

029 - You Also Are Being Built Together - Ephesians 2:22 - 2014-12-14

Call to Worship: Psalm 107:31-32a

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Sermon: "You Also Are Being Built Together" Ephesians 2:22

Benediction: Revelation 2:7

Ephesians 2:22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

"The Church"

What is meant by that?

Some say that to mean all the believers in the world: the Roman Catholics mean that

Some say that to mean all the believers in a country: "the church of England"

Some say that to mean a denomination of churches: "the Methodist church" or "the Baptist church"

Of course some very mistakenly mean simply the church building, without regard to the actual church that meets there.

Although there is certainly a church universal, consisting of all saints of all times and places, we deal primarily with the particular assembly or congregation that is for us our local church. Having read of the grand metaphor of the church as a holy temple to God, being build on Jesus Christ, we today conclude our studies in this part of Ephesians with the metaphor of a temple applied to each local church.

**As the Lord Jesus Christ is building upon Himself a holy temple in the church universal, so He also is building us into a holy temple in this particular congregation, this local church.**

TEXT: Ephesians 2:20-22

## BODY

**As the Lord Jesus Christ is building upon Himself a holy temple in the church universal, so He also is building us into a holy temple in this particular congregation, this local church.**

- I. You also are together being built
  - A. What is meant by “you also” or “you too” or “ye also”?
    1. it is in the plural, not the singular; so “you” is meant not individually but as a group
    2. he has been saying that in Jesus Christ those who used to be separate, as Jew and Gentile, are now united in one building, which is growing into a holy temple in the Lord
    3. now he says, “You all, also, are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”
    4. It must be that Paul has been talking about the church considered universally, and now he stresses that what he was saying about the church universally is also true of the church locally.
  - B. The things taught in the metaphor of the building are true of God’s church considered universally; an invisible church consisting of all saints of all places and times, together being built into a spiritual temple
  - C. They are true of you, also, considered as this particular assembly, this local church
    1. verse 20 You have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone
    2. verse 21 In Jesus Christ the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord
    3. verse 22 In Jesus Christ you are together being built for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit
  - D. Hear some voices from the past here.
    1. B.H. Carroll was a prominent Baptist pastor in Texas a hundred years ago, and was the founding president of Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

Let the reader particularly note that the church as an institution, whether called "one new man," "one body," "one commonwealth," "one household," or "one temple," finds expression in each particular congregation
    2. Hear how he spoke of the local church with a certain phrase: “particular congregation.” He did not coin that phrase, or use it on accident. It is the phrase used in our 1689 Confession to distinguish the church considered locally from the church considered universally. Want to see? Check your Baptist hymnal; chapter 26 “Of the Church”
      - a) paragraph 1 “universal church”

- b) paragraph 2, last clause “particular congregations”
- E. So, not only is the church universal being built together into a holy temple in the Lord, but you as a particular congregation, this local church, are together being built
- II. You also are together being built in Jesus Christ Himself
- A. You might recognize that this was a main point in last week’s sermon on the previous verse.
1. Will you see how verse 21 and verse 22 start with the same two words?
  2. Your translation might say, “In Him” then “And in Him”
  3. Or it might say, “In Him” and then “In whom”
  4. But the original really says *en ho* in both verses, “in whom”
- B. So the repetition serves a purpose:
1. the apostle has put it to you that you, considered as the church universal, are being built together in Christ
  2. now he puts it to you that you, considered as the church local, this particular congregation, are being built together in Christ
- C. As I was considering this idea this week, I was struck with just how close the Lord Jesus has made us to Himself
1. He said of Himself, “I will build my church;” so we are being built **by** Him
  2. We are taught in verse 20 that we are built **on** Him, as He says elsewhere that we believe **on** Him
  3. Here, the beginning phrase of verses 21 and 22 says we are being built **in** Him, as the bible says that we believe **in** Him and by faith are **in** Him
  4. He has promised always to be **with** us, so we are **with** Him
  5. He is the mediator between us and the Father, so that we come to the Father **through** Him
  6. We were created **for** Him, and we live **for** Him, and we wait **for** Him to return
  7. APPLICATION: So, then, as you live in this particular congregation, this local church, let your thinking be that this is a church by Him, on Him, in Him, with Him, through Him, and for Him!
- D. I have mentioned it before, but do so again without embarrassment, that as Jesus Christ teaches us that He is building His church in Himself and on Himself and for Himself, He is pleased to do so by using us, His servants, as workers in the building process.
1. He will say in chapter 4 particularly of the church’s pastors, that He has given us to the church for the work of building it up
  2. He will say later in chapter 4 of every Christian has a constant part in building up the local church
  3. So it seems that Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ, would have that idea come to mind when we think of the local church being built by Jesus Christ Himself

- E. Since He is pleased to use us as workers in His building, let us recognize that as soon as the Lord Jesus hands us a chisel and a hammer, our flesh will tempt us to build poorly, badly, or not at all. Let us take care not to build as if the Lord Jesus were not the builder
1. The bible tells us that in the past, the people charged with building God's church rejected Jesus Christ as the cornerstone; let us not build like that, neglecting the true gospel of Jesus Christ crucified to preach something else.
  2. The bible tells us that in one town, when Jesus preached the gospel, they did not want Him building His church there, but took Him to the edge of the cliff where they had built their own city, to throw Him off the cliff; let us not build like that, insisting that if what Jesus is building doesn't suit us, we will get rid of Him in favor of our own ideas.
  3. The bible tells us of a man who built his house not on the solid rock of Jesus Christ, but on sand; when the storms came, his house fell with a great crash; let us not build like that, hearing the words of Jesus but not putting them into practice!
  4. The bible tells us of a man who, instead of building God's church, kept tearing down his barns to build bigger barns; let us not build like that, thinking that accumulation of worldly wealth can be a substitute for the building of Christ's church.
  5. The bible tells us of a man who, before starting in building, did not carefully count what it would cost; when he found it too costly, he gave up building, lost what he had worked for, and became an object of scorn; let us not build like that! Before any of you professes to be a Christian and asks to be baptized, let him think carefully about what it will cost to become a stone in Christ's building and a servant helping to lay the stones.
  6. The bible tells us of men who tried to build back up the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile that was torn down in Christ Jesus; let us not build like that, teaching Christ's church to observe holy days and abstain from certain foods and to circumcise babies, or sprinkle them!
  7. The bible tells us of people who were told to build the temple, but lost heart when there was opposition, and stopped building; let us not build like that, giving in to the pressure from friends, relatives, even other churches, to disbelieve our confession or quit the long, slow work of building a sound church.
  8. The bible tells us of people who were supposed to be building the temple, but left it in ruins, while they built their own houses and made them luxurious; let us not build like that; even the God-given families we love and treasure are not to be unduly elevated in our esteem, while the church of Jesus Christ seems unimportant to us in comparison.

9. The bible tells us of people who try to build God's temple with hay and stubble, only to find these are burned up in the day of testing; let us not build like that, teaching one another things that we do not know to be true.
- F. Since He is building this church into a holy temple, and is pleased to use us as workers in His building, let us build as unto Him
1. The bible tells us to build by hearing the teachings of the Lord Jesus and putting them into practice; let us do just that.
  2. The bible tells us to build by understanding that we do not build with only our own strength; we build with the power of the Holy Spirit at work inside us; let us then build with courage, knowing there is power in us for the building far greater than our own.
  3. The bible tells us to build with our sword in the other hand even as we build, because the enemies of God's church constantly threaten us; let us build that way, then, with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
  4. The bible tells us to build with words, being careful what we say so that the only words that should come out of our mouths are those good for building up the church
  5. The bible tells us who teach to build with truth, as if with precious metals and costly stones, which will not be burned up in the day of testing.
- G. Even as we work for Him as builders, let us have all confidence for the success of the building in Him, not in ourselves; it is His project; He is building the church
- III. You also are together being built for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit
- A. We could take note here that in other places the scriptures talk about this in the singular, pertaining to each of us individually. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. What a privilege, what a comfort, what an encouragement, and at the same time what a responsibility! But here the doctrine is of the local church as a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.
- B. If we are being built together for a dwelling place of God, what we do in God's church must suit that purpose and that resident
1. here we are to praise the Lord *Psalm 22:3 But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.*
  2. we love this congregation for the sake of the Lord whose dwelling it is *Psalm 26:8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house, And the place where Your glory dwells.*
  3. the worship of God in this church is to be spiritual, in the spirit, not physical
    - a) there is no cross or painting of Jesus or manger scene to look at
    - b) there are no candles to light
    - c) there are no banners with symbolic representations

4. the elements of worship that are physical are there only because the Lord Jesus told us to do them, and they are not to be done apart from their spiritual meaning
    - a) baptism
    - b) the Lord's Supper
  5. all elements of worship are necessarily done in the physical, but for the sake of the spiritual; let the physical not be over-emphasized or the spiritual ignored
  6. the physical buildings are incidental, not fundamental to the life of the church
    - a) we have to assemble somewhere
    - b) these two buildings, built for the purpose, are very handy
    - c) but they are physical; the church is a dwelling place of God not physically, but in the Spirit
- C. Note that what is going on is not guided tours of a temple are being given; no, a temple is being built
1. we might be tempted to that kind of attitude regarding church
  2. but of course in this metaphor we are stones being fitted and laid
  3. and we are masons working on the building
- D. Note what you are not together being built for:
1. to get the religious experience that suits your preferences
  2. to gratify the fleshly desires for social interaction
  3. to impress other people
  4. or for any other purpose not part of being built into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit

## CONCLUSION

**As the Lord Jesus Christ is building upon Himself a holy temple in the church universal, so He also is building us into a holy temple in this particular congregation, this local church.**

Adam Clarke:

Traditions and legends are not apostolic doctrines, and showy ceremonies are not the life of God in the soul of man. [True] Religion has no need of human ornaments or trappings; it shines by its own light, and is refulgent with its own glory. Where it is not in life and power, men have endeavored to produce a specious image, dressed and ornamented with their own hands. Into this God never breathed, therefore it can do no good to man, and only imposes on the ignorant and credulous by a vain show of lifeless pomp and splendor. This phantom, called true religion and the Church by its votaries, is in heaven denominated vain superstition

Let us, then conceive of this local church as a holy temple of God in the Spirit, and let us conduct ourselves as those building it in the service of Christ, and being built together into it upon Christ as the foundation.

### **in whom you also**

Henry (as Poole, Gill, Carroll):

Not only the universal church is called the temple of God, but particular churches; and even every true believer is a living temple

Poole:

Not only the whole collection of believers is called the temple of God, but particular churches and particular saints are so called

Gill:

As the church universal, so every particular church is a building that is compact together, in and upon Christ, as the church at Ephesus was

Carroll:

Let the reader particularly note that the church as an institution, whether called "one new man," "one body," "one commonwealth," "one household," or "one temple," finds expression in "each several building" or particular congregation, and that the leading idea of its mission is to become a habitation of God through the Spirit.

RWP:

Ye Gentiles also

Clarke:

ye are all, both believing Jews and Gentiles

Hodge (as Ellicott, Ferguson):

you Ephesians are builded together with other believers

### **are being built together . . . in the Spirit**

Calvin:

It is, I think, an exhortation to the Ephesians to grow more and more in the faith of Christ, after having been once founded in it, and thus to form a part of that new temple of God, the building of which through the gospel was then in progress in every part of the world.

Poole:

the building of them into a temple to be the operation of the Spirit, working that faith and love in them whereby they are united to Christ the foundation, and to the several parts of the building.

Clarke:

Traditions and legends are not apostolic doctrines, and showy ceremonies are not the life of God in the soul of man.

Religion has no need of human ornaments or trappings; it shines by its own light, and is refulgent with its own glory. Where it is not in life and power, men have endeavored to produce a specious image, dressed and ornamented with their own hands. Into this God never breathed, therefore it can do no good to man, and only imposes on the ignorant and credulous by a vain show of lifeless pomp and splendor. This phantom, called true religion and the Church by its votaries, is in heaven denominated vain superstition; the speechless symbol of departed piety.

Ferguson:

ordinary ministers are employed in the preaching of Jesus Christ, as he is revealed in Scripture, to build up the elect upon the foundation which was laid by them