

Building of God

Part 1

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| Speaker | L.M. Grant |
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[00:00:00] Now let's return first to Ephesians chapter 2.

You'll remember last week that we considered the question of the building first of unbelievers and then the building of believers.

Now remember, in connection with the building of unbelievers, the whole thing was brought to nothing, everything destroyed.

But the building of believers, everything wasn't destroyed.

There's one thing very certain, the foundation remains, isn't it? The foundation is Christ.

And parts of the building also remain.

There are parts of it however that are destroyed. Anything that hasn't been for Christ is destroyed at the judgment seat of Christ.

[00:01:03] But now this evening we're going to consider the building of God.

Now you know that's the most refreshing of all. It's the most marvelous of all, of course.

It's that which can fill our own hearts with admiration and worship.

Not only is man building, but God is building.

God is doing something in this world.

You know I believe that it's important for us to be with God in what He's doing.

It's not just a matter of us doing something for God, but to be with God in what God is doing.

That's much wiser, much better, isn't it?

To be identified with God in the work that God is doing.

Now we're reading here in Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 19.

[00:02:17] Well here is the remarkable building of God.

Now this book of Ephesians shows us very clearly how God works.

In fact, all through the book we have God as a master worker, producing what will be for His own eternal glory and praise in souls.

Now does someone remember what it was that unbelievers were building with?

[00:03:01] Stone. I mean brick.

Brick.

Slime.

Water.

Water.

Yes. Here's the brick.

Instead of stone, you have the slime instead of water. The spirit.

Yes, that's right.

Yes, instead of the spirit of God, we're joining together here. Now you notice here, this last verse, He speaks of the spirit of God for an abomination of God through the spirit.

Now this building here, therefore, is the master workmanship of God who works by His spirit in living power and reality in souls today.

Now, it doesn't tell us exactly here that it was stones, except that He mentions that Jesus Christ was a huge cornerstone.

Does someone know a scripture that tells me that every believer is a stone in the building?

[00:04:06] Peter 2.

Yes, it's 1 Peter 2, isn't it? Yes.

It's where we have the application of it.

Now, it's good for you to get that verse while we're on the subject. 1 Peter 2.

And verse 4.

To whom coming, that is to Christ coming, as under a living stone, disallowing even men, the children of God in practice, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house and holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices accessible to God by Jesus Christ.

Now notice there.

Every believer is a living stone in the building that God is building. [00:05:04] And a spiritual house. Built up a spiritual house. Each one is a living stone and it builds up eventually a spiritual house.

Now, also a holy priesthood.

I think that makes it clear that every believer is a priest. Now this gives us something of the wonderful privileges that every believer has.

Now, did you notice what is the function of a priest there in that verse we just read?

Yes. To offer up spiritual sacrifices accessible to God by Jesus Christ.

Now the priest in the Old Testament, you know, offers carnal sacrifices.

They'd offer animals.

But today, a priest, a believer, is to offer up spiritual sacrifices accessible to God by Jesus Christ.

[00:06:03] Now do we understand what that means?

Offering spiritual sacrifices?

It goes even further than prayer. It's praise. It's worship.

Good sacrifices speak of how to send to God in worship.

Now prayer, of course, may have different aspects. In fact, in praying we may worship. We may praise God.

Though on the other hand, we may be asking for something. But in praise, everything is going up to God.

It's not asking God for anything, it's giving to God. Offering up.

Now, that's one of the fundamental characteristics of being a priest.

If you're a priest of God, how much do you really exercise your privilege in worshipping God?

Now this worship is in connection with God's house.

Now there's various aspects to it because you have the stones.

[00:07:04] There are stones that speak of the building of the house itself. And yet the priests are not exactly the thought of the stones as the house being built by those who are in the house, aren't they?

In the temple, offering sacrifices.

Now we find that very same thing in what we're reading this evening, if you're going to consider now. That both the fact of our being the stones in the building and the fact of our being in the household of God in the order, in a place of order where God is to have control.

Now, you know there's a grand and wonderful privilege?

Every believer is a part of God's household.

Every believer has the privilege of offering worship to God.

Now, that includes women as well as men.

And I don't mean by that that the women have the public place.

[00:08:03] But their hearts certainly ought to well up in thanksgiving to God just as fully as a man's ought to. A woman saying one time, well, if I couldn't get up and speak publicly, I'd lose all interest in Christianity. Well, how much heart would she have for Christ? Now, that's a very serious thing to say, isn't it?

If I can't have my own will and do what I please, then I won't have anything to do with the Lord? Well, that's a serious thing to think of.

Or, you know, one who may not be able to say anything, may be the one who is most deeply affected in their own heart in worship and thanksgiving to God. Well, you take the case of a man who is a dumb man.

He can't talk.

You say, but doesn't he worship? Certainly not.

[00:09:01] But you see, every believer, therefore, has that place of priesthood. And we should exercise it.

In the fullest way that Scripture allows him to.

You know, it's a wonderful thing. A priest is one who is drawn into the very presence of God. One who can enter the presence of God.

Now, on behalf of other priests. That's another aspect of priesthood. Prayer.

Intercession, you see.

The priest is one who intercedes. So, those are the most important things.

If we're going to use what God has given us. But now, in connection with this building.

God is taking a stone, if it were, at a time and sending it into this building. Now, I'm not going to look at the Old Testament in connection with this. Some of you know this, understand well.

That the temple in the Old Testament is a picture of the Church of God today.

The building of God.

Now, that is the only temple, the only building for worship that God ever commanded to be built. [00:10:05] Apart from the tabernacle, which is temporary. That is the temple in Jerusalem.

The only natural building.

Now, are there stones that were used there to build that building? Where?

All made ready.

Someone remembers? Where?

In the quarry.

Yes, in the quarry.

Under Jerusalem. In the dark caverns down there.

The caverns are still there, as a matter of fact. But it's a little stone dump.

They were all made ready there.

They were all hewn to shape and size.

And there were great stones.

Huge stones.

Concrete stones, you think.

You know, that's what God thinks of you, if you say. A huge stone.

Great stone, that is. A great stone.

This is the importance of everything that is in God's temple.

You know, God can't miss one single believer out of every building.

Everyone is important in that building.

[00:11:07] So that speaks of your importance.

Now, you know, I think sometimes believers get the idea that I'm not very important. And so, therefore, I won't do anything. You guys never get that impression.

You're important to God.

I don't mean by that that we ought to be filled with any self-importance. Because we shouldn't.

But we ought to realize that God has a very particular reason for saving our souls.

Great stones.

Then there are costly stones.

So now, is that hard to understand? What do you think, Sam? What do you think of it? That's right.

It costs the death of the Lord Jesus to save our souls. To heal us out of those patterns of sin. [00:12:02] Then there are also huge stones. Now, what does that sound like? Huge. Huge. Huge. You see that?

That's right.

Yeah. Yeah. In other words, Now, you know, that's the most important thing for our souls. We're naturally very selfish.

We have certain ideas that we like to ourselves. I would like certain things. And I set my mind, and I have it in there.

What does that mean? [00:13:01] That's what God wants from us. And God says, well, I'm going to do my work, and I'm going to do it whether you like it or not. And so He gives me a tool of God on the cross.

And He tucks, and tucks, and tucks, until He gets that rock-formed stone.

And He lays it on the side.

What was the number of cubits? Ten cubits, maybe? That would be twelve and a half. No, that would be one and a half. That would be fifteen feet. Fifteen feet long, one rock.

And something like fifty square. Well, now, those are huge things. In fact, today, there are those rocks still standing in the temple. Not in the temple, but in the foundation area of the temple, where the temple was built. The temple was built right on top of the mountain.

And all around, it was built up, in order to level off the top of the mountain. Built up around in an area, built up on top. Now, those rocks all around, they're still there. And, you know, they've tried to,

instead of ten nights, they couldn't, and they can't do it. [00:14:07] Anywhere.

That's massive workmanship, you see. And yet, they were all pretending they couldn't, in the quarry. No sound of a hammer, or any tool.

They're not doing it. Isn't that a beautiful picture of how God works with sinners today? Separation from their sins. Now, he says, I'm building you where I want you. And, then, you know, you hear people say, well, if you're converted, you can join the church of your choice. Is that what God says when you're converted? Join the church of your choice? Did you say to those rocks, now that I've got you out of the cavern, now you can go and build yourself into any temple you like? He doesn't do anything like that, does he? I build you in the place I want you. You see, now that's a fundamental Bible point in connection with the church of God. [00:15:03] Now, every believer, therefore, has his place in God's church. The heart of God, the building of God. So, we ought to leave with joy that which is God's prerogative. God has a right to put me where he wants me. And I have no right to speak for myself when I would like that. So, it should appeal to my inward soul, and bring me before God with my whole heart to desire, like God's shown me definitely where he wants me. That will be the only place where there will be real blessing for my soul, according to God. Well, now, these stones are brought out in order to be built up.

And you notice in verse 20, he says, You notice in verse 20, he says, [00:16:02] Now, does someone remember what he read before with the foundation? Yes, the foundation of Jesus Christ. Now, here it says, The foundation of the apostles and prophets.

I believe the thought is that the apostles and prophets have given us the foundation. That is, the whole foundation of Christianity is found there in the word of God. It's all in the New Testament of the apostles and prophets, who have given us the New Testament revelation concerning the person of Christ. Now, predominantly, Paul did that. Do you remember what Paul said? I have laid the foundation. So that foundation refers to the whole revealed truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in Christianity.

It is a foundation that can not be destroyed. Now, 2 Timothy talks again. The foundation of God's standard to do.

Now then, Jesus Christ is also a true promise-giver.

[00:17:06] He is the cornerstone. Now, you say, well, if he is the foundation, how can he be the cornerstone? Well, you know, he is not only the cornerstone, he is also the topstone. The headstone of the corner. So, there are three different places that he occupies in the building. The foundation first, and then the cornerstone. That is, the stone from which every other stone gets its character. Not only are we built upon Christ, but every other stone gets its place in relation to Christ. In relation to the cornerstone. That is the thought I am sharing. In connection with the cornerstone, he is the central one around whom the building is built. Not only on whom the building is built, but around whom the building is built. He is just like a builder. There is a center, and from there you can get your lines to get to your corner, and your corner. [00:18:01] That is right.

Then you get your corner from there, and you go up with your... We get all of our bearings from the cornerstone, uncle. Now, we got our true bearings. It is a good question for all of us, isn't it? Get your true bearings from Christ. Now, people try to get their bearings from their own experience with

someone. They may try to get their bearings from other Christians.

They may try to get their bearings from a church. Or from something like that. You know, your bearings can only get found from Christ. He is the one you can trust. He gives you the bearings. Everything comes into proper balance as you recognize Christ as the one in whom all flows. Now, then also, he is the headstone of the corner. Like the top.

When a whole building is completed, he himself will crown the whole thing. Well, in fact, it is his name that governs it.

[00:19:03] Christ at the basis, Christ in the middle, and Christ at the top. Well, now, which of the stones is most important? You want me to talk about important stones? Well, not one of the other stones is important at all compared to him. So, if man starts to argue about which will have the greatest place, the Lord just has to stop him.

He says to him, I am along with you to do this service. But now, in verse 21, in whom all the buildings, simply framed together, grow upon the holy temple in the Lord.

Now, it is growing. Because it's God's work, and as each stone is saved, he adds that one, puts him as a stone in the building, and the building is gradually growing. Soon it will be complete. And then the church will be translated home to glory. [00:20:03] Now, in glory, we can only have a reason building. Of the church is the building of God. Only on earth.

We have an enlarged part of the building now, in glory, and that is the city. That expands the thought of the building altogether. And, in fact, we have a development of the thought of the body of Christ, in glory. Now, the body of Christ is spoken of on earth. Now, that's the church. But in glory, what do we have?

The bride of Christ. Just as the bride for Adam was taken out of Adam, so, in other words, was his body, you see.

So, the bride of Christ is, in other words, taken out of Christ, and then presented to Christ as a bride. So, in the present day, the church is looked at more as the body of Christ, and, therefore, responsible to obey him. [00:21:01] Now, our bodies, what do we think? They are that in which we express our obedience, and, in fact, subjection to God.

Our bodies are responsible. In fact, we will give account of the deeds done in the body.

So, each one of us has our place today as members of the body of Christ.

That gives us one part of the church. But then, also, we have the building of God here. And that's a very important line of truth, too. But, I didn't mention verse 19 and what we were just speaking of.

Now, therefore, you are no more strangers than foreigners. Now, what nationality were these people you are talking to?

Jews. Gentiles.

Now, look at Ephesus for Gentiles, and he tells them, [00:22:03] Now, you are no longer strangers than foreigners from Israel, but your fellow citizens must accept faith, whether you or the Gentiles are all brought near to God, and your fellow citizens know, and you are of the household of God.

Now, notice, that doesn't say that we are of the house of God, and that's a church thought, too, but we are of the household of God. Now, that gives us the thought of being as members of the household. Now, the two thoughts are found continually in Scripture.

Now, in any household, what is the most important thing about it? Now, before you answer, I think you'll find the answer in the last verse here. In whom we offer our building together for and habitation of God, it is this.

[00:23:02] Isn't the important thing about a household? The important thing about any household is the people who live there. It's not simply what the household looks like. You can go down the street, you know, and you can find many beautiful mansions, and pay nothing off of them. And here you come to a little home that is very unpretentious, and maybe very poor, and that's the one you go into, because you know the people there. And the important thing, too, is who lives there. Now, in God's house, isn't that the important thing? Who lives there? Well, who is it? In habitation of God, it is this.

Now, that's the important point. God dwells in his house. And he lives there. Now, who lives there? He lives there.

Now, that's the important point. God dwells in his house. Now, does that mean in a material building? [00:24:04] Not at all.

Now, sometimes, you know, you do see signs. In fact, I've seen it myself over in a building. This is none other than the house of God, and this is the day of heaven. Have you seen that? This is none other than the house of God. Well, it was a church, of course. But that was a very unscriptural kind of designation. That's not the house of God. Now, you know, the house of God certainly must have had some kind of an order in it that shows that God dwells there, doesn't it? You can go in, and would everything there tell you, ah, here's where God dwells? Hmm. That's an interesting story. You know, if I come into your house, and tell you now, I think I'd like some of my furniture moved, you know, some of yours moved out. [00:25:02] I'd like it changed a little bit up here. A little different here. I can imagine what would happen. You'd say to me, there's the door. But you know, men don't see God that way. Isn't that right? They say, well, now, we don't exactly think that Scripture has to be quite so hard and fast in the way it speaks. And there are certain things that we'd like to have. And so we'll introduce these things. And, well, there are other things that may be, well, they might be in Scripture, but we just as soon as have them here. And so we'll build our house, and we'll call it God's house. Well, when it's all over, how much of our God's house do you think we'll have? But you know, that's something that is so commonly done, that our own hearts would just dissolve in shame and humiliation before going to God. Now, it's a solemn thing to think of. That Scripture, through the God's house, the principle of the God's house, [00:26:02] are those things that we have. That Scripture, through the God's house, the principle of the God's house, are those things that glorify God. It's not the things that glorify men. It makes men feel nice and pleasant, and it really has a kind of a nice feeling of worship. For instance, people will introduce their same last names, their road to Christ, and their priesthood, and all the rest of it. And then they'll tell you that's the house of God. That's the house of God. Well...

One who knows the living God, in seeing that kind of an atmosphere, has to tell himself, well, this doesn't look like my body. Well now, however, we do find very definitely that God in Scripture only necessitates fundamental principles as regards the order that is becoming in the house of God. Now, the house of God is not, therefore, a building at all.

[00:27:07] Do you remember James when he was lying in it, or at least when he lay down on the rock? There was a storm for his pillow. He woke up in the morning. He said, this is not it, but the house is gone, and this is the beginning of heaven. That's where his words came from. It didn't matter at all, was it? It was at the start of the message. He said, it's the house of God. Why? That's it.

The Lord is there. God is there.

And so, you know, in gathering together, then you have to then tell the truth. Where two or three are gathered together under my name, there am I in the midst of them. Now, that contemplates the truth of the house of God. Now, there should be the recognition of all true believers on the part of every believer. We should recognize all true believers as being members of the body of Christ, of the household of God. [00:28:02] But the order of God's house should certainly be submitted to the Master, all of us, shouldn't it? You see, now, the servant doesn't have a right to change things around, to change the order of the house to suit himself. The servant has the right to be subject to the Master of the house. Now, that's one thing in connection with God's house that is so important. The order of it. Now, in any home, the order or disorder always comes back upon the head of the house, doesn't it? If it's disorderly, who is the one to reflect on it? Who is the one to reflect on it? The head of the house. If it's orderly, who is the one to get the credit for it? The head of the house. Well, now, do you ever think of that? If we're disorderly, [00:29:02] we reflect on God. Now, think about it a moment. If we're not subject to God's order in this house, we're dishonoring the one who is the head of it. So, it's a serious thing for us to think of that he dwells there. And that's to just fill our own hearts with joy and speak about the soul of God. Now, before we think, I want you to turn to 1 Samuel 7. 2 Samuel 7. 2 Samuel 7.

Now, in this chapter, we find that King David, having established his kingdom, is a dead man of war. And then he decides that he ought to build a house for God. And so Nathan tells him, all right, go ahead and do all this in your house. [00:30:02] But God came to Nathan that night and told Nathan, oh no. You tell my servant David, shall God build a house for me? Inverse side. 2 Samuel 7. 2 Samuel 7.

Inverse 4.

For as it came to pass that night that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, go and tell my servant David, thus saith the Lord, shall God build me a house for me to dwell in? For as I have not built any house since the time that I first brought up the children of Israel like Ephraim, even to this day that I have walked in a tabernacle, in a tent, in a tabernacle, in all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, since I have worded with any of you under the typhoon Idris and through my commandment to deceive my people as to your things, why is there a deity now that you cannot deceive her?" And I heard God was forgiving Nathan. He said, I never told you this. But wasn't there good thought in David's heart that he was going to build God a house? [00:31:04] Well, you know we have to be very careful with our thoughts of our own hearts, don't we? God didn't command us, that was all. God said the fact that I didn't tell you is because you really cannot. It isn't that God told him not to. But God didn't tell him to do it. And so, I want you to look here in the same

chapter, verse 11, the end of the verse, verse 11, also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee a house. You know, I think that would have been very humbling to David, wouldn't it? Well, I think it would have been very humbling to David, wouldn't it? David, you would like to do the building for me, but I'd like to tell you this. It's more important for you to realize what I'm going to do for you. I'm the builder. You don't need a credit for building a building. I wonder how much credit we really give God. [00:32:01] You know, it's perfectly all right to think about buildings in a certain sense, because we saw the other day. But you know, by far the most important thing is that God does the building. Now, you know, men like to build their houses for God.

And they say they build this place and that and all kinds of big, beautiful and old buildings, and they think of building them for God.

Well, I should have said if they're building them for God, it's a complete mistake. God says, Oh, no.

I'm the one to build the house. God builds the church. And that's the source of living for them. And that's the source of living for them. Not a good material. Well, now, what effect did this have on David? Did this make David rebellious and say, Oh, no, I think I can have my own mind in this? Well, I promise. I want you to look in verse 18 of the same chapter. Then went King David in and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? [00:33:01] And what is my house that thou hast brought me here to? And if we get a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God, that thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great fire to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee? For thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things to make thy servant know them. Therefore, thou art great, O Lord God.

For there is none like thee neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

Isn't that a grand confession? What does it make me to do? Does it make me do a lot of work right now? No. It makes David come in and sit quietly before the Lord and pour out his heart in worship and adoration. Now, if we likely recognize God's marvelous work, [00:34:01] that's the first thing it does to us.

Give God his praise. Now, just two points in this prayer of David. I'll get the script and the phrase.

In verse 19, he speaks of a great while to come.

Now, how long are our buildings going to last?

How long are all the denominational buildings going to last? As God speaks of his building for a great while to come.

And then also in verse 21, according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things.

There's a great while. Now, here there are great things.

Ascribe to God.

And last, in verse 22, therefore, thou art great.

Oh, Lord God.

Now, there's real work within me.

[00:35:01] What do you do for the heart?

If I see what God is doing, it makes me just quietly submit and just rejoice in the work of God and wait upon the hand of God. It's good to see God's work and to be thoroughly subject to God's work to rejoice in it and to take our place alongside of God and what he is doing. He's submission to us. Well, that's more important, isn't it? Than all the work we can ever do.

There's one thing about that work. When God builds his temple, not a part of it all, it will be his temple. Foundations, every stone of the remaining temple. And God doesn't decide after the temple.

He decides after he's built [00:36:01] so far up that he's got to take a stone down here further down, doesn't he? That never happens. Northside's saying if God's doing the work in a soul and saving that soul and then deciding that he made a mistake in the soul, he's going to be lost after all.

That couldn't be. And God works to lead a nation. As a young fellow said to me one season, he had just been converted. It so happened that the place where he was going he believed, in fact he believed strongly that a person could really be saved and then lost again. And it troubled him some and he said to me you know, most people believe that you can really be saved and then they're so lost again. He said somehow it seems to me that when God saved me he meant it.

What about you?

Did he say anything to save you?

No. [00:37:03] You know, the thought that you just brought up about knowing your faith.

Yeah, it was there but it's left.

He said about the God has chosen you. Well, you know, that's a thought right there. I mean, some people say well, then that's fine being lost but if God has you it's not in the state I mean, he's the one that lends his hand anyway. Yes, it's God who does the saving. In fact, when you realize this that we have the truth and that same liberty of Jesus that we were chosen in Christ to explore the foundation of the world could God make any mistake?

Not at all.

So it's wonderful to realize God's work.

He can't change. You mentioned about the Levites.

They said that [00:38:01] they were going to be the priests.

Well, they got they were chosen so that they could get their jobs and their work and throughout the tabernacle that was their work and as we speak in the lesson tonight it's caused us thoughts about each individual. We don't have there isn't a separate place for priests.

We're all priests. And since it's been made possible through that accomplished work on the cross of Calvary that we're all priests.