

## What are you building?

Last week we looked at how God is responsible for building His Church. I want to launch off of the topic of building for this week and ask the question: What are *you* building?

Yes, God says that He will build His Church, but we *are builders*, because we are made in His likeness: we create, we build... the BIG question becomes: *What* are we building?

You may be saying to yourself, "I don't remember having to take a test to get my spiritual contractor's license when I got saved?" First of all, it's not a 'one-time' test, it's a daily test; and secondly, there are probably a few more things they didn't tell you in Sunday School or church about the new identities that you took on, when you became a believer:

You're a Farmer: You are sowing and growing daily

You're a Soldier: You enlisted in His Army

You're an Ambassador: You are Heaven's representative on Earth

You're a Fisherman: You are Fishers of Men

And there are a few more... do you know your Biblical identities?

One of those identities is: You are a builder. The Apostle Paul described it this way:

***"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men?"***

***What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.***

***According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."***

-1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:1-15

Notice Paul starts out in the “Farming” analogy and then moves into “Building.” Whatever we build, with whatever materials we build with, will be tested with fire in the judgment at the end of this age. Wood, hay and straw will burn up, but not the silver, gold or precious stones. Just as I mentioned a few months back, we can do good works that don’t produce fruit (**Colossians 1:10**), we can build things here on earth that won’t survive the testing fire when we stand before God in the Great White Throne Judgment.

Some people go through their entire lives as a spectator, standing on the sideline, content on letting others do the work. Assuming that because they prayed a prayer, or answered an altar call or profess to believe that they can just coast through this life and arrive at the Pearly Gates when they die. That is *not* the Christian life described in the Word of God and it is not the life that we see modeled by those in the Scriptures.

We are not saved BY good works, but we ARE saved UNTO good works! We should be able to look back on our lives and see a good amount of Christian Construction Projects, many of them to completion, or a lot close to completion.

How many people have we witnessed to or shared the gospel with? How many **Matthew 25** encounters have we had with the poor, the needy, the lonely, the outcast? How many people have we disciplined and raised up in the faith?

It’s fitting that we celebrated and honored Bill Goode today. He’s a great example of a life laid down for the Gospel and for the Lord. He had a regular job, He had a family and still he dedicated his life to building well for the Kingdom of God, both in this church and in ministries outside of this church. He lived, served and ministered in such a way, that God would get the glory. If Bill was still physically able, he’d still be going strong for God, doing something, somewhere that would be bearing spiritual fruit.

Bill is such a good example that I have created an award here at Central in his honor: It’s called the **Bill Goode Service Award**. Monthly, we will honor someone here at this Church who has exemplified a life of service here at the Church; the way Bill modeled one for us.

Bill knew, like the Apostle Paul, that whatever we build for God, must be built on a solid foundation. Foundations are extremely important in the economy of God. Probably one of the most well-known parables Jesus ever taught illustrates this importance:

***“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.” -Matthew 7:24-27***

Are our foundations that we are building upon built upon the Rock (of Jesus and His Word), or are they built upon shifting sands of modern church culture and/or religious tradition?

If we are building for ourselves in this life: for our comfort, for our enjoyment, for our pleasure and not for God and His kingdom, we too, are building on sand. Are you focused on the temporary or the eternal? Are you building for this life or the one to come? Earthly wealth, treasure and currency is no good in Heaven. As the age-old proverb goes, "You can't take it with you." We must be focused on the eternal and not the temporary (**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:18**).

That reminds me of 2 good illustrations:

*A rich gentleman was dying and wanted to make preparations for the afterlife. He instructed his servants to fill his coffin with his gold. He died and went to Heaven and was dragging his bag of gold with him. Saint Peter met him at the Pearly Gates and said, "What have you got there?" and the gentleman replied, "I brought my most important items with me." He opened up his bag and showed St. Peter his gold. Peter looked at him, bewildered and said, "The most important thing to you is pavement?"*

*Another wealthy gentleman had died and was confident that he was going to have a huge mansion in heaven. When he arrived, he checked in at the Pearly Gates with St. Peter. Peter walked him by some big mansions and he kept waiting for Peter to point to one of them and tell him, "Here is yours," but he never did. Soon they were walking by smaller and smaller abodes until they got to some really dilapidated cottages. Peter finally stood in front of one of them and said, "Here is yours." The man was visibly frustrated and said to St. Peter, "There must be some mistake." I lived in a big mansion on earth, I went to church, lived a moral life... I should have a big mansion in heaven." St. Peter said, "We did the best we could with the building materials you sent ahead of you."*

Now that I've made my point, spoiler alert: that's not the way any of that works or will go down, but you get my point. Jesus said it this way:

***"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." -Matthew 6:19-21***

How do you become an effectual builder in and for the Kingdom of God? You must first lay hold of your Biblical identities (some of which I listed previously) and live from that place. See yourself the way Heaven sees you; live for an audience of One.

Next, you discover your God given purpose. For some of you, that is what you do for a living or career. It is your calling. It doesn't have to be within the 4 walls of the Church. Some of you might have more of a focus on Church or para-church ministry.

I want to remind everyone within the sound of my voice:

1. EVERYONE has at least one ministry to fulfill, but I'm confident that almost everyone has multiple ministries. If you haven't found yours yet, you either haven't asked, or you are not looking hard enough. Don't be a "pew potato" or a spectator. Get in the game.
2. As long as you are alive, you still have purpose. There is no such thing as a person without purpose; no matter how old, or how young. There is no such thing as someone being too old to have an impact in the spiritual realm. If all you did was pray, that's purpose (and a powerful one at that: **James 5:16b**). If all you did was spend time in the presence of God, that's purpose (because we were made for that).

Paul said, "***Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.***" -**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:1**

We have many good examples around us of people who have lived, are living a fruitful Christian life. Bill is just one of them.

What are you building in your life, what are you building *with* your life? God is responsible to build His Church, but He's looking to you to help build His Kingdom here on earth.