

The Church ~ A Dwelling of God

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[0 : 00] Amen. Good morning. Good morning.

Is that an up-to-date picture, Josiah, Carolyn?! Yeah, yeah, yeah. We need to blow it up so we can see it.

Or we can just go over and meet you. That's true. Better do that. So we're all excited that Josiah and Carolyn will be with us in the coming weeks.

And Mr. Josiah will be preaching. We've been working with him, trying to work with him, you know, the last few months.

And I think you're going to really enjoy the book of Ezekiel. No, you're not Ezekiel. What are you doing? Haggai. Haggai. Yeah, a little shorter than Ezekiel.

[0 : 59] Check out that book. There are some really good stuff. There are some really good stuff. Yeah, I think that works.

In there. And Josiah will be drawing that out for you. So we'll be praying for him. Amen. And appreciate your prayers for us as we go.

May the Lord meet us in a special way. We pray. Open your Bibles with me to Ephesians chapter 2. Next week, we're finishing up chapter 2 this week. So next week, we will, Lord willing, do a discussion review time over chapter 2.

So we'll be talking about all the things that Paul has been showing us through this amazing chapter. First half of the book being on salvation.

[1 : 59] The second half of the book being on what happens after that. The reconciliation that we have with God in one body. That he reconciles us to himself, but as a body.

He does that. Not as individuals. He reconciles us as a body of Christ to him. And that's how God has designed things. And that's what we'll be looking at this morning.

So we're looking at the last two verses this morning. But I'd like to read from verse 11 on. Because that's the section. Or I might say the sentence as Paul does it.

He has long sentences with much to say in it. So it takes us a little time to be careful to unpack it.

So that we can grasp all that Paul's laying out for us about who we are. And what God has designed us to be. So if you're able, please stand. And I will read from Ephesians chapter 2, verses 11 through 22.

[3 : 13] The end. Therefore, remember. That formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh. Who are called uncircumcision.

By the so-called circumcision. Which is performed in the flesh by human hands. Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ.

Excluded from the commonwealth. Or citizenship of Israel. And strangers to the covenants of promise. Having no hope.

And without God in the world. But now. In Christ Jesus. You. Who were formerly far off. Have been brought near.

By the blood of Christ. For he himself. Is our peace. Who made both.

[4 : 13] One. And broke down the barrier of the dividing wall. By abolishing in his flesh. The enmity. Which is. The law of commandments. Contained in ordinances. That in himself. He might make the two into one new man.

Thus establishing peace. And might reconcile them both in one body to God. Through the cross. By it.

Having put to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you. Who are far away. And peace to those who are near. For through him. We both have our access.

In one spirit. To the father. So that. You are no longer strangers and aliens. But you are fellow citizens. With the saints.

[5 : 12] And are of God's household. Having been built on the foundation. Of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself. Being the cornerstone.

In whom. The whole building. Being fitted together. Is growing into a holy temple. In the Lord. In whom you also.

Are being built together. Into a dwelling of God. In the spirit. So it reads. Let us pray. Father. Be with us this day. In a way that. Father. We sense your presence. In a way that we recognize your presence. In the body. We thank you Lord.

That you have designed. The church. The body of Christ. To be. Your dwelling place. To be your temple. Your holy temple.

[6 : 11] Help us grasp. That today. And to see the significance. Of how you designed us. So that Lord.

We might more. Readily. And fervently. Love one another. As you've. Desired us. To do. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Please be seated. What do you think.

It would be like. To experience. The manifest. Presence of God. There's a song.

Right. Mercy me. I think. That's it. I can only imagine. Surrounded by your glory. What will my heart feel?

[7 : 13] Will I dance for you Jesus? Or in awe. Of you be still. Will I stand in your presence. Or to my knees.

Will I fall? Will I sing. Hallelujah. Or right. Will I be able to speak at all? I can only. Imagine.

Well the Old Testament. Describes sometimes. When God's presence. Was manifest. When God gave the law. Of Sinai.

He descended. On that mountain. With fire. And smoke. And the mountain. And the mountain trembled. And the people said. To Moses.

You talk to him. We're going over there. When the tabernacle was finished. In the end of the book of.

[8 : 10] Exodus. It said that. The glory of the Lord. Filled the tabernacle. And that even Moses.

Wasn't able to enter. In 2nd Chronicles 7. When Solomon. Was dedicating the temple. They had built the temple.

And they finished it. And Solomon. Was praying. And dedicating this temple. To the Lord's glory. When he finished his prayer. The glory filled the temple.

And the priest. Could not enter. In fact. When God's presence. Was manifest.

All the people. Bowed down. To the pavement. With their faces. To the ground. So were they. Impacted. By the manifest. Presence.

[9 : 03] Of a holy God. How. Can a holy God. Dwell with men.

It seemed. Impossible. In the Old Testament. And yet. This is exactly. What the end of chapter 2. Of Ephesians.

Describes. The church. As the dwelling. Place. Of a holy God. In that context.

Christ. I want you to think about. What we're. What Paul is showing. To us today. Remember the context. Back to verse 11. Through 13.

We see. The before. Before. Christ. Before the cross. Before. Being. Reconciled. To God. We were alienated.

[10 : 01] We were without. Christ. We were without. Hope. We were without. God. In the world. We were alone. We were alienated. If you were not Jewish. You had no way. To approach. This God.

And even if you were Jewish. You could only approach. This God. So closely. You could not approach him. All the way. Only one man. Once a year.

If he was clean. Could go in. To the holy of holies. And pour blood. Over the mercy seat. Of the ark. Of the covenant. This is how holy.

The God. Of Israel. Is. Yahweh. Is. So we were alienated. Then in verse 13. Through. 18.

Paul describes. How things changed. Verse 13. But now. In Christ. Jesus. You who are far away. Have been brought near. By the blood of Christ. The work of the cross.

[11 : 01] The work of the cross. We. We discover. From Paul. Does more than simply. Forgive us of our sins. It also establishes. A new people of God.

It establishes. What Paul calls. One. New. Man. That brings. Jew and Gentile. Together. Jew and every other. Kind of man.

Together. In the cross. That establishes. A whole new people. A whole new citizenship. Not one nation.

But now. A new nation. Literally. A new. Nation. What Peter calls. A holy. Nation. And.

Also. Reconciles. Us. Both. To God. In one body. Again. Through the cross. So he brings.

Reconciliation. Among. On a.

[11 : 55] Horizontal scale. As well as a vertical scale. He brings us together. And then. Together. As this new body. We are. Reconciled to God. So we see this. Reconciliation.

And now. We see the results of that. Verses 19. To 22. Again. Paul. Shows. The results. So then. You're no longer aliens and strangers. But your fellow citizens.

You are of God's household. You've been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. And Christ himself being the cornerstone.

So we looked at that last week. How God is building up the church. And he builds it on the apostles and prophets as the foundation. But Christ being the cornerstone.

The very bottom. Stone. From which. The foundation is laid out. Going this way. And this way. As well as going this way. And then. We talk about building upon that foundation.

[12 : 54] We make sure that we're in line. As we look down 20 stories. Or 21 stories. Whatever we are now. We look down to the first century. We look down to the apostles.

Are we in line with the apostles? And are we in line with Jesus Christ? And that's how we determine what doctrine is true. And what doctrine is false. Does it line up with the apostles?

Does it line up with Christ? If it's out of line. Of that. If we drop that plumb line down. And if it's out of line. Then we are. Off.

From Christ. So that is what. We looked at last week. This week. We look at. Another aspect. Verse 21 and 22. How can a holy God dwell with men?

So we see the result of this reconciliation is another thing. Another purpose. Another picture. We saw the picture of a household. A family.

[13 : 51] We saw the picture of a building with a foundation. Now we see the picture of a holy temple. A dwelling of God. That reconciliation has led us.

Not only to be God's family. Not only to be God's building. In terms of truth. But now also. God's dwelling place. We're reconciled.

So that God may dwell. In us. As a church. As a congregation. As the body of Christ.

So Christ. God is building the church into a temple. It's an ongoing process. And so. I'm asking today. What is his purpose?

For us as a church. And so we see two. Two goals. Or two purposes. We see in verse 21. That he's. Designing us to be a holy temple.

[14 : 48] He's. Growing us. Into a holy temple. And secondly. Just that. That kind of grows out of the first one. In verse 22. He's. Designed us to be.

The dwelling. For himself. His own. Dwelling. In our. As we gather together. There. So first of all. We see verse 21.

We see him saying. Talking about. Christ as being the cornerstone. In whom. Verse 21. The whole building. So still talking about this building picture. Being fitted together.

Is growing into. A holy temple. In the Lord. So growing into a holy temple. He's. He's fitting us together. Growing us into.

A holy temple. In the Lord. Through Christ. He's growing us together. In the holy temple. Through Christ. So I want you to notice a few things. First of all.

[15 : 44] Note that it's a process. Verse 21. He says. We are. Being. Fitted. Together. It might not be in your text.

Is it? Yeah. You got being? Wow. Is that RSV? I mean. Is that ESV? Yeah. Being. Being.

Being fitted. Oh. I'm sorry. Yeah. It's in mine too. Okay. I missed it. Okay. That must be the blind spot in my eye. Well.

That's okay. That's the emphasis. That's the process. Being. That's present tense. Being joint. And growing. It's an ongoing process.

So it's not a finished thing. Much of Christ's work is finished work. This is a work in which he is still growing us. Because the church is dynamic. The church has new people.

[16:40] The church has. Is a growing thing. We are all growing. We are all growing in Christ. We're growing in our maturity. Right? So it's a growth project. Process.

God grows the body. Develops the body. And it's in him. It's in whom. Right? First two words of verse 21. In whom. In the cornerstone. In whom the whole building. Right? Being fitted together. Is growing. So the whole building. It's all. It could also be translated. Every building.

Could be all. The whole building. It could be every building. In which case. If it was every building. It would apply to each local church. Would be a. Being a unique expression. Of God's temple. That makes sense. Each local congregation. Has a different. Expression. Different. God designs them differently. Oh.

[17:41] He designs them all. For the same purpose. But. But the makeup is different. Personalities are different. The gifts. Work differently. In each church. So observe.

How we grow. It's by being joined together. Being joined together. Present passive. So it's an ongoing process. Passive meaning. It's being done. To us.

We're not doing the joining together. God is joining us together. We are the ones being joined. We are the ones being worked on. And actually. Paul coins a new word here.

It's the only place you'll find it. It's the. This word. Joined together. English is only picking up. Two parts of the word. It's actually three different words. Paul puts together. Selectively.

Joined. Together. So three words. Together. Selectively. That's the word that gets left out. Of our translations. We usually just have joined together.

[18:36] But it. But it's. Logo. So. Which means. A logical process. Rational. Or. Or intentional. So. Selectively. Or intentionally. Joined together.

Okay. Why make a big deal out of that? Well. It's a description. Of what a stonemason does. When he builds. A wall. Or a building.

A stonemason. As each rock is. Put together. It's chosen. Each stone. Is deliberately chosen.

Each. Is a different. Size. And shape. It might be chipped off. To make it thin. So look at our. Brick wall. Not brick wall. If it was a brick wall.

Everything would be uniform. Right? There would be no uniqueness to it at all. But when it's a rock wall. Like this. Whoever did that.

[19:31] Knew what they were doing. Don't you think? Yes. Look how it's fit together. There's some big ones. There's some long ones. There's some little ones. There's some round ones. Just like the church.

All different shapes and sizes. We're not uniform. We're not. We're not all to look together. Now. When all are fitted together. And joined together. It's a.

It's a beautiful thing. Right? It shows design. It shows purpose. It shows. Uniqueness. And that's what the church is. Like that brick wall. But it's still being built.

It's not a finished project. Why? Because people are still coming into the church. People are still joining. People are still. Right? God is bringing. And then he's.

Selectively. Joining. Together. Where do you fit in that wall? So I think I'm the. I'm the round fat one there. I don't know.

[20:37] So the goal though. As he's joining. These together. Is to make us. Into a holy. Temple. Holy. What's holy.

Me. Holy. Set apart. Set apart. Sacred. Right? When we pray. The first prayer.

Jesus taught us. Right? Hallowed. Be thy name. Holy. Talk about. Hallowed. Ground. What's the. What's the cemetery. Arlington. Right? That's. Hallowed. Ground. That ground. Set apart. Right?

To honor. Those who gave their lives. For this country. Hallowed ground. Set apart. It's not common. Right?

[21:38] And so. So he says. We're a holy temple. We're set apart. We're not common. So I like to always talk about China.

When we talk about. Not the country. China. The dishes. When we got married. We had registered for China.

And we registered for regular dishes. And we got a whole lot more China. Because it was on sale. So we got all this China. And China is. When do you use China?

Special occasions. Special occasions. Right? Right? You have the family. You're doing something special. Thanksgiving. Christmas. Whatever. Whatever you decide is special. Right? It's set apart.

For that special purpose.

Now we use it every day. Because that's what we got. No. We don't. We're going to have to buy some other stuff. Some. You know. Plastic bowls. And stuff. To live on.

[22 : 43] How many years was it. Before we actually got to use China? I don't remember. Like in stolen boxes. So that's what the. But he's saying.

That's what the church is. We're sacred. We're consecrated. We're hallowed. The main characteristic. Of God's church. Is not its size.

Not its influence. Not its programming. It is. It's holiness.

That it is. Set apart. For the Lord's use. For the Lord's purpose. It is an uncommon. Kind of organization.

It's not. I don't even like. The word organization. It's a body. Is a body. An organization. It seems to be organized.

[23 : 44] When it works. Which it usually does. It breaks down. Okay. So. What does this mean?

What difference does it make. That we are growing together. Into a holy temple. Through Christ.

What is God attending for us? Well he's building people together. Peter. In 1st Peter 2.

Uses the same picture. Same words even. And he says. He says this. In 1st Peter 2. 4. As you come to him. Meaning coming to Jesus.

As you come to him. A living stone. Rejected by men. But in the sight of God. Chosen and precious. As you come to him.

You yourselves. Plural. Together. Are like living stones. Being built up. As a spiritual house. Being joined together.

[24 : 38] Being built up. As a spiritual house. For what purpose? To be a holy priesthood.

Priesthood. To do what? To offer.

Spiritual sacrifices. Acceptable to God. Through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture. Behold. I'm laying in Zion.

A stone. A cornerstone. Chosen and precious. Christ. So notice. Peter is using the same. Language as Paul. And whoever believes in him.

This cornerstone. Will not be put to shame. So. The honor of being built. Is for you. Who believe. But for those who do not believe.

The stone that the builders rejected. Has become the cornerstone. And. A stone of stumbling. And a rock of offense. They stumble because they disobey the word.

[25 : 35] Or reject the word. As they were destined to do. But you. Are a chosen race. Interesting.

We're a new race. Jews. Gentiles. In Christ. New race. New people. A royal priesthood.

A royal priesthood. Did you know you're priests? Did you know you're priests? Well I thought you had to be a Levite. To be a priest. Now we're all priests.

Why? Because we can all draw. Near. To God. We can all do what the. What only the. High priest. Could do once a year. Now we could do. Daily.

Amen. Thank you Lord. Several times a day. Whenever we. Need to draw near. To the. Father. No barriers.

[26 : 32] You are a chosen race. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. There it is. Holy nation. A new nation. We're the nation. Not USA. Not Israel.

We are a nation. The church. Buy that? Well Peter says it. Yeah. Yeah.

It's new. A people. For his own. Possession. For what purpose. Lord. Are we his possession. That you may proclaim. The excellencies.

Of him. Who called you out of darkness. And do his marvelous. Light. Is that something. To proclaim. Is that something. To preach about. Is that something. To declare to others. That you've been called.

Out of darkness. Into his marvelous light. That's why we're. Chosen. Once. You were not a people.

[27 : 26] But now you are. God's people. Once. You had not received. Mercy. But now. You have. Received. Mercy. Is this how you view.

The church. As a holy temple. We are being built. Into this. Spiritual house. This.

Holy. Temple. And so we have a privilege. To apply this. In a couple of ways. As we gather.

As we come to him. Peter says. As you come to him. Right. We have the privilege. To. To. Offer spiritual sacrifices. So we come. For worship. Right.

He's gathered us. Joined us together. For the purpose. As a holy priesthood. That we come to offer. Spiritual. Sacrifices. And secondly. To witness.

[28 : 22] He says. I've chosen you. I've made you a royal priesthood. A holy nation. A people. For his own possession. That you may proclaim. The excellencies. Of him. Who called you out of darkness.

Into his marvelous light. So we're called to worship. And we're called to witness. That's our purpose. We gather to worship. And we go out to proclaim.

To witness. As God leads us. How do we witness? Do we go stand in a street corner? If God calls you to do that. Do that. Do that. But more typically.

It's by building relationships. Like Jesus did. You gather people. And build relations. You must build trust. Before you can share.

Something. Into their lives. You must know them. And love them well enough. And they must be persuaded. That you love them well enough. To speak into their lives. That's what Jesus did.

[29 : 19] He won people over. And then he spoke truth to them. He cared for them. They knew he cared for them. Right?

Not like they're priests. Not like they're teachers. Of the law. And that's. So that's what we're called to do.

This isn't about witnessing. Some days you do. Thing on witnessing. Because I think it's much understood. Misunderstood today. Most people think of it as a. As an event.

That's what I grew up with. It was always an event. Bam. Not. Not. It was very well intended. Very well done. But I.

Then it was. Make a decision. And. And. Jesus never called us. To get people to make a decision. He called us. To make disciples. And that's a process. That takes a lot more investment.

[30 : 16] A lot more sacrifice. Amen. A lot more loving. Not against events. I just don't. See Jesus doing that. So.

First of all. First purpose. He's growing us. Together. Into a holy temple. Through Christ. The second purpose. Builds on the first one.

He's building us. Into a holy temple. But why. Why are we. Why is he calling it a temple. Verse 21. Comes over. To verse 22. In whom.

We're a holy temple. In the Lord. In whom. You also are being. Built together. Into a dwelling of God. In the spirit. So second purpose. We might say it this way. To shape us.

Together. Together. So he's growing us together. Now he's shaping us together. Into a dwelling of God. By the spirit. So building the temple. And then.

[31 : 15] The dweller of the temple. Right. So. He builds the structure. Which is the church. And then. He pours himself. Into it. See. He shapes us. So that he can dwell.

In us. As a church. As a body. By. The spirit. So. Three points. To emphasize here.

He talks about being built together. And being built. Secondly. Into a dwelling of God. And then thirdly. By the spirit. So let's look at those. Being built together. Together. Again.

This building picture. But. But note. The close relationship here. It talks about being built. Together. We saw that. Phrase in the first. In verse 21.

Right. Fitted together. Right. Now. Verse 22. Being built. Together. It's about relationships. We are linked. Together.

[32 : 12] Through active fellowship. We're being shaped. Together. Together. And this is God's. Design. This is why. There's no such thing. As the lone ranger. There's no. Such thing. As going off on my own.

And doing. My own thing. Or it's just me and Jesus. That's not. In the New Testament. Unless you're Paul. Arrested in prison. But even then. He depended on folks.

To come to him. Right. Never alone. It's together. Built together. Through relationships. To one another. Together. So my. Individual purpose.

What's my. Individual purpose. Well it depends on what my. Gifting is. But my individual purpose. Is going to be. Through the church. That's. Certainly. Through the church.

Not on my own. So. If I'm involved in a parachurch. I better be connected to a home church. If there is a parachurch. It ought to be connected to a church.

[33 : 08] Church. What is a parachurch? What is a parachurch? Yes. I'm sorry. No. You're fine. That's a good. I'm glad you brought it up.

Para. What's para? Alongside. Yeah. Boy. You know Greek. See. You know Greek. Para. Alongside. Like parallel. Right. Para. Alongside.

The church. So parachurch. Like. You know. The youth ministry. A lot of youth outreach. Kind of things. Okay. Right. Okay. Yeah.

But they need to be connected to a church. Because that's God's design. I think. That's my opinion. Why do we build.

Why is he building us. Well. Into a dwelling of God. This is God's purpose for the church. To become his dwelling. His home. His abode. His permanent residence. Now.

[34 : 06] Contrast that with the Old Testament. The Old Testament. When we come. To him. At the temple. I'm always looking over here. Because. I remember the illustration I used. That's the Holy. Holy's right. Then you. Keep backing up. So. So that's why. I'm looking over there. If you're wondering. Why is he always looking over there? The Old Testament's over here. Just. Just by analogy. So. At the temple. Right. That's how you came to God. And you came to him. And then he would come. Now.

He. Comes to us. And he comes to us. In a body. He comes to us. Particularly in a body. Now. I'm not denying that he comes to us individually. Of course he does. Of course he saves us individually. Of course he works in our lives individually. Of course. Of course. We walk with him. Okay.

[35 : 01] In fact. In a different. Text. In 1st Corinthians 6. I believe. Paul talks about individual. How we are individual temples. Of God.

But primarily. Paul teaches. We together. Are the temple. Of God. We are. It's a corporate. Thing. And then his presence. Is magnified. I can't tell you. What's the difference. When. When we are alone. And we're meeting with God. And we can. Have a wonderful experience.

With God. We can. Sometimes. Feel like we have a breakthrough. In prayer. Or. You know. Or we. We kind of persevere. In prayer. And we feel like we've. Or not. I've broken through to him. And he's broken through to me. Probably. You know. Where I sense. His presence. But when we gather. I sense that every time we gather.

[36 : 00] I don't sense that every time I'm alone. There's something. Special. And it's designed that way. When we are together.

For the purpose of worshiping. Him. Because he's honored by that. And he dwells. Among us. Why would you want to be away?

So. So we're going to be away. But we'll be watching. I'll be watching. So we'll be watching. Because when we're away. We always watch. You know. As long as the thing's working. We watch. Or if it doesn't work. Then we watch the next day. Or whatever. It's just not the same though. I mean. I feel joined to you. When we're away. And when we're watching. I feel joined. Right. I can hear. Certain people. You know. Even though I can't see them. I can. I can hear some voices. Over others. Why are you guys looking at me?

[36 : 59] Wasn't me. You told me. It wasn't. It wasn't me. Some voices are more distinctive. It's like. Hey. There's. Yeah. Anyway.

You with me on that? Get it? I mean. It's just not the same. If we're not here. Great. And so the best. Next thing. To not being here. Is you know. Watching online. Then he said.

Thirdly. Now. We're built together. Into a dwelling of God. By the spirit. Right. Or in the spirit. Being built together. Into a dwelling of God. In the spirit. Or by the spirit.

Or with the spirit. That's how God dwells. By means of the Holy Spirit. And we see the Holy Spirit. Mentioned all through. The book of Ephesians. In chapter one.

He talked about. That's one of the blessings. Right. God has blessed us. With every blessing. Right. And one of them. Is that we're sealed. With the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Becomes our personal.

[37 : 59] Witness. That we are of God. That God gives us. The Holy Spirit. When we are born again. And that's how we know. Because he's. Changed us. From the inside.

In chapter 2. 18. We just read. Right. That it's. Through Christ. We both have our access. In one spirit. To the father. So we come.

And have access. To the father. By means of Christ. And the spirit. And then chapter 3. 5. We'll discover. That the Holy Spirit. Is the one. Who reveals. To the apostles. And prophets.

What was not shown before. Chapter 3. Verse 16. We'll see. That Paul prays. For the power of God. To be. To come into us. By the spirit.

The power comes. Through the spirit. And then chapter 5. 18. Of Ephesians. Talks about. Be. Not filled with. Wine. But be filled with.

[38 : 54] The spirit. Be filled. Right. Let him. Pass it. Right. Be filled. Receive him. So.

Spirit. Is. Is. All through this book. So. What does that mean? That. It means. That we. As a congregation. Our focus.

For God's presence. In our world. Our focus. Is for God's presence. How did I mean this? I wrote this down. So.

So. We. Are God's presence. In this world. Right. So. So. Christ. When Christ was in the world. He's the body of Christ. Right. Christ ascends to heaven.

[39 : 50] Now. He sends the spirit to us. And we are the body of Christ. We are the manifest presence of God. In this world. Right. And so. I'm trying to apply it to us.

Just as a local congregation. Right. So. So. Our world. Where's our world? Well. Here. On this hill. Right.

And to our neighbors. And to wherever we live. Our neighbors. But when we're together. That presence of God. Is magnified. If it's just me.

It's. One little light. But when we are the light. The light's bright. The salt. Is impactful. Together. He walks among us. So. Paul speaks of a local church. As God's temple and dwelling. Let me look at a cross reference.

[40 : 48] I'll read you a cross reference. First Corinthians three. Paul talks about the same. Kinds of thing. And he's building. In fact. We looked at. I think we looked at this text last week. So let's look at it again. First Corinthians three.

Nine says. We. Paul speaking of the. He is an apostle. We. Are God's fellow workers. You. The congregation. Are God's field. You are God's building. According to the grace of God.

Given to me. Paul says. Like a skilled master builder. I laid a foundation. Right. So he's the evangelist. He goes out and begins a church. He lays a foundation.

He brings people to Christ. He preaches Christ. And they come to Christ. And then he says. And now. Someone else is building upon it. So he laid the foundation.

People are saved. Now. Someone else is building upon that foundation. And then he says. Let each one. Take care. How he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation.

[41 : 42] Other than the one. Which is laid. Which is Jesus Christ. Now. If anyone builds on the foundation. With. Gold. Silver. Precious stones. Wood. Hay. Straw. Each one's work.

Will become evident. For the day. Will disclose it. Because it will be revealed. By fire. And the fire. Will test. What sort of. Work. Each one. Has done. If the work.

That anyone. Has built on the foundation. Survives. Then he himself. Will receive a reward. If anyone's work. Is burned up. Say their work. Is just haywood.

And stubble. If their work. Is burned up. He will suffer loss. Though he himself. Will be saved. But only as through fire. Question.

Do you not know. That you. Plural. Together. Are God's temple. And that God's spirit. Dwells in you. If anyone.

[42 : 37] Destroys. God's temple. Meaning. The body of Christ. God will destroy him. For God's temple. Is holy. And you. Together. Are that temple.

So God is building us. Together. How. So the foundation. Has been laid. How. Is the next. Layer built. How do you think.

He built it. Who is he. Warning. To be careful. About how. He builds. Upon the foundation. If Paul. Was the one.

Laying the foundation. Who comes after Paul. Right. Paulus. Titus. Timothy. Josiah. Right. Josiah. Josiah. Bill. The preachers. And teachers. They're not apostles.

[43 : 36] And prophets. They're preachers. And teachers. They build upon. They make sure. Their teaching. Is in line. With that foundation. And they don't.

Teach anything new. They teach. What has been. Passed down. From the apostles. That's why. We walk through. Ephesians. Through the preaching.

Teaching. And I would add. Fellowship. As God applies. As the Holy Spirit. Applies the word. In the ministry. In the ministry. Of the church. So how do you.

View the church. Is it an organization. A lot of people. Think of it that way. Is it simply. A gathering of. Christians. But you know.

The real work's done. Outside. Is it a classroom. Where we all sit. We take notes. We open our notebooks. And we take notes. And you know. We have to get lectures.

[44 : 35] And we learn about the Bible. And some of that. Isn't it? But it's not a classroom. Is the church. Something that's optional. I hope. I hope you all say no. No.

Not. Not. Because you believe that. God is carefully selecting. Each stone. And framing us. Shaping us together. His intent. Is our close interaction. Between each other. So let's apply this in two ways. Let me. Let me lay it down. Here.

Here. What does it all mean? One. That. As a church. Coming from the church's perspective. You know. When we think about. Who we are as a church.

What does the church mean? We. We are people oriented. Versus program. We believe the Bible teaches us. To be people oriented.

[45 : 30] Not program oriented. Programs come and go. Programs serve a purpose. They're not the end all. So some folks come and ask. Do you have this program? That program? No. Probably not.

I remember when Crystal. First came. 20 years ago. And her. Kids were little. Do you have a children's church? No. But if you'll stay.

For a while. I think you'll see the benefit. Of having your children. In with us. They stayed. Almost 20 years. Salt.

Wouldn't have it any other way. Not all people see it that way. But we believe that's. I don't see them here. Break them off into groups.

Babies should go in the nursery. Where's that? All right. Not against nurseries. Not against. I'm just saying.

[46 : 31] We. Follow this. Of course. There's. No. Never mind. I'm not going to get into it. You can ask me. If you have a question. Or you can ask Rick. He's better. At answering.

Hard questions. So. We're people. Oriented. Versus. Bro. We are relationship focused. Not. Not about individualistic. Things. Secondly. What it means.

Is we grow. Into a true identity. And our purpose. As we join. God. Building us together. So. We will grow. We will grow.

Into God's. Purpose. For us. As that temple. As we join. God. Building us together. So. I want to encourage you. To join in.

Get engaged. With the congregation. Come early. Stay late. Talk to folks. Get to know them. Invite them to lunch. Invite them to coffee. Right.

[47 : 26] Invite yourself. To their house. Or invite you. Whatever it takes. We want to be interactive. We want to be engaged.

With one another. Because that's how God builds. He doesn't build it. From here. Out. He builds it. From here. Out. However that. Works. I don't have a diagram. For them. All right.

Hey. Maybe even become a member. Maybe. Maybe not. If God calls you here. Whether you're a member or not.

If God calls you here. Take the step of faith. To engage. The body. Let's pray. Father. We thank you. For your word. We thank you. For Paul. And his.

[48 : 19] Distinctness. His carefulness. But also. His teaching. Lord. That shows us. What we're to be. How we're to function. How.

As we gather together. The things that you're doing. That we might understand. That it's not about. Individuals. Doing special things. It's about. All of us. Together.

Joining. And supporting. Each other. To both worship. And to witness. So. Clarify for each one of us.

Father. How you want us to be. Engaged in your. Church. In your body. We ask in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.