laid with the foundation and built upon that foundation found in verse 20.

This finished product (not that we are perfect, but that with the finishing of the canon of Scripture the church was fully established - it was completed in its order not its practice and growth) was established in Jesus Christ - "in whom all the building..." The word "all" again points to the unity of the believers.

There are several things concerning the function of this "building" that we need to note here:

### **A. *It is to be "fitly framed together"***

These words are from one Greek word which is in a form to indicate that it is an action continually in progress. As long as the church is in existence on this earth it is ever growing, ever learning, and fitting tighter and tighter together. The tighter, more fitly joined it is the less likely it is to succumb under pressure of the Devil and his forces.

**Ephesians 4:16** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

### ***B. It is to grow - "groweth"***

This word is in the same form as the previous one (this one is the verb, the former a participle) – indicating continuing action in the present time. We, as a church body - "building" – are to be ever growing, ever increasing in spiritualness, striving to grow more "fit" every day.

### ***C. It is to be "an holy temple"***

1. The word used here for "temple" is referring to the inner sanctuary of the temple, or tabernacle, not the whole structure. It is the Holy Place of our heart and life that God wants to dwell, not in the worldly, sinful nature of man. It is that part of man that needs to be holy – set apart for God's use. If the inner sanctuary of our life is pure, and holy, then the natural, sinful flesh will not be so susceptible to the devil's temptations. Not that we will not sin, but the Bible says that what's on the inside will be seen on the outside.

**1 Samuel 16:7** But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for [*the LORD seeth*] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

**Proverbs 23:7** For as he thinketh in his heart, so [*is*] he: Eat and drink, saith he to

thee; but his heart [*is*] not with thee.

**Matthew 12:34** O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

2. If we, as individuals, are "an holy temple" then the church will be filled with individuals which are "holy temples" and therefore the church will be "an holy temple"

**1 Corinthians 3:16** ¶ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and [*that*] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

**17** If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which [*temple*] ye are.

**1 Corinthians 6:19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [*which is*] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

**20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

#### ***D. It is to function "in the Lord" – using Him as our guide***

If this point is not adhered to then the others will not matter, for Jesus, our Lord, is the Chief Cornerstone of the church, and if He is not put in the forefront of our individual lives and put in the forefront of the church business then our foundation is insecure, and **WE WILL FALL.**

**Ephesians 1:22** And hath put all [*things*] under his feet, and gave him [*to be*] the head over all [*things*] to the church,

### **III. ITS FORM – VS. 22**

We find in this verse the words "are builded together." These words are referring to the church as being continually put together out of several things to make a whole. In other words, every church is to strive to win the lost so that it can continue to "build together" out of a sinful life another part of the whole.

#### ***A. Every church is seen as an individual church, yet part of the whole***

The word "ye" brings this whole matter to an individual local church level (speaking directly to, and of, the church at Ephesus).

#### ***B. Every church, individually, has all three Persons of the Godhead at work in her to help edify, or build, the body.***

1. God the Son – "In Whom" – referring back to verse 20 and the reference of Jesus being the chief cornerstone.
2. God the Father – "an habitation of God" – a dwelling place in which God meets with His children to empower them to accomplish its goal, mission, or function, that being the winning of the lost and the discipling of these new converts so they can, in turn, do likewise.
3. God the Holy Spirit – "through the Spirit" – All power is given unto the church to accomplish what the Father set it out to do, built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, God the Son, by means of the power from God the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit we have no church, for without

the Spirit we have no power, and thus we have no authority.

**Acts 1:8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Conclusion: This passage is far too deep to cover in one message, but the main thing to remember is the church is always to be striving to grow, and each of its members are to strive to grow right along with it.

How about you? Are you still struggling with the basement of your Christian life, or are you sound and secure and building up your life?

Perhaps someone here has never made sure of the foundation. If that is the case with you it would be better to know that your Cornerstone is in place or your building will crumble.

'T was a sheep, not a lamb, that strayed away,  
In the parable Jesus told;  
A grown-up sheep that had gone astray  
From the ninety and nine in the fold.  
Out on the hillside, out in the cold,  
'T was a sheep the Good Shepherd sought;  
And back to the flock, safe into the fold,  
'T was a sheep the Good Shepherd brought.  
And why for the sheep should we earnestly long,  
And as fervently hope and pray?  
Because there is danger, if they go wrong,  
They will lead the lambs astray.  
And so with the sheep we tenderly plead,  
For the sake of the lambs today;

If the sheep are lost, what terrible cost

Some lambs will have to pay!

(source - Fredericksburg Bible Illustrator  
Supplements, as found in Sermon & Illustration  
Database by Holwick)