

“The House God Is Building”

1 Peter 2:4-10

- INTRO. – In September of this year Parker Bible Church will be 21 years old (that is really hard to believe). We have come a long way from where we began 21 years ago. We had very humble beginnings way back then.
- There are *not* many of us left who were there on the day of that first official worship service at Cherokee Trail Elementary School (expound), or even our *first* “Victory Sunday” when we dedicated this land to God, or our *second* “Victory Sunday” when we paid this land off and burned the note.
- I think of the way God provided us with the High School when we had outgrown Cherokee Trail. I think of the way God provided the “bowling alley” in His providence. (expound)
- And what an awesome day it was when we dedicated this building to God (on Jan 7, 2001). It is hard to believe we have been in this building for 15 years.
- My mind is flooded with the people who have come to know Christ through the ministry of this Body and the lives that have been touched through the preaching and teaching of God’s Word and I am very grateful to the Lord.
- He is the Lord of this church and He is the One who has been building this church. He is the *only* One

worthy of praise for what has happened in this church. For the most part we have enjoyed sweet Christian fellowship and a unity of purpose since the very beginning days.

- And from those early days, we have had a “track” to run on, that we go over in our orientation class, in regard to a philosophy of ministry, and we’ve never really wavered from that.
- I believe the reason is, that this track is based on God’s pattern for the church that He has revealed to us in Scripture, and is given for us in a few key passages of Scripture.
- We don’t have to wonder what God wants us to be and do, we don’t have to come up with some kind of creative plan, we don’t have to turn to some kind of programs or gimmicks or do market research to determine what we are to be about, because God has given us all that in His Word.
- And one of the things we determined from those early days is that we need to go back and study these passages periodically so we can be reminded of what God has to say about the church. So we’re doing that again this summer.
- And I think a great place to start with this study is 1 Peter 2:4-10 (that we read earlier). This passage talks about what we are to be about as a church. It talks about the church that God is building.

- The church God is building is *not* made of bricks and mortar; it is built with living stones...those who have been born again through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- In Scripture, God gives us 3 analogies to describe the church:

1.) The Church is the *Bride* of Christ (emphasizing Christ's sacrificial love for, and perfectly chaste commitment to, the Church).

2.) The Church is the *Body* of Christ (demonstrating Christ as the Head or Lord of the Church, giving direction to the differing members of the body in all the unique and various functions).

3.) The Church is the *Building* of Christ (emphasizing Christ as the foundation, architect, and builder of the Church, as a spiritual house which He indwells).

- It is this final analogy of a *building* that Peter uses to encourage the local churches in his day. And in this tremendous discourse, Peter reminds us of our position and purpose in Christ as a Corporate Body and as the Building of God! We can learn so much about the Church in these few verses.

- We're *not* really going to exegete this passage today, but we are going to glean from it some important principles related to the church. When we were going through 1 Peter I did 5 sermons on this one passage

because it is so rich in truth, but we are *not* going to go into that much detail today. But, notice first of all:

I. THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

- The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ. Look again at vs. 4-6, "And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: 'BEHOLD I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.'"

- The church is built upon Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone. This was prophesied in Psalm 118:22, (it says) "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone."

- Jesus said in Mat. 21:42, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone?'"

- The Apostle Paul declared that this verse applied to Jesus in his testimony before the Sanhedrin. He said, "He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone."

- And, you may remember that in Mat. 16:18 Jesus said to Peter, "...I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it."
- Now, when Jesus said that, He was *not* talking about building His church on Peter. He was using a play on words to refer back to the great confession that Peter had just given.
- Jesus had asked the disciples who they understood Him to be, and Peter responded in v. 16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." My friend, listen, there is only one Rock upon which the church is built and that is the Christ, the Son of the Living God!
- Eph. 2:19-20 declares, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone..."
- And *now* Peter is reminding those early believers in Asia Minor of the solid foundation upon which the church is being built. (pause) *The foundation of the church is the Lord Jesus Christ!*
- Now, folks, what this means *practically* is that we must never seek to build the church on the personality of a man, on gimmicks, on human methods, on clever programs, or any kind of human instrumentality.
- The church is *not* a club! It is *not* a social institution! It is *not* even a religious institution! It is *not* a political group! It doesn't belong to *you*! It doesn't belong to *me*!
- It is a Supernatural institution founded on a Supernatural leader. Jesus Christ is the rock of the foundation of this Church!
- He is the foundation stone. Everything rests upon Him, is built on Him, begins with Him, and ends with Him. He is the One who holds up the entire structure.
- Notice that 1 Peter 2:4 says that Jesus is "...choice and precious in the sight of God..." The word "choice" means "elected by God." In other words, "this is the way God wants to build His church."
- Listen, the only things that truly please God are those which are built on Christ, depend on Christ, and bring glory to Christ. Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church. But notice secondly:

II. THE FRAME OF THE CHURCH

- Born again believers are the *frame* of the church. Look at v. 5, "...you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house..." God is building His house, His church, with living stones.
- Listen, what God is building here is much greater than the physical structure that we have erected on this site.

God is much more concerned about the *spiritual* house than He is the *physical* house.

- What God is building is *not* made up of bricks and mortar. It is built with living stones; those of us who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ.
- And, by the way, the idea of living stones seems like an oxy-moron, doesn't it? We usually do *not* think of stones as being living. In fact, we equate stones with "deadness." Have you ever heard someone refer to something as being "stone dead?"
- Stones are *not* living, and that is the paradox here. A stone has no life, but these stones are *living* stones. In the same way that our Lord is a living Lord by virtue of His resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven, so we are living stones by virtue of the fact that we are "in Christ Jesus."
- In fact, this entire passage of Scripture is all about the incredible privileges that you and I enjoy, who are in Christ Jesus. This is a laundry list of the great blessings of being in Christ.
- And one of the most important benefits of being in Christ is new life, eternal life, spiritual life – thus the analogy of living stones. So the picture here is of a masonry building. And every person, regenerated by the Spirit of God, is a living stone in the framework of the church.
- But please understand - the picture being developed in this verse is *not* the picture of a brick building where every brick is uniform and one brick can easily be substituted for another.
- The kind of building pictured *here* is one made of individually selected stones. Every stone is unique (*not* uniform). Every stone is shaped a little differently. And when all the stones are together, each one fills a specific place in which no other stone could possibly fit.
- Every individual is uniquely chosen by God, uniquely shaped, uniquely placed in the building. *You* fill a place in the church, (by your shape of gifts, talents, abilities, and personality) that no one else in the church can possibly fill.
- And listen, if you are *not* functioning in the church – if you are *not* active and faithful in attendance and in service – there is a gap in the structure no one else can fill. This is how the Church is built. This is God's design for His church. The church is the people - *not* the physical building.
- But now, notice that vs. 5 is in the passive voice. It says, "...you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house..." The verb "being built" is in the passive voice. The subject (the living stones) are *not* doing the acting but are being acted upon.
- You see, the stones don't *do* the building - they *are* the building. The master craftsman chooses every stone

and puts it in its proper place, often chipping and cutting it so it fits perfectly. Jesus Christ is the master craftsman who builds His Church.

- The Church is *not* built by human programs, human personalities or human promotions. The Church is built by Jesus Christ. Psalm 127:1 says “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it.” Jesus said, “Upon this rock I will build my church.”
- Listen, any church that relies on the ingenuity and activity of man to build the church, is *not* building a church. Man can build a CROWD but only Jesus Christ can build a CHURCH! (pause)
- But now, having said all that, I need to point out that just because this verse is in the passive voice does *not* mean that we are totally passive in the process of building His church.
- In the first 3 verses of this chapter we are instructed to grow in our salvation, and *now* we are being encouraged to be involved in the spiritual ministry that God desires to use to build His church.
- Christ is the One building His church, but we have a part to play in that. We are the living stones with which He builds His church, and we need to be faithful to what He has called us to do and to be. Well, notice a third thing that we see here in this passage:

III. THE FILLING OF THE CHURCH

- Notice that v. 5 says “you...are being built up as a *spiritual* house...” This is *not* just any ordinary house God is building. It is a *spiritual* house. The weapons of our warfare are *not* ordinary weapons; they are *spiritual* weapons. And God does *not* desire to build His church with ordinary means. He does it with *spiritual* means.
- I heard someone put it this way one time, “God uses supernatural methods as His mortar!” Listen, I’m *not* interested in what *man* can build here. I want to see what God can build!
- APPL. - Of course, we could do what all these other churches are doing, and we could bring in a rock band and smoke machines and show video clips and build the church with all kinds of gimmicks, but that is *not* God’s plan for His church. He’s the One building it and I don’t want to be in competition with Him.
- Well, there are two ways that Jesus *fills* the church. First of all:
 - A. Jesus Fills the Church With His Presence
 - The Lord Jesus indwells the church. He indwells believers individually and when we assemble in corporate worship, He fills the corporate Body with His presence.
 - In that passage we read while ago in Eph. 2, the Apostle Paul says that the church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus

Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

- It is Christ’s presence within the Body that makes the Church a living organism - *not* just an organization. It is the presence of Christ in the Church that makes us a church and *not* just a crowd. It is the presence of Christ in the Church that gives: Life, power, direction, and strength to the Church.
- ILL. - A glove is a limp, lifeless, useless article until you put your hand into it. Then the glove comes to life and does whatever the hand does. So it is with the Church. Without Christ, we are just a lifeless assembly or crowd. But when Christ indwells His Church and fills us, He gives us life and we do whatever He does.
- By the way, some churches have forfeited the presence of Christ through unbelief, sin, liberalism, division or strife. You walk into their service and they are dead and lifeless. (expound) Well, there is a second thing with which the Lord Jesus fills His church.

B. Jesus Fills the Church With His Praise

- Let me show you something interesting in Heb. 2:10-12. Look at it with me (if you have your Bible) “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through

sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM THY NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING THY PRAISE."

- Here the writer of Hebrews quotes from the Messianic Psalm 22:22. And the picture is of Christ standing in the midst of the congregation of the redeemed (those who He calls His brethren) and singing praises to the Father!
- Listen, do you know how you can tell whether or *not* Christ is in a church? Listen to the church’s praise! You see, when Jesus indwells a church, the church does what Jesus does. And Jesus sings praises to the Father in the midst of the congregation.
- The *filling* of the church. Jesus fills the church with His *presence* and He fills it with His *praise*. But there is one more thing we need to see this morning, and that is:

IV. THE FRUIT OF THE CHURCH

- Listen to what Christ desires to accomplish and produce in His church. Look with me at v. 5 and v. 9. Verse 5 says, “you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

- Verse 9 says “But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...”
- God desires to produce two things in His church. First of all:
 - A. God Produces a Church Full of Priests
 - As born-again believers, we do *not need* an earthly human priest - we *are* priests. We can come directly to God through Jesus Christ for confession of sin, prayer, intercession, petition and supplication.
 - In the Old Testament God's people *had* a priesthood. In the New Testament we *are* the priesthood. Every believer is a priest - and we perform the ministry of priests.
 - This is why New Testament church leaders are never called priests, but are called pastors, elders, shepherds, or overseers. You call me your pastor, but I am *not* your priest. You don't need an earthly priest because you *are* a priest. You have direct access to God because of Christ.
 - When Jesus died, the veil in the temple was torn in two. The O.T. priesthood was abolished that very moment. For access to God had been opened to all men through Jesus Christ. The Holy of Holies was opened to all men through Jesus Christ.
- So there is great privilege in being a chosen priest, but there is also great responsibility. We are to serve as priests in bringing God to men and in bringing men to God.
- The first part of v. 9 talks about all the privilege and blessing we have in Christ, but the last half of it points to the responsibility. Look at it again, “...that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...”
- That's a big part of our responsibility as priests. We are to bear witness to God's saving grace in our lives. We are to “proclaim the excellencies (all the glorious truths He has revealed to us in His Word).”
- We are to point people to the One who has saved us, and has transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light.
- Can you think of a greater privilege than that of being an ambassador of the living God? I can't. Being an ambassador of the President of the United States is nothing in comparison to that! We are ambassadors for Christ! What a privilege!
- We have the wonderful privilege of being the ones who proclaim the excellencies of the One who has called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light.
- But *not only* does God produce a church full of *priests*, secondly:

B. God Produces a Church Full of Praise

- Look at v. 5 again. It says we are “to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” We are spiritual priests in God’s spiritual house and our greatest joy and privilege should be that of offering up pleasing spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to Him.
- Now, one of the most important of those spiritual sacrifices of the sacrifice of praise to His name. That verse sounds a lot like Heb. 13:15 doesn’t it? Heb. 13:15 says “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.”
- Our spiritual sacrifice is our sincere, spirit-driven praise and worship. The Bible teaches that this was God’s primary purpose in our redemption - that we might bring Him praise and glory.
- Eph. 1:5-6 says “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace...”
- I believe the most important thing a church does is to praise and glorify God! God is producing in us a holy, righteous, body of priests who bring to Him our offerings of genuine praise and worship.
- Now, this sacrifice of praise is broader than just our corporate worship on Sundays. Rom. 12:1-2 says “I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (expound)
- But the most important element of our worship is *not* what we *do*, it is the One whom we worship. You know, there is an interesting truth found in the OT in the book of Genesis. In Gen. 35:1-7 we are given the account of Jacob going back to Bethel, the place where he first met God.
- Now, the interesting thing about this account (and the part we need to take note of today) is that it says in v. 7 that when he got there, he built an altar and then he named the place, not Bethel, but El-Bethel.
- The word “Bethel” means “the house of God” but the name “El-Bethel” means “the God of the house of God.” You see, what Jacob was saying is that no longer was the *place* the primary thing. Instead it was the God whom He had encountered in that place that had become primary in His life.
- The emphasis had shifted from the house to the God that the house was created for. My friend listen, the primary thing is *not* this building we gather in. The

primary thing is the God that we are seeking to honor in this building (and in the world)!

- We must put the “El,” that is God, before the “Bethel,” the house of the Lord. We’re *not* here to glorify man but to glorify God. A facility doesn’t make a church. It is the Lord Jesus using living stones that makes a church.
- Now, what is our part? We are the living stones that God desires to use to build His church. Our commitment to Him and our commitment to work together as His people is what it takes to build the church He desires. It takes all of us.
- ILL. - Together, the people in Solomon’s day provided for the house of the Lord. They were so committed to the Lord and building a house for His glory that eventually the leaders had to beg the people *not* to bring anymore.
- You know, it is amazing what God can do through us when we are all willing to get involved in His work! Do you know that a single bee can only make one teaspoon of honey in a whole year? But a hive of bees can produce 80 pounds or more in a single hive.
- APPEAL
- PRAYER