

Spiritual House: The Building of the House

by Stephen Kaung

The church is God's spiritual house, built out of Christ's body, and is the union and communion of God and man in Christ Jesus.

Duration: 1:38:22

Scripture: 1 Kings 6:7, Acts 10:13, 1 Corinthians 3:9-15

Topics: "The Cross", "Sanctification"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the significance of his cry, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?' The preacher explains that Jesus, who had a close relationship with God the Father, experienced a moment of separation from God when he took on the sins of humanity. This separation was necessary for Jesus to bear the weight of our sins and fulfill his mission on earth. The preacher also highlights the purpose of Jesus' coming into the world, which was to seek and save his bride, referring to believers as his counterpart. The sermon emphasizes the importance of holding onto the truth in love and growing in Christ.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the gospel according to Matthew. Matthew chapter 16 verse 18. And I also I say unto thee that thou art Peter and on this rock I will build my church and Hades gates shall not prevail against it.

Hebrews chapter 3 verses 4 and 5 and 6. Maybe we'll start from verse 3. For he has been counted worthy of greater glory than Moses by how much he that has built it has more honor than the house for every house is built by someone but he who has built all things is God and Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a ministering servant for a testimony of the things to be spoken after but Christ as son over his house whose house are we if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end. And the same book of Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews chapter 11 verse 10.

For he waited for the city which has foundation of which God is the artificer and constructor. Verse 16. But now he 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.

First Corinthians chapter 3. Our brother read it this afternoon. First Corinthians chapter 3. We begin with verse 9. For we are God's fellow workmen. We are God's house and God's building 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 foundation can no man lay besides that which is laid which is Christ Jesus.

Now if anyone build 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. And finally Ephesians.

Ephesians chapter 4 verses 15 and 16. But holding the truth in love we may grow up to him in all things who is the head the Christ from home the whole body fitted together and connected by every joint of supply according to the working in his measure of each one part works for itself the increase of the body to itself building up in love. We have been considering before the Lord on this matter of spiritual house.

First of all we mentioned that God even before he created he had this very thing in his heart. He wanted a house. And that's the reason why he created the universe.

Not in the sense that he created the universe to be his house. Because the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. The heavens are his throne and the earth is his footstool.

So what he created is not his house. But then why did he create? And we find that he created man. So brothers and sisters God is not after a physical house.

If he is after a physical house he could easily create it for himself. God is after a spiritual house. And this spiritual house is made up of the man whom he created.

He wanted to dwell among man. He wanted man to be his dwelling place. His home.

And that is the eternal purpose of God. In the book of Hebrews we are told whose house are we? If indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of our confession firm to the end. In 1st Timothy chapter 3 verse 15 we are told that God's house is the church of the living God.

The base and the pillar of truth. So in a sense we can see very clearly what is this house or this home that God is after from eternity to eternity. It is his church.

We are his house. If we hold fast the boldness and the boast of our confession to the end. So brothers and sisters it is of tremendous importance for us to understand what this house is.

We are involved in it. We are to be that house. And of course we want to know what is the meaning of this house.

Now yesterday morning we shared together a few of the meaning of the house of God. We went through the Bible picking up some illustrations to illustrate the meaning of God's house. We will not go back and go over again.

But to mention it. The house of God means the union and communion of God and man in Christ Jesus. Unworthy as we are.

We are like Jacob. Holy, righteous is our God. And yet it is his desire to come to us.

It is his desire that we may be joined to him. And we may have communion with him. Now how can it be done? It is through that letter.

Our Lord Jesus. So brothers and sisters the first meaning of the house of God is the union of God and man in Christ Jesus. And communion.

And then we find that when God commanded Moses to build him a tabernacle as his dwelling place. And why did he want that dwelling place? Because he wanted to communicate with his people. He wanted to speak to his people on the mercy seat between the two children.

And not only that. He also wanted us to speak to him. He desires fellowship.

He desires communication. And are we given him that? And then we find in the heart of David to build a temple for God. It is a place of rest.

Brothers and sisters, since man sinned, God has lost his rest. He has been seeking, searching, looking for, finding the lost. He is longing to rest in man.

But as we mentioned before, unless we first are rested in the finished work of Christ, we will not be able to give him that rest. And then in Solomon we find he built a temple. Not because he believed that God would really dwell in that temple.

But he believed that God would put his name there. God would commit himself there. He would listen to the prayers of the people who pray in that house or pray toward that house.

So brothers and sisters, what is the church? Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of it. Our Lord Jesus has committed his name to the church. And because of this, how much we need to be committed to it.

And finally we mentioned the remnant returned to rebuild the temple. And they did it out of pure love. So what is the church? The church is a house of love.

Now these are the things that we covered yesterday. Now this evening we would like to consider together before the Lord on this matter of the building of God's house. It is really eye-opening when you read the scripture.

You find that whenever the house is mentioned, the word build is used. Or to put it another way, the house is to be built. It is not to be created.

Our God is the God of creation. But he is also a great builder. By his wisdom and power, he created the heavens and the earth.

But he built his church by giving his own self or his own son. So brothers and sisters, you do see that the building of the house is a greater work than the creation of the universe. In creating the universe, God only uses wisdom and through his power.

He is not in a sense directly involved. But in building his house, you find that he is so involved himself that he even gave up his own beloved son. The cost is so much greater.

Why? Because the house is so much nearer, dearer. Brothers and sisters, we admire his creation. But do we admire? We love his creation.

We enjoy his creation. But how much do we really love his house? He gave everything for that house in giving of his own son. And brothers and sisters, if this is the case, do you think we can give more for that house? Do you think that in giving to that house, it would be too much? If it costs God everything, if you love the house of God, it should cost you.

This matter of the building of God's house, you find it is throughout the scripture. It is in types. Even from the very beginning, in the book of Genesis, you find that God created man.

In chapter one, God created man in his own image after his likeness. Male and female created he them. Now that is the creation of man.

But when you come into the actual work of creating man, you find that in chapter two. And there you will find God took the earth, the dust, the red earth, and he formed it into a body. He breathed into that form's nostril, the breath of life.

And the Bible said man became a living soul. Adam was created. And then God said it is not good for man to be alone.

So you find that God led all that he had created, all these living creatures, one by one, to Adam. I personally feel it is the law of elimination. Because God said it is not good for man to be alone.

He needs a help, a counterpart, his life. So God just brought all these living creatures to him, the bigs, the small, the queer, the strange, all kinds of animals were brought to Adam. Let Adam look at them.

You know it is more than just a task of asking Adam to name these animals. Now of course he named all of them. He is a natural zoologist.

He didn't need to go to school. He named every one of them. By naming them, he put them in their specific area.

He couldn't find his like in any of these animals. So God put him to sleep. And out of his side, God took out one of his ribs.

Now in the original, it said God took out something, took something out of him. We don't know whether it is a rib or not. But God took something out of him.

And built a woman. So you see, man was created, but woman was built. But woman was built out of man.

God did not take another lump of clay and form the form of a female and breathe into it. And he became a living woman. God didn't do that.

God took something out of Adam and built that something into a woman. And then he led that woman. Oh he of course woke up Adam first.

And he led that woman to Adam just like he led all the other animals to Adam. But when a woman was led to Adam, Adam looked at her and said, well I see myself in him. This is me.

Part of me. Bone of my bones. Flesh of my flesh.

Called him a woman. And they too became. Now brothers and sisters, we know that Adam and Eve, they are types of Christ.

What is the meaning of building? Now, we know in studying the Bible, there is a principle called the principle of first mentioning. You know, whenever something is mentioned the first time in the scripture, usually it gives you that basic idea of what that is. Now according to the principle of first mentioning, that word build is used the first time in the Bible.

And it is in building that woman. Now, what is the basic meaning of building? Building is different from creating. Because creating is you create something out of nothing.

There was nothing there. No material. Nothing.

And God just used his word. He spoke a word and it was done. In other words, he created the whole universe out of nothing.

That's creation. But building is different. Building is taking something out of the original creation.

And build it up into something. Now that is the basic idea of building. Applied to Christ and the church.

God said, it is not good for him to be alone. Even before the foundation of the world. In eternity past.

If we may, we may say, well, there was only God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, the Triune God. They were self-existing and one. One day, in eternity past, the Father looked at the Son.

He loved his Son so much. He said, it is not good for my Son to be alone. I will give him a helpmate.

His like. And God had that idea even before he started creating the universe. And that's the reason why he created man.

But unfortunately, that man fell into sin. And since that time, God was looking for that man. Who could be his Son's helpmate, his Son's counterpart.

Just like his Son. But he couldn't find it. So finally, he had to send his Son into this world.

Do you know why our Lord Jesus came into this world? You know, the gospel of John is the gospel that gives us the inner meaning of the life of Christ. Why did God's Son come into this world? He came into this world. Well, in other gospels, you find that he came to seek and to save the lost.

But if you read the gospel according to John, you get into the inner meaning, or you get into the very mind of God. You find that God sent his Son into this world for one purpose. To seek for his bride.

To look for his counterpart. He was on earth for 33 years. He looked everywhere, but he couldn't find.

So finally, God put him to sleep. But his sleep was different from Adam's sleep. Because when God put Adam to sleep, there was no sin in the world yet.

Sin had not come into the world yet. So you find that Adam's sleep was a very peaceful sleep. And not only that, that operation was a painless operation.

No blood. But with our Lord Jesus, man have sinned dreadfully. So the Son of God, the Son of Man, he had to bore our sins in his body.

He who knew no sin was made sinless. Brothers and sisters, it is a mystery. We do not understand.

We could understand somewhat our Lord's rejection by man. We could understand somewhat the attack of the enemy, of Satan, when our Lord was on the cross. In other words, we could understand the first three hours of our Lord's crucifixion.

Because during the first three hours, there he suffered from the hand of man and of the powers of darkness. We could understand a little bit. But we couldn't understand the last three hours.

At midnight, we find the sun hit its face. The earth turned into darkness. Why? Because God made him sin.

All our sins came upon this spotless Lamb of God. Pure and spotless. He was made sin.

And because he was made sin, God, the righteous one, crushed him. Departed from him. So our Lord cried out, My God, My God.

He did not say, My Father, My Father. He has such sweet fellowship with his Father through eternity. And when he was on earth, there was uninterrupted communion.

He always pleased the Father. He did the things that the Father wanted. The Father was always with him.

He always saw the Father's face, smiling face. But during that time, he could only say, My God, My God. Why? He stood in our ground.

A corrupted, defiled, sinful, rebellious old creature. My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me? It was a painful, but thank God, before he gave up his spirit, he said, it is finished. The work is done.

He has borne our sins in his body. But then you remember, because the next day was a Sabbath day, and the Jews honored that day, and would not allow any body to be hung there, because to be hung on a cross is a curse. So the soldiers came, broke the legs of the two robbers, because they were strong.

They were still living. So they broke their legs to speed their death. But when they came to our Lord Jesus, they saw he was already dead.

To make sure that he was dead, a soldier thrust a spear through his hand, and out of the spear came out blood and water. You read John chapter 19. John was there.

He saw the spear thrust in. He saw it was drawn out. And he saw the blood and the water.

And he bore testimony that what he saw was true, that you may believe. Now, why did he make it so emphatically? What is the meaning of that? It is because there you'll find God put our Lord Jesus to death. And out of him, God took out blood and water.

Now, I do not know. Some people say that's the last drop of water, of blood still in his heart. He shed all his blood, and there was still some remaining in his heart.

But he died of a broken heart. So the blood disintegrated into blood and water. But anyway, you'll find that something was taken out from his very heart, blood, to atone our sins.

Water to give us life. So, brothers and sisters, here you'll find, out of the body of our Lord Jesus, God took out blood and water. And with this blood and water, he built, brothers and sisters, if we remember this, blood to atone our sins.

Water to give us life. It is only when our sins are atoned, and we have his own life in us, and this is the material that he builds. It is coming out of him.

Therefore, he can say, this is me. What is the church? The church is Christ, in his corporate expression. The church is the extension of Christ.

He looks at the church and says, this is me, my flesh, my bone. And because of this, the church can be united with him in one spot. He builds the church.

Well, we mentioned about Jacob. Jacob thought that if God will bless him, give him food to eat, garment to wear, and lead him safely, peacefully back home, then he will make God his God. And he will use this pillar that he used for his pillow.

He put it up and said, now this pillar shall be the house of God. And I will give one tenth. Jacob thought that if God shall bless him, then he will serve God.

He will build God a house. And actually, he built God a monument, not a house. Because a pillar is a monument if it is not a house.

He will build God a monument, and also he will give God one tenth. In other words, to show his gratitude, he will serve God with his work, with his service. He thought that is the way of building the house of God.

But God said, no. God will take hold of Jacob, this original, and transform him into Israel. And with Israel, he will build.

The same thing is true with the children of Israel. God redeemed them out of Egypt. And you know, not only they were redeemed, their women, their children, their cattle, their sheep, all these were taken out of Egypt.

But more than that, before they left Egypt, they spoiled Egypt of her wealth. You see, Egypt was a very wealthy nation at the time. And when they came out of Egypt, they literally spoiled Egypt of all her wealth.

They had gold and silver and all these precious things with them. Now, our brother mentioned, they became a free people. Not only a free people, but a wealthy people.

Now, how are they going to live their lives? How are they going to use their wealth? They could easily live a very comfortable life, luxurious life, enjoy themselves, because they have all the wealth. But brothers and sisters, God asked them for a key offering, a love offering. They shall offer what God had given them to build.

You know, it is very easy for God to drop a tabernacle from heaven. Now, in a sense, you know, when Peter was in ecstasy, he was on that roof, you know, it was noon time and he must be hungry, so he was thinking of food when he was praying. And God gave him a vision.

A white sheet coming down from heaven and full of particles and creeping things. And the voice said, rise, kill and eat. Surely, God can easily drop a tabernacle from heaven and say, now I'm going to dwell among you.

No. That would be creation, not building. So God said, no.

Out of what I have redeemed of you, you give and then with that, build that tabernacle. That's building. So you see, the basic idea of the building of the church is building.

You take something that God has already given and then you build it into the house. That is the concept. Now, who is the builder? Our brother has already stolen my message.

I just want to re-emphasize it, that's all. You already know it. Now, who is the builder? The Lord Jesus said, I will build upon this rock and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The church is so precious to our Lord. He cannot commit the building of it to anyone other than himself. So he said, I will build my church upon this rock.

He is the builder, the only builder, the only one who can build that house, God's house. Many people can build, but he is the only one who can build a house for God to rest. He is the only one who is able to do that.

Nobody else. You cannot do that. I cannot do that.

None of us can do that. The angels cannot do that. I will build my church.

In Hebrews, it is said that Christ should have more honor than Moses, just as the builder of the house is more honorable than the house. So here you find Moses is the house, and the Lord is the one who builds Moses. In Hebrews 11, you find Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

They wandered in the promised land as sojourners. If they wanted to go back to their homeland, Ur of Chaldea, they could do that. Even halfway to Haran, they can do that.

But they were looking for a city with foundation, whose architect and constructor is God. God has prepared for us a better. This is the city that you find in Revelation 21 and 22.

That is God's house. God and man dwell together in unity for eternity. Now who is able to build that house? Except.

God cannot trust anyone to be the architect of that house. No architect has the wisdom to draw the design. He cannot trust anyone to construct it.

No construction company in the world can do this job. God alone is the builder. Now brothers and sisters, we cannot emphasize enough on this.

Because we find in Christianity today, out of good intention, we are trying to build God's house. We have been trying for 2,000 years. Almost 2,000 years.

And what do we get? We get the tower of Bethel. Not the house. Therefore I hope that tonight there is none among us who has a secret desire to build the house of God.

You better give that up. Today we hear a lot of church painters, church builders. But what they build is the tower of Bethel.

To spread their names, not to give God. We cannot build it. Don't try it.

God is the only builder. He designs it. He builds it.

He does everything in it. But then brothers and sisters, you would challenge me and say, did I not read in the very beginning some scriptures that tells us we are the builders? Our brother already mentioned this afternoon so thoroughly. Paul said, we are God's workmen and you are God's husbandry and God's building.

Paul said, I'm like a wise master builder. Now some version said a wise architect and some version said an expert builder or master builder. But as a matter of fact, if you try to put it more properly, probably what Paul means is, I am a wise chief foreman.

So here Paul said, I am a master builder. I lay the foundation. Even Christ Jesus.

And there can be no other earth but the foundation, but Christ. And then each one of you, remember he wrote to the Corinthian believers and to all who call upon the name of the Lord. So we are included.

You, each one of you, pay attention to what you build upon it. If you build with gold, silver and precious stones or you build with wood, straw and stubble, one day a fire will appear and will test what you build. And if you build with gold, silver and precious stone, it will just glorify it and you will receive a reward.

Now if you build with wood, straw and hay, it will be burned. But you will be saved. Barely.

So you are building. Everyday we are building. Everyday you are putting something on.

And then you look at Ephesians chapter 4. You find that all the different members of the body work together, fitted together and work together according to the measure that God has given to each for the self building up in love. In other words, we are all involved in this building work. No one is accepted unless you are not the Lord.

If you are the Lord, you are involved in that building. Now how are you going to reconcile these two opposites? I think there is one verse that can solve that problem. And it is found in Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2 verse 12 and 13.

So that my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both the willing and the working according to his good. Now indeed, the Lord himself is the only builder. But how does he build? He first works in you, that you may work out with fear and trembling.

Now do you see this picture? In other words, it is not that you have an idea what the house of God should be like. So you draw up a blueprint. You are the architect.

You give it the concept. Now, God is the architect. He is the one who has the concept of the house of God.

He is the one who draws the blueprint. But he works this in you. By revelation.

He reveals that to you. And after you receive that revelation and understand it, it is working out of you. So who is working? Who is building? He builds.

He builds in you, through you. After all the work is done, all you can say is, he has done it. You haven't done anything.

Because all that comes out of you is what he has worked in you. The same thing is true. Not only with the blueprint.

It is true with the whole process of building. You find that everything that is put into the house of God, he first works in you. And then it works out from you, with fear.

All the materials he first worked in you. And then you give it back to him, with fear and trembling. All the power he first gives to you, and then he works it out from you.

So brothers and sisters, thank God he wants us to work together with him. But actually he does all the work. But we share the glory.

I always remember that story. One day the father is going to move a table. It is a heavy one.

But the father is strong. So he began to lift up the table. And a little boy, he said, father let me help you.

So father said, good, I need your help. So he allows that boy to hold one of the legs. And together they move the table.

As a matter of fact you find that the boy puts more weight to that table. So he bears not only the table but also the boy. And finally he moves the table and the boy said, father we have done it.

Now that's what it is. How he loves us and honors us. And that's the reason why after everything is done you have to go back and say we are but unprofitable servants.

He is the builder. Now brothers and sisters, if only tonight we can remember this, it will save us lots of headaches. Not only you, but your brothers and sisters.

Lots of headaches. Well, let's come to this matter of, I am just starting you know. I am telling the truth.

Now how does God build? We need to go into some of the processes. Building processes. You know that's important because that's how it is built.

God created man with the idea of building man into his house. But unfortunately man did not. Man did not follow God.

Man did not eat the tree of life. If man should eat the tree of life, they will receive that uncreated divine life in them. And thus they can be united with God in life.

And from that life it can be developed into a house. But unfortunately man ate the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man declared independence of God.

Man fell into himself. Man became flesh, spirit, lost contact with God. Man became slaves to sin, to the enemy, under the bondage of death.

Satan holds that bondage over man. So brothers and sisters, when God looked at this material, could he take it up and build his house? That clay was marred before it became a vessel. There was no way to repair it.

You know we are always thinking of trying to repair it, to reform it, to beautify it, to decorate it, to add something to it. And then it will become. God looked at man and said, what can I do? I cannot do anything with it.

I cannot build my house with this kind of material, polluted, defiled. The holy God cannot dwell in that unclean. So the first thing you find God had to do, he had to send his beloved son into this world.

To do the work of redemption. God did not throw away man completely and say, well, this is finished. I will create another kind of man.

Maybe a kind of man without a free will. So I can build up to be my house. God cannot do that because God is the free will.

And for the free will to dwell in no will, he couldn't do that. It is not like him. No counterpart there.

And yet you find God did something marvelous. I do not remember who said that. Maybe it is Moody.

He said, God will take the cast away of the devil. What devil cast away? God said, I will have it. And that is what it is.

We are a bunch of nothing. Worse than nothing. And God had to do a tremendous work.

Every time you think of redemption, you see the heart of God. He shall throw us away, but he couldn't. He loves us.

So he had to give us his son. Christ has to die for us in order that he may give us a new life. If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation.

All things have passed away. All things are made new. And all things are of God.

So brothers and sisters, you do not know the cost that God paid in building his house. So the first thing is, he has to do a work of redemption. He has to bring in a new mankind, a new race, a new creation.

A people whose sins are forgiven, who are righteous in the sight of God. A people who have his own life. Now that is the first thing God has to do.

Our brother also already mentioned that. See, the building material of God is man. But not just any man.

Any kind of man. Not just a man that we know. God builds with man, but it is a new man.

A born from above man. A regenerated man. A man with God's life in him.

And that life in him, that new creation is the building. You are not the building material. I am not the building material.

It is the new creation in you. It is Christ in you. It is life in you.

That is the building. And that is the reason why you find when Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, what did Christ say to Peter? You are a stone. Formerly you were dust, earth, clay.

But now on your confession, a new element has entered into your life. You now become a living stone, as our brother mentioned. So as we come to the Lord, first of all you find from dust we are turned into stone.

How is the tower of Babel built? It is built with brick. And brick is mixing up with straw. That is how the tower of Babel is built.

But the house of God is built with stones. Living stones. Stones, the life of God in them.

That is the building block. Our problem is, we say what is the church? The church are the gathering of the believers. The church is the gathering of you and me.

And that is the church. But that is the problem of the church. The problem of the church is because of you and me.

We try to come in and build with wood, hay and straw. We come in. Instead of letting the life in us be the building material, we come in with our human nature.

Our own glory. Our own energy. Our own work.

And we say we are building the church. That is the power of Babel. You have to build with gold, silver and precious stones.

It is the Christ in you. It is the Christ in me. The hope of glory.

You have no hope of glory. I have no hope of glory. The hope of glory is Christ in you and me.

So brothers and sisters, what is the church? The church is Christ in His corporate expression. The Christ in you, the Christ in me are built together. These stones are built together.

And that builds. So anything that is you, anything that is me has to be separated by the cross. Before you enter into the church.

Whenever we try to bring anything of ourselves into the church, remember, you destroy, you do not build. And that is the reason why the church is an awesome thing. We need to build it with fear and trembling.

Not only that, we find that when the Lord builds with stones, these are not just stones, these are precious stones. You know, when you read the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, you find these are precious stones, not just stones. Sometimes we think that, well, as long as we are saved.

So God just built all these saved ones together into His house. Now you build a nursery. All babies here.

And weeping here, crying there, and every baby is very self-centered. At midnight, if he is not happy, he cries. If you do not cater to his desire quick enough, he gets angry.

Well, that is what you have today. Not just stones, not just babes in Christ. God builds with precious.

Now, how can stones be turned into precious stones? You find these elements. You know, precious stone is a compound, not an element. You find all these different elements buried deep down in the earth, in

darkness for centuries, under great pressure, heat.

Eventually, certain elements began to be compounded together to become a precious stone. And this precious stone is different from the other precious stones. Brothers and sisters, God builds with precious stones only.

As our brother said, our Lord is a precious stone Himself. Not just a living stone, a precious stone. What is that? That is character.

Simply with life is not enough. This life has to develop, to grow into character. You know, when life follows its natural nature, it becomes character.

Every life has a nature. But if you follow that nature long enough, it becomes a character. If you do not follow that nature, it does not become a character.

It still remains in that immature stage. We have too many babies in the church. On the one hand, it's good.

We love babies. But on the other hand, it breaks our Father's heart. Because we are always in that stage of receiving, receiving, receiving.

Self-centered. Everything is for me. God is for me.

Christ is for me. Everybody is for me. Me, me, me.

How can you build a church? God's house. But brothers and sisters, character building is painful. That's the reason why I always feel if God saved me, He should rapture me to Him right away.

That would save me all kinds of temptations, all kinds of trials. Why does He leave me on this earth, miserable earth? Passing through all these trials and testing and many failures because He wants you to be precious stones. He wants to develop character in you.

Through suffering, through pressure, through darkness, through heat, that you may find the different elements of His divine life begin to form in a special way. Become Peter is one precious stone. John is another precious stone.

But they all manifest Christ. Not Peter, not John. And yet it is in Peter, in John.

All the character of Christ must be developed within us through much suffering. Suffering is good. But then, brothers and sisters, it is not just precious stones.

You go to the museum and you see some precious stones displayed there for people to look and admire. And maybe some people hope that they may have it. But that's not God's purpose.

God's purpose is not just to create some spiritual giants that He can display to the world. What's the use of that? It only brings spiritual pride. God is too practical for that.

So you find that these stones, now in one sense it is important to see these stones being developed into precious stones. Every one stone is a precious stone with different combination of the nature of Christ in a special way. And only you have it.

And another brother, another special way. You know, there is an individuality that God loves. You know, even in eternity there is an individuality there.

Peter is always Peter, even though he is a different Peter than when he was a rock stone. He becomes a precious stone, but it is still Peter. There is an individuality there.

It's precious, brothers and sisters. You are you. And God wants you to be what He wants you to be.

You know, He doesn't want you to be somebody else. He is developing you in an individual way. He loves it.

And I hope you will love it too. But brothers and sisters, individuality is something that will continue to eternity. But individualism must be done.

In other words, you are still one precious stone. But that one precious stone has to be fitted together and joined together with other precious stones. You cannot maintain your individualism and say, You know, I'm going to stand here alone to be a specimen of the wonderful work of God.

That's not possible. It's not for your glory. It's for His glory.

So you find that these stones have to be fitted together. Now, that's the problem. The more precious that stone becomes, the more difficult for it to be fitted with one another.

You know, when you quarry these precious stones out of the mine, you have to do a lot of work on these stones. When you take them out of the mine, you do not see any radiancy there. Lots of light there.

It's covered with dirt, with all kinds of elements. And you need to do lots of breaking, cutting, purifying work, you know, to take off all these things that are attached to that precious stone. And this is the same thing with us.

Even though the Lord is working within us each and develop within us each as precious stones, but brothers and sisters, you'll find that we still carry with us a big load of all kinds of things. Right? We still have the world upon us. We still have maybe some sin.

We still have some weight. We still have our flesh there. We still have the self there.

Brothers and sisters, all these things need to be purified. And that's the reason why. You'll find in Ephesians chapter 5, the Lord loved His church and gave Himself for her.

And then He said He sanctified them, purifying them by the water with the Word, that they may become a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any of such sort. Dear brothers and sisters, the cross has to work in our lives to purify us from all those draws that we carry. Do you not find sometimes that there is just too much draws? Do you accept the working of the cross in your life? The cross is not only a subjective, that is the foundation, but on that foundation of the cross of Christ that we believe, we must allow the Holy Spirit to apply that cross to our daily life.

He will enlighten us. He will show us where the draws is. He will show us where it needs to be.

His Word will divide the soul and the spirit, will penetrate, keep dividing. And let you see, this is soul, not spirit. It has to be purified.

The world has to be purified. Your flesh has to be brought to death. Your self must be denied.

Brothers and sisters, these works of the cross have to be going on in your life, in order that you may be fitted together with one another. More than that, even though all these draws are purified, brothers and sisters, you still cannot fit with one another. You need to be cut, be sawed, chiseled, smoothed, according to your brother and sister, that will be built to your right, to your left, to your bottom, to your top.

According to God's will. Here is a big piece of precious stone, but to fit in with another precious stone, the corners, even some part of that precious stone, had to be cut off, to be made into that. Some brothers and sisters are too big to be cut.

They are too big to be built with brothers and sisters. They want everybody to be cut, so they can occupy a place larger than God's design. Even the gift that God has given to you needs to be dealt with.

Do nothing because this is given by God. It is spiritual gift. Look at Corinthian church.

Even this gift has to be regulated, that everything will be done orderly and in calm. Think about it. Not because God has given you this gift, therefore, everywhere you go, my gift.

Brothers and sisters, sometimes your gift has to be hidden for a while, lay aside for a while. It is not the time to use it, and to use it according to the proposal. Our spirituality.

What's wrong with our spirituality? Brothers and sisters, oftentimes your spirituality frightens your brothers and sisters away. You want to measure everyone with your spirituality. Therefore, when you meet a brother or sister, all they get is condemnation.

You judge them. You need to be cut. Sometimes God may even take away your spiritual virtues.

God has to break you down, to make you pliable in his hand, that you may be fitted together with your brothers and sisters. We are told, when the temple was built, all these stones that are quarried out of the mine, actually was discovered under Mount Moriah. The masons will go into these mines, and will cut these stones according to.

There is a plan there. Every stone in the temple is already planned. And every stone is numbered.

It's numbered. And all these stones are cut in the mine, in darkness. So when they are transported up to Mount Moriah, to be put together, in 1st Kings chapter 6, verse 7 it says, there is not a sound of hammer, or the sound of iron.

All these stones just put together quietly, without making any sound. You don't need to do any further work. Iron work.

No spark, no fire. Just put one to another, and they fit so beautifully. Because everyone is cut according to measure.

According to one another. Brothers and sisters, lots of God's dealing with us, is more than personal. Personally, you may not need these dealings.

But because God wants to fit you, with the brothers and sisters, therefore, you have to go through all these dealings. A shoulder must be cut. A corner must be cut.

Some smooth must be chiseled, and even sawed. So brothers and sisters, you know God has a place for you in His house. It's already labeled.

Your number, so and so. And you will be put in a certain position. Only you.

Nobody else. And you will have, next to you, another number. God has already put the number.

And it is according to that, He is sawing you, cutting you, chiseling you, and smoothing you. How patient the Holy Spirit is. But how impatient we are.

All these works have to be done in a hidden place. In your private closet. If this work is not done, what you will find is, when all these stones are put together, you have to hear lots of sound of hammer and iron.

Lots of sparks. And that's what you are having now. Because you have not allowed the Holy Spirit to complete His work in your life.

We need one another. I cannot do without you. You cannot do without me.

The Lord cannot do without any one of us. And that's the house. It is also a dreadful place.

But it is the gate of heaven. Brothers and sisters, what I am trying to say is simply this. The building of God's house is not a common thing.

It is most precious in God's heart. And hopefully it becomes very precious to our heart. God spent everything for that house.

Are we willing to spend? All that God has given us, actually we have nothing. It's all given. But are we willing to put our all in His hand and let Him do whatever is necessary to make us fit to be put into the place He has ordained for each one of us.

And when that house appears, that's what you'll find in Revelation chapter 1 and chapter 21 and 22. That holy city, the new Jerusalem. A glorious church without spot or wrinkle of any of such sort.

A bride suitable to the bridegroom. In union forever. Ruling, reigning in glory.

Brothers and sisters, this is the purpose of God. With you and with me. May the Lord have mercy upon us.

Dear Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that human words are so inadequate. Even our understanding is so limited. We are not able really to enter into Thy heart, Thy mind, Thy love.

We really are not able to feel how Thou feel concerning the house, that rest that Thou art seeking for. But Lord, we do pray that in Thy mercy and grace Thou will at least give us a glimpse of it. We pray that Thou will touch our hearts.

Give us at least a heart for Thy house. Lord, we do acknowledge that when we see what Thy house really is, to us it is dreadful. Dreadful to our flesh.

But Lord, we want to commit ourselves to Thee for that house. Do whatever is necessary in each one of us. Do not let us go.

Remember, tonight we have committed ourselves to Thee and to Thy house. Thou are faithful. Perfect Thy work.

To the praise and Thy glory. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

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