



“Unless the Lord Builds it”

Since approximately 150 AD the Church has been under the charge of men, who have endeavored to build something for God, yet have ended up all too often building monuments to their own agendas. While building is a clear theme of Scripture, the process and the product are so clearly to be in and of God, that man is inconspicuous and Jesus is glorified.

1. It is the Lord’s House and He is the builder:

Psalm 127:¹ **Unless the LORD builds the house**, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

2. Jesus will build “His” Church. He is the real builder. We may be called to co-labor with Him, but He is the builder and it is His Church:

Matthew 16:⁸“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock **I will build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

3. Beware of the tendency of the flesh to try to do something for God, and forgetting that your flesh cannot pay the amount necessary to complete the task. Only bearing the cross, and dying to our own self sufficiency, and thus entering into His power, will access the currency necessary to build, and access the power necessary to conquer, so that it ultimately becomes Him who does it all.:

Luke 14:²⁵Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ²⁶“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸“For which of **you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost**, whether he has *enough* to finish it— ²⁹“lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, ³⁰“saying, ‘This **man** began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹“Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²“Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³“So likewise, **whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.**

4. Men are all about building things on behalf of God that God hasn’t called for. It always evidences the hardness of our hearts, no matter how beautiful it appears to men. We aren’t called to build anything for God. He does the building. At times He does it through us if we are dead enough to not get in His way, but it must Him doing it.:

Acts 7:⁴⁴“Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, ⁴⁵“which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, ⁴⁶“who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷“But Solomon built Him a house. ⁴⁸“However, **the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands**, as the prophet says: ⁴⁹ ‘Heaven *is* My throne, And earth *is* My footstool. **What house will you build for Me?** says the LORD, Or what *is* the place of My rest? ⁵⁰ Has My hand not made all these things?’ ⁵¹“**You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit**, as your fathers did, so do you. ⁵²“Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?

5. Only God’s grace can do the building. Men in their inward legalistic tendency towards duties, agendas, and mission statements, will lean towards building, but when God is in charge it will be His grace doing the necessary work. We are at most simply channels through which He accomplishes it as we are in agreement with His Spirit. :

Acts 20:³²“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of **His grace, which is able to build you up** and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

6. It is the Spirit’s gifts that build the saints, not our best plans and systems that we devise to bless the body and impress the Lord. We are called to be channels of His Spirit’s gifts, not originators of our best plans and works on His behalf. :

1 Corinthians 14:¹² So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in **gifts that build up the church**.

7. Men have a part, but it is truly God who brings the increase. We are nothing, and if any way anything we are doing is drawing much attention to ourselves then it is evident we are building on His behalf instead of Him building through us. People are the only building He is after. If I build it must only be that Jesus lays Himself as the foundation of His building through me. I don’t build something for Him and then stand back and offer it to Him as a gift of my self effort. This has far too often been the history of the Church. It always leads men astray and takes the focus off Jesus and places it upon man. It creates a boasting in man rather than a glorification of Jesus alone. :

1 Corinthians 3:⁵Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but **God gave the increase**. ⁷So then **neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase**. ⁸Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, **you are God’s building**. ¹⁰According to the grace of God which was given to me, as **a wise master builder** I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. ¹¹**For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ**. ¹²Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴If anyone’s

work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. ¹⁶Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For ***the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*** ¹⁸Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their *own* craftiness"; ²⁰and again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." ²¹Therefore **let no one boast in men.** For all things are yours: ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. ²³And **you are Christ's**, and Christ *is* God's.

8. Consider Jesus, be focused on Jesus, look at Him, don't take your eyes off of Him. He builds. It is His house. We're servants, but He is the builder. People are His building not prominent ministries or natural buildings. If the entire focus of everything in the Kingdom isn't Jesus then somehow man, in his craftiness, has stolen the focus from Jesus and placed it on himself. Often this is not the direct intention, but because we so easily lose sight of the true focus it happens. May God deliver us from the hardness of heart we so dislike acknowledging in ourselves. :

Hebrews 3:¹Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, **consider** the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, **Christ Jesus**, ²who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also *was faithful* in all His house. ³For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as **He who built the house has more honor than the house.** ⁴For ***every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.*** ⁵And **Moses** indeed *was faithful* in all His house as **a servant**, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken *afterward*, ⁶but **Christ** as a Son **over His own house**, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. ⁷Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, ⁸**Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,**