

Building - the Heavenly Pattern

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of building according to God's heavenly pattern, with Jesus Christ as the foundation and each believer contributing to the temple of God.

Duration: 1:05:58

Scripture: Psalm 127:1, Matthew 16:18, 1 Corinthians 3:9-15, Hebrews 8:5, Hebrews 11:10, Hebrews 11:16

Topics: "Humility Before God", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for humility before God and the importance of seeking more light from Him. He warns against the danger of becoming proud when we have some understanding of spiritual matters. The speaker uses the example of a blind man who initially saw people as trees, but with a second touch from the Lord, his vision was fully restored. The sermon also references Hebrews 8:5, which speaks of the representation and shadow of heavenly things, and Psalm 127, which highlights the importance of God's presence in our lives. Overall, the message encourages believers to continually seek God's guidance and to build their lives upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

This is Sunday evening, February 8th, 1976, in Richmond, Virginia. Ministry is being given through Brother Stephen Kong. We do thank the Lord that we are here together in his presence.

I'd like to read a few passages from the Scripture. Hebrews, chapter 8, verse 5. Hebrews, chapter 8, verse 5. Who served the representation and shadow of heavenly things, according as Moses was oracularly told when about to make the tabernacle. For see, said he, that thou make all things according to the pattern which has been shown to thee in the mountain.

For see, said he, that thou make all things according to the pattern which has been shown to thee in the mountain. Matthew, chapter 16. Matthew, chapter 16, verse 18.

And I also say unto thee that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my assembly, and Hades gates shall not prevail against it. Go back to Hebrews again. Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 16.

Maybe we'll read verse 10 first. Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 10. For he waited for the city which has foundations, of which God is the artificer and constructor.

Verse 16. For now they seek a better that is a heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. 1 Corinthians, chapter 3. 1 Corinthians, chapter 3. We begin with verse 9. Maybe it's better to begin with verse 10.

According to the grace of God which has been given to me as a wise architect, I have laid the foundation, but another builds upon it. But let each see how he builds upon it. For other foundations can no man lay besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if anyone builds upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, the work of each shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire, and the fire shall try the work of each what it is. If the work of anyone which he has built upon the foundation shall abide, he shall receive a reward.

If the work of anyone shall be consumed, he shall suffer loss, but he shall be saved, but so as through the fire. Do ye not know that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone corrupt the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, and such are ye.

And finally, Psalms. Psalm 127. Just the first verse.

Psalm 127, verse 1. Unless Jehovah build a house, in vain do his builders labor in it. Unless Jehovah keep the city, the keeper watches in vain. Shall we pray? Our Father, we have read Thy word, and now we do ask Thee that Thou would breathe upon Thy word, and make it living, real, and operative to each of us.

We ask Thee to give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that we may know Thee, that we may know Thy mind, that we may know what Thou art doing, that we may know what we are doing, and we may do Thy will. We just commit this time into Thy hands, and ask Thy blessing. In the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen. We have read a number of passages, and you will notice that in all these passages, one thought runs through all of them. And that thought is the thought of building.

And yet you find in some passages, the builder is God. The builder is Christ. And yet in other passages, you find that the builder is you or me.

God is building. The Lord Jesus said, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. God is the builder of the city with foundation.

God himself is building. And yet you find we also are building. A foundation is already laid, which is none other than Jesus Christ.

And then each of us are building upon that foundation. We are building the temple of God. The house of God.

Are we building the same building? Or do we build something differently what God is building? May we say that what God builds and what we build are actually one building. One thing. But are they really the same? And this is something that we would like to fellowship this afternoon.

After Peter confessed the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. The Lord said, you are Peter, you are a stone. I will build my church upon this rock.

And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. The Lord said, I will build. He himself will undertake the work of building the church.

And the gates of Hades, even though all the gates of Hades are open. And yet, it cannot prevail against what the Lord has built. In other words, what the Lord is building is so perfect.

That Satan could find no flaw, no loophole, nowhere that he can prevail over it. But of course, immediately after, the Lord said, I will build my church upon this rock. And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

And then the Lord began to share with his disciples how he will go to Jerusalem. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead. And immediately, you remember Peter, out of his good heart, he took hold of our Lord and shook him probably and said, No Lord, don't do that.

Be kind to yourself. Well, the Lord just said, you are Peter, you are a stone. I will build you, with others of course, upon the foundation which is your confession.

And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it, but only a few minutes. And you will find the gates of Hades as if it has prevailed over Peter. But thank God, it has prevailed over Peter.

But it has not prevailed over the church that Christ is building. Because immediately you will find the Lord say, Satan, get thee behind. You have no part in it.

The Lord is building with Peter, yes. But the Lord is building with himself in Peter. Not just Peter.

The gates of Hades can prevail over Peter. But it can never prevail over the Christ that is in Peter. And our Lord Jesus is building his church with nothing but himself.

It is true, it is himself in Peter. It is himself in you, himself in me. As we break the bread, you have a portion.

I have a part of that loaf. You have a part of Christ. I have a part of Christ.

And it is with that part of Christ in all of us that he is building his church. And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Why? Because the church that he builds is nothing but an extension of himself.

Whatever the Lord builds, whenever he builds, it is always perfect. There can be no spot, no wrinkle, not of any such thought. But it will be a glorious church, presentable to himself.

Can you imagine that the Lord is building his church and he builds something wrong? He builds it imperfect. It has to be corrected and changed. And there are flaws, there are loopholes for the enemy to attack and even to prevail.

Can you imagine that? It cannot be. Whatever the Lord lays his hand on and builds, it has to be perfect. It needs no alteration, no adjustment.

It is perfect, complete. And the enemy cannot prevail against it. May we go even a step further? The Lord said, I will build my church.

That is in future tense. The Lord is going to build. He is fast to build probably first with Peter and then with other living stones.

And so far as we understand, the Lord is still building his church today. He said, I will build. And then in Ephesians chapter 5 you find one day, after he has purified his church by the washing of the water with the word, that it will become a glorious church and will be presented to him as his bride.

So in one sense we will say that the Lord is now building. The Lord is now purifying. The Lord is now working until the church becomes a glorious church that is fit to be presented to himself as his bride.

But that is only in relation to us. Why? Because we are human beings. And he is working with us.

Therefore you find there is the time and the space factors involved. But so far as God is concerned, he is forever now. There is no past, there is no future, it is always now.

In other words, when God conceives a thought, it is already done. Even before the foundation of the world, God conceived a thought. And that thought is concerning a mystery.

And that mystery is called the mystery of the Christ. It is the church. Even before the foundation of the world, God conceived in his mind the church.

And when is that church completed? It was completed. The moment he conceived the thought, it is as good as it is done. Why? Because God is not restricted, limited, circumscribed by time or space.

In Hebrews chapter 10 you will find even Abraham. He was waiting for that city with foundation. The city which God is the artificer, he is the architect and also the constructor, the builder.

Even Abraham in his time was waiting for that city. Now was it because the city was not yet built, therefore he had to wait? Not at all. Because immediately after that you find in verse 16 we are told, God is not ashamed to be their God.

Why? Because he has prepared for them a city. He has prepared. So far as God is concerned, that city with foundations is already present.

What is waiting for, as Hebrews said, Abraham had to wait. He waited not for God to complete that city, but for us. He will not be completed without us.

So actually Abraham was waiting for us, not waiting for God to complete that city. That city was as good as it was already completed. Now dear brothers and sisters, I know probably it is a little difficult to comprehend, but that's the truth.

That's the truth. So far as we are concerned there is always the time factor and the space factor involved. But with God he is eternal.

He is for forever now. And because of that, when God conceives something, it is done. It is done.

When God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle, God said, See, that you make everything according to the heavenly pattern that I have shown you on the mount. In other words, the tabernacle that Moses built was built according to the pattern in heaven. There was a pattern in heaven.

And Moses was building according to that pattern. Now the problem is, did the tabernacle of Moses come first, or the pattern in heaven existed first? Of course. If Moses built according to the heavenly pattern, now that pattern must be there already in heaven.

What Moses built was just a representation and a shadow of the reality that is in heaven. There is a reality in heaven. There is a tabernacle in heaven.

There is a pattern in heaven. And that reality in heaven exists even before the foundation of the world. It is there.

Always there. And one day God told Moses, Now you build a tabernacle on earth, and that tabernacle is according to the heavenly pattern. Because this that you built was just a representation and a shadow of the things above.

Brothers and sisters, with God there is a reality. And that reality exists with God. It is there.

Whenever God conceives a thought, whenever God purposes a purpose, it is already there. Full and complete. So far as God is concerned it does not take time to complete it.

It is complete. It is perfect. It is complete.

That is reality. That is spiritual reality. And spiritual reality is eternal.

And it is according to that reality in heaven that Moses built the tabernacle. Why? Because it is but a representation and a shadow of the heavenly reality. And God's word to Moses was, See that you make everything according to the pattern as I have shown you on the mountain.

Why? Because that tabernacle was to be a shadow, a representation of the tabernacle in heaven. The tabernacle that Moses built was built with gold, silver, linen, wood, all kinds of things. But this is but a shadow.

The physical is but a shadow. But a representation. The real thing is in heaven.

Not with gold and silver and wood and stone as we see today. It is with a spiritual reality that God has in heaven. And Moses was warned to build everything according to the pattern.

Why? Because if he did not, he would commit the sin of misrepresentation. And the sin of misrepresentation is a great sin in the sight of God. You remember once Moses misrepresented God by getting angry.

You remember that story? The children of Israel had no drink, no water. They cried, they complained, they murmured. And God told Moses, You go there, take the rod from before the tabernacle, from before the ark, the rod of Aaron, that budded.

And you go there to the rock and speak to the rock. And water will come forth. And Moses was provoked in his spirit.

He went to that rock. He smote that rock twice with that rod. And the bud and the fruit of Aaron were all destroyed.

And he scolded the children of Israel and said, You rebel, I give you water to eat, to drink. Moses committed the sin of misrepresentation. He misrepresented God and he was not allowed to enter into the promised land.

Thank God, Moses built the tabernacle just as he was shown of the heavenly pattern. To the minutest detail. There was no misrepresentation in the tabernacle.

And the shadow was the exact shadow of the reality in heaven. You know, brothers and sisters, we are all building. We are all building.

The foundation is already laid. Which is none other but Jesus Christ. We have believed on the Lord Jesus as our Savior, as Christ, as the Son of the Living God.

The foundation is already laid in each one of us. And after we are saved, we are all building upon that foundation. Not in the sense we each are building our own house.

Actually we are building just one house, the temple of God, together. You are building on the foundation, same foundation. I'm building on the same foundation.

And actually we are building the same house. We are building together. Paul is like a foreman.

Actually that master builder or master architect is not the right thing. Because the architect is God. Paul is a foreman.

He is a foreman. And we are laborers. We are laborers.

We are all working together, building that house of God on that foundation. Now when it comes to us, you find the time and the space are involved. We are all building upon that foundation.

But the thing is, be careful as how we build on that foundation. Several things are involved. Number one, how can we build rightly? If we do not see the reality.

In other words, if you want to build, you have first to see the pattern. If you do not see the pattern, how are you going to build? You have to build according to what you think it should be built. And of course that's a guesswork.

And probably 9.999 out of 10 it will be wrong. The chance is very slim that you will build what the pattern really tells you. So first of all you will find you will need light.

You will need to know what the pattern is. And then of course the second question is, what materials are you using? You may use gold, silver and precious stones. Or you may use wood, straw and grass.

And we know gold, silver and precious stones speaks of that which is of God. Gold speaks of the nature of God. Silver speaks of the redemption of Christ.

Precious stones speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit. And if you build with such materials, now that's one way of building it. Or you may build with wood, grass, straw.

It speaks of the nature of man. Man is not like wood, like trees. The glory of man is like grass that will soon fade away and wither.

And the work of man is working with straw. So here you will find you can build on it with that which is of man and not of God. You can build on that foundation.

And number three, when you build, where do you build? You may build a partition where there should be open space. You may build in the wrong place. And if you build in the wrong place, even the material is right, it has to be torn and corrected.

And then lastly, you may build so independently you are not thinking of the other parts of the building. So you may build very diligently and you may build with the right material, but when it is finished it just cannot fit with other buildings. Part of the buildings.

So you find lots of problems are involved. Now dear brothers and sisters, when God builds, what He builds, there is no problem. Because whatever God builds is perfect.

And not only perfect, but it is complete. But when it comes to our building, you find we have lots of problems. Now are we building the same building or are we building some different buildings? I think this is something that we really need to consider before the Lord.

You know sometimes I wonder, will God ever be able to have a holy habitation? Something that really satisfies His heart. That He can dwell forever as His eternal home. Will God ever be able to have such a thing? The more you know about Christianity today, the more you know about yourself, the more you know about what we are doing on earth here.

Probably sooner or later you begin to wonder, Will God ever be able to have what He has purposed even before the foundation of the world? And recently I've been asked this question in different places where I travel. All people ask, will God ever get what He wants? Is there any hope? There doesn't seem to be any possibility. But dear brothers and sisters, may we be comforted with the thought that God already has it.

You are afraid that God may not be able to have it, but thank God He already has it. It is already there. There is a reality which is already there.

It is always there with God. You do not be fearful for God, it is there. Now the problem is not that.

The problem is with us. Is with us. We are supposed to build the same building.

But what has happened? What has happened? You know, as the sun rises, it begins to shine upon a substance. And then casts a shadow on the earth. When the sun rises higher and higher until it reaches its meridian, where is the shadow? The shadow disappears in the substance.

And you know, this is what is happening today. Now brothers and sisters, you find in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, in that well-known chapter on love, you know there is something there. 1 Corinthians chapter 13, verse 12.

For we see now through a dim window obscurely, but then face to face. Now I know partially, but then I shall know according as I also have been known. We see now through a dim window.

Now some translation is through an opaque glass. It is a semi-transparent glass. It is not a, you know, in the old days you don't have transparent glass as we have now.

So what they use is a kind of opaque and semi-transparent thing. Or even they use a metal to reflect. So here it says, we see now through a dim window obscurely.

Because when you see through a dim window, in other words, it casts a shadow. It reflects a shadow. You see somewhat of an outline, but you see only dimly.

Not too clear. Not too clear. But if you receive more light, and probably when you have the full revelation, full light, then you see the real thing.

Now that's one place. Another place is in 2 Corinthians chapter 3. 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 18. But we are all looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, and in some version says, as in a mirror.

As in a mirror. Are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit. First, there is a reality in heaven.

It is always there. It is always perfect. And it is already complete.

Now brothers and sisters, we need to grasp this. Because if we don't, we have no anchor. No anchor.

Everything will be depending upon us, as it seems. But no. Everything is dependent on God.

Therefore you find with God there is a reality. And that reality is ever-present. Full and complete.

So far as the church that God conceived in his mind before the foundation of the world is concerned, dear brothers and sisters, it is already there. Full and complete. God already has it.

That's the reality. And that's something that we have to grasp. But how do we see that reality? We need light.

That's the second thing. We need light. And as light shines upon the reality, it casts a shadow.

Strictly speaking, what we profess to see is probably the shadow of the reality. Do we say we have seen? We have seen the purpose of God in Christ Jesus? Yes. We have seen something.

We have seen that God has a purpose. Which he has purposed in Christ Jesus even before the ages. And that is concerning the church.

An eternal home for God and man. We have seen it. Do we? Have we seen the reality? Probably all we see is the shadow of that reality.

We see it dimly. And because we see dimly, therefore when we build, we build it vaguely. You know, there are places where we do not know how to build and what to build because we don't see.

It is vague. It is dim. But as the light continues to shine, when the light comes to its full meridian, then thank God you find that the shadow disappears in the reality.

It is real. It is real. But oftentimes, brothers and sisters, we are playing with the shadow.

You know, as little children we often play with the shadow. We try to catch our shadow. Step on it.

And sometimes I wonder whether we are playing with the shadow. There is a reality there. The light has come.

Dimly we see something. Maybe it is just a shadow. And we are playing with that shadow.

We are building accordingly. And that's the reason why you'll find when we build, it cannot be perfect. We make lots of mistakes.

We cause lots of problems. We have to be corrected. Torn down sometimes.

And rebuild it. Why? Because we see it dimly. We need more light.

As more light is given, then we come closer to the reality in our building. Until, by the grace of God, one day it disappears in the reality. So a month ago, I was asked to speak to a group of Chinese.

They are believers. Most of them. And they asked me to speak to them.

And they gave me a topic. Sometimes I was given topics to speak. Not that free.

And the topic was the perfect church. How am I going to speak on that topic? I waited before the Lord and said, Where is the perfect church? I cannot find it on earth. How am I going to speak on the perfect church? And the Lord said, The perfect church is there in heaven.

It's always there. Even though on earth you cannot find the perfect church, but in heaven it is always there. It is always there.

On earth, the most perfect church that you can find is the church in Philadelphia. Of the seven churches you know, five churches were reproached by the Lord. One church was not reproached, but only one church was praised.

And no reproach. And that was the church in Philadelphia. If you want to find a perfect church, the church in Philadelphia is the most perfect church.

But even to that church there is a warning. The Lord said, Now be careful lest you lose your crown. Yes, you have your crown now, but you may lose it.

There is a danger of losing it. Nothing perfect. Brothers and sisters, wherever our human hands come, nothing is perfect.

If you are looking for a perfect church on earth, forget about it. You won't find it. I have seen some perfectionists wandering all over the world trying to find a perfect church to be identified with, but they cannot find it.

It's nowhere. It's nowhere on the earth. But that doesn't mean that it does not exist.

It does. It always is there with God. And what we are doing here is see that you do everything according to the pattern that has shown you in heaven.

Oh, brothers and sisters, one day the shadow will disappear in the substance. Even though today it is as if we are playing with the shadow. But be careful how you play it.

How we need, first of all, that the Lord will give us more light. Oh, do not say that I have seen it all. I have known it all.

No, we don't. Today we are just looking through a dim window. Vaguely.

Even when we behold the glory of the Lord, it is as in a mirror. But thank God, even so, we are transformed. We are transformed.

The Spirit of God is working. But dear brothers and sisters, how we need to be humble before God. If anyone thinks that he has seen fully, he is deceiving himself.

The light has shown. No doubt about that. It shows on the reality.

It has cast a shadow on earth. We have seen something. But dear brothers and sisters, how we need to be humble before God and ask the Lord to give us more light.

We need more light. We see an outline, like what you see in a shadow. You see an outline.

But even that outline is not complete. We need to ask the Lord to give us more light. And with more light, we may be able to see more.

And as the shadow begins to shorten and shorten and shorten until it fades in the reality. And actually, brothers and sisters, that is what is happening. So first thing, we need to be before the Lord is to always be humble and open.

And asking the Lord to give us more light. The Lord gave grace to the humble. And he resisted the proud.

You know, there is a real danger for people who have seen something. If we are totally blind, there is no way for us to be boastful. But if we can see a little bit, now that is the danger.

You see, we are like that man whom the Lord healed. When the Lord first touched that man, that man said, I see. But what did he see? He saw man moving around like trees.

He saw dimly. He saw dimly. He needed the second touch of the Lord.

And with that second touch, now he saw man as man. No longer as trees. You know, sometimes we thank the Lord.

He did give us some light. And we thank the Lord and say, oh, praise God, I see. But brothers and sisters, we are like that blind who do see, but we see dimly.

Dimly is the shadow. It is the shadow of the reality, yes. Something is real there, but it is just a shadow.

Dimly. We need the second touch of the Lord. We need more touch from the Lord that we may see the shadow begin to shorten and the substance begin to lengthen until we really touch the reality.

So that is something that we need to be very careful about. And of course, number two, how we need to be faithful to whatever is shown. If we are not faithful to what is already shown, how can God give us more light? The reason why we do not receive more light is not because God does not give light.

It is because God is waiting for us to be faithful to the light that is already given. And if we are faithful to the light God has already given us, then He will give us more light. So brothers and sisters, the second thing is how we need to be faithful to the light which has already been given.

Now, are we faithful? And of course, number three, we need to be careful as to how we build upon the foundation with the vision that is given. Are we building upon it with gold, silver, precious stones? Things

that come from God. Are we building it with what comes out of ourselves? The fire will test it.

Now, the fire in 1 Corinthians 3, we believe, is not a physical fire. The fire in 1 Corinthians 3, we believe, is God Himself. Because God is a consuming fire.

In other words, at the judgment seat of Christ, everything will be measured by God Himself. Christ will be the rod to measure every work. And if it doesn't measure up to Christ, it will be burned.

It will be burned. Even though He is saved. But barely saved.

Barely saved. How we need to live every day in the light of the judgment seat of Christ. Brothers and sisters, one day, we who are the Lord will appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

It is true that we will not be judged on the issue of eternal life or eternal death. That judgment is already passed. The judgment of the great white throne.

That judgment of life and death is already passed so far as we are concerned because Christ was judged in our stead on Calvary's cross for us. Therefore, anyone who believes in the Lord has passed out of life and death into life. And that judgment is already passed.

We will not be judged before the great white throne. But that doesn't mean that there will be no judgment. Because as a family of God, one day we shall all appear at the judgment seat of Christ.

It is not a throne. It is a seat. A bima.

A lifted place where the head of the family will judge the members of the family. So as a family of God, we will all appear at the judgment seat of Christ. And there we will be judged, measured.

We will either receive reward or suffer loss. Now, brothers and sisters, that's why today we should not wait until that day. Because if we wait until that day, it's too late.

Today, we shall live in the light of the judgment seat of that day. Now, if we live today in this manner, then we will not be judged at that time. In other words, it is already judged today.

So how we need to be? Always before the Lord and let the Lord judge us today with the light of the judgment seat. And that is the manner that we should build. There is no guarantee that what we build will not be torn.

No guarantee. We may think we are building according to the pattern. But when we have more light, we may see that we are not.

We need to be adjusted. We need to be corrected. Some need to be torn and to be rebuilt.

But dear brothers and sisters, if we will build in this manner, you will find, so far as human is concerned, by the grace of God, we can build as close to the reality as possible. Until one day it disappears in the reality. You know, there is something in me I don't know whether I should share or not.

Because I'm not too sure about it. Well, I will lay it out. And if I'm wrong, please correct me.

It is just something in me. I wonder if we can put it this way. You know, often times we use these two terms.

Universal church and local church. Actually in the Bible you don't find these two terms. The church is the church.

But the Bible does show us the church has two aspects. That is true. For instance, in Matthew chapter 16, the Lord said, I will build my church upon this rock and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Of course he is thinking of the church universal. No doubt about that. The Lord himself is building the church.

Universally. With living stones all over the ages. He is building all these living stones into that church universal.

Upon himself. And it is so triumphant that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. That is the church universal.

But what are we building? What are we actually involved with? Are we building the church universal? Hardly. May I say we are building the church local. I wonder if that is correct.

You see, we are limited by time and space. We are actually involved in the building of the church local. Sometimes, you know, we think we are building the church universal.

You are hanging in the air. How are you going to build the church universal? When you come down to earth, come down to time, what are we building? We are building the church local. Isn't it true? We are building together, fitly framed, rightly joined, exhorting one another, loving one another, loving one another, helping one another.

We are building that house. It is the church local that we are building. That is practical.

If we say we are building the church universal and we do not lay our hands on the church local, what are you building? Nothing. Nothing. And that's the reason why the church local is so essential.

You are not able to build the church universal. Christ builds it. God builds it.

He builds the city with foundation. He builds it. He does not entrust that to you and me.

He does it Himself. What we are working actually is building the church local. And it is only the church local you find it is so imperfect.

Because we are building. It is so imperfect. It needs to be corrected, adjusted all the time.

But thank God for one thing. Whatever we build in the local church that is according to the heavenly pattern, one day you will find it is there. When the local church has disappeared, the universal church is manifested.

And you will find it is there. You will read Revelation chapters 2 and 3. And you will find in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 seven churches in Asia. Local churches.

Here you will find the Lord is dealing with these local churches. And see if these local churches really have there the right testimony of Jesus. And the Lord is disciplining.

The Lord is exhorting, encouraging. Here you will find all kinds of imperfections, all kinds of corrections, how we need to repent. That is the church local.

But after you come to the end, when you come to the end of the book of Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, what do you see? You do not see the seven lampstands anymore. The church local disappears. Why? Because it is absorbed in the church universal.

You see the new Jerusalem as a giant lampstand. The twelve foundations is the base of that lampstand. The city is that lampstand.

And the lamp is the lamp. And God is the light. That is the city that God has prepared for us.

We see it manifested only in the future. But so far as God is concerned, it is already there. It just waits to be manifested.

That's all. That's all. Oh brothers and sisters, isn't that a tremendous responsibility? To see how we build with a local church? How careful we must be? Because if we corrupt the temple of God, God will corrupt us.

God will destroy us. And by that it means that we will not be able to reign with Him for a thousand years in the kingdom, even though we are saved in eternity. Isn't that a tremendous thing, brothers and sisters? Oh thank God, that we are not just sitting here passively, say, well, God builds, so let Him build.

We are not involved. We are doing nothing. And it's better we are not involved.

If we are involved, we just spoil it. Brothers and sisters, that's not it. It is true, God is building.

But we are building too. And it is the same building. And whether it will eventually merge into one or not, that is a big issue.

And that concerns us very much. Very much. Therefore, brothers and sisters, my burden this afternoon, actually, that is just a burden within me.

My burden is, what are we doing here? We are building. We need more light. We need to be very careful.

We need to be very humble before the Lord. We need to look to the Lord that whatever we build, it may one day be found in that building which God has prepared. In other words, the shadow will disappear in the reality.

And I think probably that's what it amounts to. So may the Lord have mercy upon us. Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, we do rejoice in Thy presence because whatever may happen on earth, that reality before Thee is always there.

Even Satan cannot touch it. It is complete. It is perfect.

Oh, we need more light. That we may build according to the heavenly pattern. And may be found to be in heaven when it shall appear.

Deliver us from being proud of ourselves. To be self-conceited. Oh Lord, keep us always open and humble before Thee.

Permit us to live in the light of the judgment seat of Christ. Oh, that we may be very careful, very faithful, and very practical. Unless the Lord builds the house, the builder labor in vain.

So we just give ourselves to Thee and ask Thee to guide and lead us in such a way that nothing, oh nothing, may be lost. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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