

Title: How The Church is Built

Text: Ephesians 2:19-22

Let's turn in our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 2 beginning with Vs 19.

(Read 2:19-22)

The phrase "so then" ~~XXXXXXXX~~ in Vs 19 refers to everything that went on just preceding this Verse. For example in chapter 2:1-3 Paul said that our condition was dead in trespasses and sins. A hopeless picture was given there. When we came to Vs 4 Paul said "But God being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us." Then he discussed salvation by grace.

And then in verses 11 to 18 Paul showed how that salvation through the work of Jesus at the cross brought the Jews who were near and the Gentiles who were far away, brought them both together by the blood of Jesus and put ~~XXXXXXXX~~ them into one new body, one new man. And he called that the CHURCH. And both Jew and Gentile now has access to God the Father says Vs 18.

"SO THEN"... And that is what we are going to look at now.

How Do You Build a Church? Well, First of all it involves people.

() As to the people involved. ~~Paul~~ remains us in Vs 19 that you cannot build God's church without people. The church isn't mortar and stone. Even though it is illustrated by mortar and stone. The church is people. People who have come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

~~Now~~ Now, there is really only one place where the universal true church is really seen. Only one. And that is in heaven. And they are all dead. I think it is important that we understand that. Every organized church on earth hopes it is the true church. But I don't know. The only think that will show us once and for all, regardless of what you and I have professed, the only thing that will show us, once and for all, who in this church is really part of the true church is either ^{at} the time of our death, ~~which know~~ ~~who are alive~~, or, at the time of the coming of Christ. ^{How} It is my prayer that if christ would come now, there wouldn't be anyone seating here in this building wandering ~~what~~ happened....

The true ^{is} ~~is~~ being assembled in heaven says Hebrews 12:23. There is a gathering ~~together~~ of God's people in heaven.

And every last one of them up there in heaven are really saved and really born again.

Now, on earth all we have are local churches. Visable manifestations.. hopefully, of the true church which is being gathered in heaven. There is no universal church on earth. There is only a universal church in heaven. None on earth. All we have are local churches.

When Jesus said "I will build my church" in Matthew 16:18 "and the gates of Hades will not over power it", he was talking about His true universal church. The gates of Hades, the door way into Hell is death itself. And what Jesus is saying is that even death iteself can not wipe out his church. Because if you have come to know him as saaviour, death simply ushers you into heaven. "Absent from the body is present with the Lord!" Death does not wipe out christ's church.

But when Paul discusses the church, he is interested in the church as it is historical and locally on earth. And how the local church gorws. And how churches, locally, should put themselves in line with what he says here And become God's church on e arth.

And the people involved, he reminds us, had an old problem. They were strangers and aliens. And that is why Vs 19 says "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens."

But I must stop at that point and say that that is not necessarily so. Now, I am not contridicting the Bible. I am simply saying that there is a sence inwhich you and I are no longer strangers and aliens, but the Bible also teaches that we become strangers and aliens. This is one of the fasinating illustrations in the Bible of who we are.

Now, the word "stranger" simply means "something of a different nataure or quality of something else." And Ephesians chapter 2:3 says that before I came to christ I was by nature a child of wrath. I was under the ~~condemnation~~ condemnation of God. And when I became a christian I received a new nature. And thus I am no longer a stranger that is different in nature from the family of God. I am now in the family.

When it says "I am an alien" is refers to one who makes his home along side of another. But he doesn't have citizenship....

Everyone who comes from another country and lives here is an alien.

Interesting thing, here, is that I am no longer alien, meaning "outside of God's family", but there is another sense in which I am an alien. God calls christians strangers and aliens on earth. The word "alien" is a popular word today. We think of people from outer space invading our planet. And something strange coming from outer space.

I don't think that is a bad idea for the Bible word "alien." A lot of us have all of our hopes and dreams and priorities all tied to down here. We live down here. But friends, if you are a christian, you are not a citizen down here. You are a citizen in heaven. Therefore, you are living in a county that you don't belong to. You are an alien.

Before, you come to christ, you are an alien to God's city and God's family. When you become a christian you then become an alien to this world.

"This world is not my home. I am just a passing through."

Turn over to the Book of I Peter and let me illustrate. I Peter chapter 1 gives us a usage of the word as it relates to Jews who were no longer in their home land, Israel. But because of persecution were scattered throughout the Roman empire. And so Peter writes to all those folks in chapter 1 verse 1 and says:...."To those who reside as aliens"....

Notice he calls his Jewish brothes "aliens" scattered throughout all these Roman providences.

Now, that is one usage of the word. O.K. let me show you a spiritual application. Look at chapter 2 of I Peter verse 11. Chapter 2:11.."belooved I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul."

Here, we are called "strangers and aliens." We are in the world. Yet, we have to watch out that we don't become involved in the world's mess. The fleshly lusts of the world because they will do battle with us against the soul's purposes and directivaes.

The only reason that I am on earth and not in heaven right now is to have a ministry in someone's life. There isn't anyother reason.

Until God's people wake up to the fact that they are literally "aliens" here, I don't think we will ever get strengthened out on what is really God's purpose for us. Our purpose is not to made money, it is not to be happy, it is not to get our act together, it is not to feel good, it is not to get over depression, it is not of these things. As important as they may seem to be to us, that is not why we are here.

Paul said, "I have a desire to depart and be with christ which is far better, but it is more needful to remain in the flesh at the present time.

But a time came in his life when God said to Paul that it was all over and I am going to take you home. And then Paul wrote, "I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. I am now ready to be offered. The time of my departure is at hand. He knew that there was only one purpose as to why God leaves us on earth. And that is to ministry the gospel to other people. To witness to the lost, to encourage and build up the saint and to get on with the battle. And a lot of us are so involved in the world's system. And we act like we are citizens of the world. We are not. We are aliens, here I like that. I live in heaven. My citizenship is there.

And listen, you don't have to call the men with the white coats. I haven't lost my mind. But the more you think of yourself as an alien, the more you can get on with God's Work.....The more you will be free to serve the Lord...Friends we have to remember who we are. The church is being assembled in heaven. But it is being left down here. People to affect other people with the Gosple of J.C. That is our only purpose. We are to make ~~decisions~~ disciples of every nation. And so we are strangers and aliens to the world system.

() Let's carry this thought a step fruther by looking at the new privilages of the people of God, who form God's church,. We see that they had a problem. ^{Or we} They were once strangers and aliens, but now..two things are said about ~~them~~

One, ^{we} they are fellow citizens with the saints. And number two, ^{love} they are of God's household. I am back in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 19.

So, we have these two statements as to our present condition. One, is that we are in a city. The other is that we are in a family.

an Let's look at the city, first. I ask you: "what city do you belong to?" Well, I am a resident ^{of Alameda} ~~of Calif.~~...NO! I am an alien here. They only think that I am a resident.

Now, you say that to somebody and they are really going to trip out... I am really not a resident of ^{Alameda} ~~Calif.~~. I am just an alien...My real citizenship is in another city. A real city. It is not pie in the sky. It is a real city.

Do you believe that there is a real city in existence right now where christians are citizens?

The Bible says so. ^{of Antioch} And a lot of ~~us~~ in the past are already there. And they are probably having a ball...waiting for us to get there.

an I believe the Bible teaches that those people that God really used in this world always knew that. Always had the heart set on it. And never set on the things down here.

Let me give you an example. Turn over to Hebrews chapter 11...Let's just take a look at Abraham. When it says that we are fellow-citizens with all the rest of the saints or believers, it is referring to our resident. We all belong to another city.

In Hebrews 11 verse 8 we read...(Read Vs 8-10)

Isn't that wonderful? A city prepared for them. ^{Do} ~~Did~~ you know ^{what} that Revelation 21 says, "that that beautiful city, which in human terms is beyond belief, is going to come out of heaven."

And I believe it is going to come and set on the earth. Not the earth as we know it now. But a new earth. And that city is going to set on it. It is a beautiful city where the streets are of gold. And if the Lord made the universe in 6 days, as the Bible clearly says he did, just imagine what that city will ~~be~~ like when Jesus, himself says, when he left his disciples, "I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU"... "In my Father's house are many mansions."

an Now, if it only took 6 days to whip the universe into existence, imagine what the city looks like that ~~He~~ is preparing for us...~~WOW?~~ WOW!!!

And this city is going to come out off heaven. It is a heavenly city. And right now there is a church that is being assembled up there. The true church. And each one of us who is a true believer is going to be a part of that. And the moment you become a believer God automatically makes you a citizen.

Do you remember the story of the disciples coming to Jesus and getting all excited about casting out demons. Boy, they were all charged up..

But Jesus said to them, "Don't rejoice over the demons that are cast out. But rejoice that your names are written in heaven." HOW ABOUT THAT?....

I am not a citizen down here. And neither are you, if you asre a believer We are just aliens doing our work for God. Trying to get as much ~~that~~ done as we can until the Lord comes or death takes us home. Our real citizenship is up ~~there~~ in heaven.

(2) Praise God! I am a fellow-citizen with the saints. But, I am ^{also} of God's house hold. I am in His family. A city might be a little impersonal. But a family is warmth, love, and needs are meet. We are part of God's family..

Let me illustrate how this ^{family} should work. Turn over to Galatians 6:10 Galatians chapter 6 verse 10..."So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the hoshold of the faith."

What this means is that the prority of ministry ^{in your life} is to the house hold of faith. Even though I try to do good to all men. But what am I doing when I try to do good to all men? ^{am I} Trying to meet social needs..... ^{yes that's part of} ~~no!~~.....Trying to give a person ^{yes} food?.... ^{But} ~~no~~.....I should be trying to get him into God's family. That is my ^{real} ~~only~~ reason for doing good to all men.

Let me give you an illustration... A few ;months agao a guy came by the church office. He was passing through town and needed some gas. So I took him over here to the gas statinnn..He was happy. And I went with him to the gas station to ^{fill} ~~feel~~ his car with gas. And that car was empty. Thata car needed gas...And about half way along in filling that car with gas I said:....."I bet you are wandering why I am doing this?....."

And immediately he stopped pumping gas.....And he probably thought: "Oh, boy, here comes the pitch."

But he just stopped. It is amazing how that changed his attitude. He looked at me and said, "Why are you doing this?"

I said, "Well, it isn't because your car needed gas." But, I realize that is the biggest thing on your mind right now..Now, don't stop pumping that gas. Just keep putting into your car. I just wanted you to know why?"

And he wouldn't finish pumping that gas until I told him why?... I said, "the reason why I am giving you that gas is because I want to give you some spiritual truth that will change your life. The most important thing is that you know Jesus Christ. And I hope you are not offended, but I could care less if you got that gas or not."

And he said, "Let me get this straight. You are only buying me this gas because you want to talk to be about something." I

I said, "right. I want to talk to you about Jesus."

"Amen, go ahead." And he started pumping gas....

It illustrated to me again, folks, you know, this world, man that is where they are at.

We do good to all men. But there should be only one motive controlling our lives. To win people to Jesus Christ. To get them into God's family.

And especially we should do go to those of the household of faith. What does that mean? It means that your christian friends are more important

What a simple little application. Galations 6:10...

OK You are in a city; and you are in a family. So, there are real people involved in God's church. The church He is building ^{under} ~~is~~ people

() Let's look, for a moment, at the prerequisites for building. If you are going to build a building you must know what is necessary. And according to the Bible there are two things necessary, from Ephesians 2:20.

Vs 20 says, "having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the corner stone."

Two things are necessary. (1) a foundation; and (2) a corner stone.

IF We are going to grow the church

That is very simple. We can all understand how important a foundation is. ^{if no church}
 So, let's start with that foundation. The Bible says "the foundation is the apostles and prophets." The church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets. Well, what does that mean? I believe it is referring to the Bible. Those apostles and prophets, who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gave to us the Holy writings. *The Bible*

Several years ago, two men with white shirts and long ^{Ties} ~~times~~, riding bicycles, stopped by my home. They ~~are~~ very curious. And they ~~came~~ came up and knocked on the door. And it was interesting that the very first question they ask was: "Do you have apostles and prophets in your church?" ^(please)
 And I ~~was~~ said: YES!.....And they were stuned.....They got excited....
 And they said, "you know, you are the first one that we ever talked to who has ever said that."

"Oh, yay, we hear from them ~~every~~ every Sunday." And they just went bannas....They are standing on the pouch and they can't believe what is happening.....

And they ask, "Do you mean to tell me that you have Apostles and Prophets speak ever Sunday in your church?" I said, "that's right"... "Do you want me to share a little bit with you about what they said?"

They said, "Man, we would love ^{it}" So, I went and got my Bible and came out and said, "You know, we heared from Paul last week. And he said....."
 And we have heard from John and James and Peter.... *(And they sort of smiled and nodded first exit)*

Friends, God has laid a foundation through a chosen group of ~~men~~ ^{people}, to write scripture.

Notice down in chapter 3 verse 5 that God directly revealed to them what to write. He didn't trust them to come up with this out off there heads. Oh, no..he revealed it to ~~my~~ them.

The truth about the Bible is that men didn't sort off look at things and then get some good ideas. Oh, no.....

You say, "Well, that is all it means, doesn't it? They were controled by the Spirit. Kind of filled with the Spirit as they saw things..."

Are you kidding.. That means that any christiana could write scripture today. Filled with the spirit. Saw things. Wrote them down. Some people believe. ^{They} They ran around saying, "God said something to me."

Oh, no...God directly revealed to a special group of men. He didn't trust them to come up with their own ideas, he revealed to them what to write. John clears that up in the Book of Revelation. ~~Oh~~, John didn't even understanding what he was seeing. Yet, God told him to write. And John wrote...Now, what am I trying to say to you? I am saying that you cannot ^{Grow} ~~build~~ a church without People, number one; and without the foundation, which is the Bible. You show me a church that doesnot build it's ministry on this book, and I will show you a place that is not a church. It may be a nice little club like Rotary or Lions where people gather and meet one an another. But it is not a church.

A church must be built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. (2) The second idea is that of a corner stone. A corner stone. And this has a lot of misunderstanding, I believe. If I were to pass a ~~piece~~ piece of paper around this morrowing and ask you to write down what a corner stone is: most people would think of that nice little thing you do when the building is up and you put a plage up which says that this building was dedicated on such and such a date and this is the corner stone. You have a ciramony called "laying the corner stone."

Now, get ~~that~~ ^{that} out of your mind. It has nothing to do with ~~the illustration~~ illustration.

Also, there is the idea that the corner stone is the main support stone in a building. And if you would remove the corner stone the whole building would fall down. And that is a nice spiritual thought. Meaning that every thing should be resting upon Jesus. But that is still not the purpose of the ancient corner stone.

O.K. what is the purpose of the corner stone. In ^{Greek} ~~Greek~~ it means "the tip of the angle".....That is the meaning of the word translated "corner stone." "The tip of the angle."

Now, the reason why this is important is because in ancient building, the angles and lines of the building were lined up on the bases of the corner stone....~~WHW!!!!~~ Now, I understand the point.

Jesus Christ is the corner stone. Or, the one by whom we line up every other stone. We are the stones in this building. *Do you see*

I Peter 2 tells us that we are the spiritual stones of this building. But we must be lined up in perspective to Jesus.

OK - How is the church ~~built~~ - with the real people
~~In other words, we have learned so far that the church J.C. is really~~
secondly. The church is built upon
~~people. We also learned that the foundation~~ *of* the Word of God. The third thing we learned about the church is that you cannot visualize a church ~~of~~ ~~christ~~ without looking at a J.C., and seeing everything through him. He is the central director of how the building should be put up. He is ^{The} corner stone, that guides all the lines and all the angles *of* the building. And to refuse to seek him, will see that church in ruins and decay in a short period of time. Only J.C can put things into proper perspective. He is the ~~center~~ center of it all.

() Now, let's come to the process of building. Vs 21 says.. "In whom" Meaning "In Christ" "IN whom the whole building, being fitted together ~~is~~ is growing into a holly temple in the Lord."

Have you ever seen a building grow? I guess you could say "by stages." But I doubt seriously if left by itself that a building would grow from a one story into a two story building. *Right?*

at You know, one day it is a one story building. And the next day you come by and it has grown into a ^{Two} ~~three~~ story building.

Oh, no...building do not grow. But God used the word "growing here". Do you know why? Because ~~it~~ it is a metaphor. It is an illustration. And he ~~used~~ ~~not~~ a word that refers to living organism growing. To make sure that we understand the stones, the spiritual stones, in this building are alive. ~~It~~ *is* is a real organism. And it is growing continually; *of* people coming to know christ. It grows bigger and bigger and bigger.

And there is a process in which this building is growing. And that is, that there is a relationship of all the parts to the whole. *over the*

Vs 21 says "the whole building is being fitted together". "Fitted together Literally "to join together." Can you see the importance, here.

We are all ~~stones~~ stones in the ^{F.B.C} building. But we need to be fitted together. A lot of people are out here by themselves. They are isolated from the body of christ, saying: "I am a part of God's building."

Oh, no. You are a stone on the ground. You need to get over here with the other stones and be ~~stones~~ fitted together. This is very important to understand. The relationship of the parts to the whole. The whole area of spiritual gifts is also involved in this as Paul describes in chapter 4. Each one of us has a ministry. God working in each part ~~by~~ builds up the whole.

Now what is the whole? It is my understanding that the whole building is centered in the corner stone. The corner stone is so important to the whole building. And Paul says "in whom". Meaning "the corner stone" the whole building is fitted together.

OK. WHAT IS THE POINT? You and I will never having the ministry, we will never ~~have~~ ^{be} the part to the ~~whole~~ whole that we ought to be, until we see ourselves in relationship to the corner stone, Jesus Christ. It is when you lose perspective of Jesus, ~~when~~ when you ~~no~~ ^{no} longer go to Him for direction, to line up your life with ~~Him~~ Him, you do not have a ministry ~~to~~ to other people.

What is ~~the~~ ^{the} one thing that keeps us from having a effective ministry in the lives of others? It is because we ~~are~~ ^{do NOT} ~~line~~ ^{line} our life according to the corner stone, J.C. ~~we~~ ^{we} get out of line. And we are not ~~where~~ ^{what} we should be... We are out here doing our own thing. Instead of being fitted together..

And notice ~~the~~ the result. "Growing into a holy temple in the Lord." Now, stop and think about that....

All of us are individual stones. We are being fitted together in ~~the~~ building for God. So that we are a holy temple.

What went on in the Holy of Holies? Well, that is where the High Priest went once a year. It was the place where God dwelled. His presence was there. *The High Priest met God There.*

Now, the Bible is saying that the church of J.C. is to be a Holy Dwelling place for God. A Temple. The Holy of Holies. A special place where believers can go directly to the Lord.

And the point that I believe Paul is making is that if you have a real church, and we as believers know our role in that church, then our ^{Focal} point is worship. It is worship...Until we worship God...Until we see that we are a holy temple, ^{God} our relationship to God is strong, ^{Until we see that -} our relationship to others will not be ^{strong}

The first priority is to fellowship with God. Out of which will flow a fruitful ministry. And we will be fitted together correctly. And the building will achieve its purpose for which it was designed.

A holy temple. That reminds us by the usage of the word "holy" that when our lives are living in sin, whether it is attitude, words, or conduct, it is hindering God's purpose for you and for me on this earth. It is sin that is stopping the beauty of God manifesting himself through that temple. And just as sin in the past caused God to withdraw from the Temple, so also the wonderful presence ^{of God} in the believers life is hindered. The Holy Spirit is quiched when we tolarate sin in our life. And we once again do not understand why we are here. God wants clean vessals to use. To reach people for his glory. This is so very important. A holy temple in the Lord.

() AND WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS BUILDING? ^{FOR GROWING THE CHURCH} ^{Read vs 21-22} (Vs 22 "in whome you also

^{and} are ^{being} built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

(1) First, notice, to the beleivers ^{God's} purpose is unity. We are being built together. Fitted Together

How does God bring unity? The last phrase "in the spirit." Look over at chapter 4:3...Paul continues this theme as he says, "being dilegent to pæserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The unity of God's people. Do you know why that is so important? For this reason. Jesus said, "by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another."

You see, when we ^{are} fitted together, when we are built together, and we love each other, and we minister one to another, that dwelling of God can be manifest to the world in the sphere of love. It will be attrative to the world

Point

Now, without diminishing the importance of the role of the pastor in a church, it simply must be said that he, alone, cannot and should not be responsible for the growth...the attendance...the strength...vitality.... progress....and the effectiveness of a church. He has his place. But so does each and every other member of the church. It is pastor and members together who cause growth in the church. And Praise God, it is all built upon the corner stone, namely Jesus....

To illustrate this, I am reminded of a truly great parable. It goes this way: Behold...a ball team went forth to play a game of baseball. Just as the umpire was saying "batter up", the catcher for the home team arrived and took his place behind the plate. The center fielder was late. He didn't arrive until the second inning. The first baseman didn't show up at all. But later explained that unexpected company had dropped in and he felt obligated to stay ^{here} with them. The third baseman, likewise, failed to appear at the game. Having been up late the night before, he felt the need to stay in bed and nurse a headache. The left fielder had felt the need to visit another team across town, so he, in like manner was absent from the game. The shortstop was present, but lo, he had left his glove at home. The right fielder and the second baseman were away on a week-end trip, but sent a message to the coach saying that they were truly there in spirit and hoped the team would win.

Verily, when the pitcher went into the box, he looked around for his teammates, and lo, his heart was heavy, for their places were empty. But the game was announced and the crowds were in the stands. There was nothing to do but throw the ball and hope for the best.

In due time the pitcher tightened his belt, tugged at his cap, and stepped into the box to do his best as pitcher....first baseman....second baseman....shortstop...and left and right fielder. He threw the ball. And lo, the batter smote it to left field. In like manner he threw the ball again, and lo, the batter smote it to right field. With patience he threw the ball again and again, wishing that perchance the opposing team would

grow weary of smiting the ball, but to no avail.

The sky grew dark and the fans went unto their homes. The game was finally called when the umpire could no longer see the ball. The game was over, and alas, the home team never came to bat. The pitcher went down to sore defeat, and great was the fall thereof.

When the absent members heard that their team had lost they called an emergency meeting, in which there was much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. However, in due season, the thoughts and meditations of their hearts bore fruit, and they hired a new pitcher.

You see, it is the pitcher and team working together that wins the games. And it is every person who builds the church. It is God working in each person, fitting them together that builds the whole.

Loving one another is always an attraction to others *to Jesus.*

(2) And there is also a purpose towards God. Vs 22 says that "we are a dwelling of God." God literally is living in the bodies of believers. Just as ~~the~~ ^{He} dwelt in the temple and the tabernacle, so also our bodies, according to I Corinthians 6:19 ~~are~~ ^{as} the Temple of the Holy Spirit of God.

I don't know christian, how long it has been since you thought about this?

But Do you realize what this means?

~~But~~ *In* spite of what you know about some other christian, let's take me for an example. In spite of what you know about me and all my problems and short coming and everything else, I want you to know ~~that~~ you should tread lightly. God almighty is living in this sinful vessel.

You talk about a tremendous truth. If you are a believer, God is living in you.....It is fantastic...

And a lot of the resources and power that we are looking for is already there and we are not drawing upon it. Our faith is ~~weak~~ ^{weak}. And the more you involve yourself in the world the more, as I Peter 2:11 says, it wages war against your soul. It defeats you and discourages you. And the whole world system works against the power that is really in your life and in mine.

We are a ~~holy~~ temple in the Lord. We are being built together into a dwelling of God by means of the Holy Spirit.

Let us work on loving one another.....~~hearing our differences.....~~ *reaching out to people,*

Demonstrating our unity.....*Then the church will grow.*

It will be full

Let us close in prayer

Why - Because we are the Temple of the H.S. of God

How will the Church Grow

- 1 people - Reach out
- 2 Grow on the foundation - Bible
Corner stone Jesus
- 3 Understood the purpose
Unity
Bodies - Temple of God