

“Built Together Part 6 - Built up in Love” (10-1-23)

Introduction: Tie into the series with Church building / Family story

How do you view church (even subconsciously) - is it a building and programs, or something more?

Consider: What is our expectation of what the Church should be?

The proximity between your expectations and your experience affects your ability to stick with something for the long haul.

Example 1: Marriage - what are my expectations? I will then base how I feel about my experience on that. Take marriage. The closeness of your expectations to the reality of what being married is like, is directly proportional to your ability to stick it out.

Example 2: Another real story - Famous worship leader

A famous worship leader who had deconstructed was interviewed by Justin Brierly

Example 3: Another story - Francis Chan leaving his church to be more efficient.

It was the revelation of the Body that led Francis to that public repentance

Application: Similarly, the way we see the church is entirely built upon what we think this is all about! What **we think the goal is, what we should expect to experience, and how we think we get there.** If we don't know what this is, if we don't know what the point is, if we don't know what we should be expecting... Disorientation in our future.

The Church - what is the goal? What should we be expecting? How do we get there?

Let's look at some potential faulty existing structures before we let the Word renovate us . . .

What is the goal? Some common, broken (or at least incomplete) views . . .

- Get to heaven- escapism
- Become a one-man or woman kingdom builder- reach my potential- narcissism
- Get all the sin out of my life and stop screwing up- perfectionism

What do I expect?

- More self-confidence
- More notches on my belt
- Less anxiety
- Less shame

How do I get there?

- Get to know my strengths, my calling, what gives me life, my sin tendencies, the boundaries that I need, forgive myself, hone my craft, overcome my shyness, talk more, or listen more, or any number of behavior and mindset modifications
- Go to church because that's where we get equipped to go out into the world

What's the problem with all of that? It's all about me. I'm telling you we are swimming in individualistic waters and it's obscured the central thrust and theme of the scriptures.

Possible thoughts we have if elements of these broken views of church are in our foundation:

- I'm not gifted to reach the world like some are. I'm not as valuable a member of the church as that person is.
- I don't know that I have what it takes to make disciples
- I'm not sure I need these people.
- If I stay the course, I will end up really effective and productive for God's kingdom

OK, let's renovate - Here is what the scripture says about the Church's purpose:

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds^[c] and teachers,^[d] ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,^[e] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

- The word “equip” is a hapax legomenon (only usage in NT)
 - “Katartismos” noun form of this word - medical term: setting right, setting a bone, fitting together, repairing
- This all culminates in **The goal which is to be built up in love.**
If your theology looks more and more like John 17, you are on the right track.

John 17:23

I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Note: The goal is to be built up in love!

Example - church of “Satan” leader gets saved due to experiencing the love of God thru a christian journalist

- Why? Isn't that just a side effect? A perk of being part of a Christian community? How could that be so central?
- Built up in love isn't a side effect of Christian community, it's the nature of God.

A church that is built up in love is a church that is manifesting the kingdom of heaven.
Love is the motivation of everything in God. Mission as overflow of love.

How do we get there? How do we pursue being built up in love?

The church isn't where we go to get equipped to go out into the world.
The church is HOW we have been sent out into the world. This is clear in John 17 . . .

John 17:23

I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Note: You have a role to play in this. Everyone does see: 1 Corinthians 12

1 Peter 4:10

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

Let's revisit those broken thoughts from earlier:

Broken thought 1: I'm not gifted to reach the world like some are. I'm not as valuable a member of the church as that person is.

Repaired view: I have been given gifts that belong to the church and that enable her to be a functioning body that's built up in love

Broken Thought 2: I don't know that I have what it takes to make disciples

Repaired View: The great commission was given to the church, and I will participate in this as I assemble with other believers.

Broken Thought 3: I'm not sure I need these people.

Repaired View: Without these people, I'm not doing Christianity

Broken Thought 4: If I stay the course, I will end up really effective and productive for God's kingdom

Repaired View: If I stay the course, we will become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ, built up in love, so that the world knows the Father sent the Son

Closing: Return to title "Built up in Love" or sermon series "Built together"

The nature of God is the most amazing thing there is. And his nature is love. And that's what we he is doing. If we don't have that environment, we don't have a masters house to fill. We don't have context for disciple making. We don't have the aroma on us when we go out.

Ultimately, we don't have to get this done by being clever or try-hardening. Why? Because it's the gospel. It's part of salvation. Salvation is much broader than your personal afterlife destination.

Comprehensiveness of Salvation from "The Portable Seminary"

The comprehensiveness of salvation may be shown in the following ways:

- (1) **By what we are saved from.** This includes sin and death; guilt and estrangement; ignorance of truth; bondage to habit and vice; fear of demons, of death, of life, of God, of hell; despair of self; alienation from others; pressures of the world; and a meaningless life. Paul's own testimony is almost wholly positive: salvation has brought him peace with God, access to God's favor and presence, hope of regaining the glory intended for men, endurance in suffering, steadfast character, an optimistic mind, inner motivations of divine love and power of the Spirit, ongoing experience of the risen Christ within his soul, and sustaining joy in God (Romans 5:1–11). Salvation extends also to society, aiming at realizing God's kingdom; to nature, ending its bondage to futility (8:19–20); and to the universe, attaining final reconciliation of a fragmented cosmos (Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20).
- (2) **By noting that salvation is past** (Romans 8:24; Ephesians 2:5, 8; Titus 3:5–8), **present** (1 Corinthians 1:18; 15:2; 2 Corinthians 2:15; 1 Peter 1:9; 3:21), and **future** (Romans 5:9–10; 13:11; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Philippians 1:5–6; 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Hebrews 1:14; 9:28; 1 Peter 2:2). That is, salvation includes that which is given freely and finally by God: grace (forgiveness [called in one epistle "justification"], friendship or reconciliation, atonement, sonship, and new birth), that which is continually imparted (sanctification—growing emancipation from all evil, growing enrichment in all good—the enjoyment of eternal life, experience of the Spirit's power, liberty, joy, advancing maturity in conformity to Christ), and that which is still to be attained (redemption of the body, perfect Christlikeness, final glory).
- (3) **By distinguishing salvation's various aspects:** religious (acceptance with God, forgiveness, reconciliation, sonship, reception of the Spirit, immortality), emotional (strong assurance, peace, courage, hopefulness, joy), practical (prayer, guidance, discipline, dedication, service), ethical (new moral dynamic for new moral aims, freedom, victory), personal (new thoughts, convictions, horizons, motives, satisfactions, self-fulfillment), and social (new sense of community with Christians, of compassion toward all, and overriding impulse to love as Jesus has loved).

I love that they end it on that one. An overriding impulse to love as Jesus loved... Let's pray.