

What are we building and how can we build

August 1, 2010

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Last week we looked at what it meant to be a skilled master builder looking at 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 of which Paul writes.

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1 Corinthians 3:10-15

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw- each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

From this passage we saw that God had given Paul his grace and that in cooperation with God's grace he laid a foundation stone and others were building upon it.

This foundation stone was Jesus Christ the only foundation stone that can be laid for any spiritual work or endeavor that we find ourselves engaged in to have any real, significant and lasting impact.

We saw that it is important that first of all we build as individuals but also together. It is not just an **INDIVIDUAL** work but it is a **TOGETHER** work also.

We also saw that we need to build out of a place of security in Jesus knowing that the salvation he has given, is giving and will give us is all of him.

Salvation is both instantaneous as well as progressive. His progressive salvation saves us at three levels:

First - He saves us from the **guilt of sin** at the new birth known as **Justification**. A legal term to declare our slate has been wiped clean and will be kept clean for eternity - absolutely no record of any conviction committed ever - innocent and blameless in his sight.

Second - He saves us from the **power of sin** throughout our lives as believers, known as **Sanctification**. No longer held captive by sin to fulfill its desires, but the **FREEDOM** and the **POWER** to say NO, I won't and don't need to do wrong things or to even think them.

Third - And finally He saves us ultimately from the **presence of sin** in eternity with

Jesus known as **Glorification**.

When we are in that place of humility knowing that from first to last Jesus saves is saving and will save us, everything thing we build has the huge potential to be done for the right reasons with the right motives and for the only right purpose - to point back to the foundation stone and bring Jesus all the glory.

When we build in this way we build with materials that will not perish through the fire but will LAST.

We also saw that to build well like a skilled master builder we needed the following skills and abilities.

- ✓ Vision
- ✓ Knowledge
- ✓ Faithfulness
- ✓ Submission
- ✓ Patience and Flexibility

On Monday of this past week when thinking about the week ahead and what it is God wanted me to share this week, I felt that he wanted me to go back over these points from last week and drill down into some more detail.

But first, you may have seen that there was a young girl that visited us last week and she brought with her the following prophetic word for our church from Isaiah 9.

She actually was at the Hillsong conference the week before and met someone from Coastlands church in Adelaide and mentioned that NCMI had a relating church in Burwood.

As she was thinking about our church God gave her this scripture and she came up to me after the meeting and felt that it fitted in with what I had been talking about particularly in regard to us existing as a church to go beyond ourselves to reach the nations.

Isa 9:1-5

1 But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

3 You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

So, let's go a bit deeper and look at what we are building and how we can build together.

1. Vision

First of all to build well we need vision. Vision for our own lives and vision for how God is using our individual lives alongside of the work of those around us.

Our vision needs to be individual and collective. As we fulfil the individual call of God on our lives it will find its collective fulfilment both in our church and beyond.

Are you struggling for vision for your life as a believer?

Let me help you out. You will have no higher vision for your life than to be a lifelong disciple of Jesus Christ.

Learning from him, growing in your understanding of him, becoming more like him.

For us to have an impact here in Melbourne and out into the world we need to be a church that continues to grow and mature in our discipleship.

As we grow we need to be able to cater for that growth so that we help ourselves and those who God's brings to be all that we can be in him.

This Thursday night our deacons are getting together to plan how we can best do that as we set our sail for the next 5 years.

Some of the things we will be looking at will be how we can best lead and administrate things like: music, preparing the main room, overheads, multimedia, social media (Facebook, Twitter), website, welcoming team, sound, signs, espresso coffee area, tea & coffee room preparation, fellowship lunches, men, youth (The Edge), women, kids, Bible college, outreach, home groups, overseas ministry, community involvement, bookkeeping etc and the list can keep going on.

All of this provides a framework for us growing in our serving, each other the community and our own discipleship, but also creates a backdrop where visitors can come in among us and be well looked after and brought to faith.

To do all of these well requires servant hearted leadership and people with a heart to volunteer and build together.

We can often take things like these for granted and believe that they all just sort of magically happen, but the reality is that it takes prayer, work and persistence to build all these things.

I want to read an article I came across this week about a church highlights what our church would be like if we had none of them.

Crazy Risk? A weekend with no volunteers

By Tobin Perry

Imagine if your church had no volunteers next week. No one to park cars. No one to pass out bulletins. No one to display music lyrics on a screen for worship. Imagine that your staff has to do everything next weekend. Sound crazy?

Jimmie Davidson thought so. When the creative team of Highlands Fellowship in Abingdon, Va., started talking about the idea as part of a weekend focus on “Crazy Service.” Davidson, the church’s senior pastor, thought the idea sounded risky. They depended upon their volunteers to help make the service effective and well-run, the kind of worship service where people wanted to invite their friends.

But the Highlands team also knew that a weekend without volunteers was an ideal way to show the congregation just how much volunteers mattered to the running of the church.

Highlands has always been the kind of church that takes risks. So on Sunday morning Davidson and his staff gathered the volunteers for a thank-you breakfast. That’s when he told volunteers they wouldn’t be volunteering that day.

When people came into the worship services that weekend, they were struck by a completely different kind of Highlands experience. No one was there to hand out bulletins, help with parking, put the lyrics to the music on the screen, or greet people as they came in.

Just one person was up front leading worship - not the typical worship team and praise band. The staff handed out the song lyrics copied poorly on sheets of paper. And although Jimmy had told the church this would be a bad weekend to bring their friends, few people listened. There were many first-time guests. In time Davidson explained what was happening to the congregation and apologized to guests. People seemed to “get it.” During the service, 500 people committed to serve at Highlands.

Our vision is that we will be a church of servant hearted people who make our gatherings as comfortable for unbelievers as possible so that when they hear the sometimes *un-comfortable* truth they can at least enjoy a brilliantly made coffee and a vibrant atmosphere full of the life of God.

2. Knowledge

Secondly, in building well I believe we need knowledge. It is one thing to have vision but to build well we need knowledge.

As I said last week I certainly had vision for the wall that I needed Ian to build for us, but I didn't have the knowledge.

As I mentioned last week also to be able to get knowledge we must be taught but more importantly we must first be TEACHABLE.

Judgemental people are unteachable people.

Self proclaimed experts are also people who are unteachable.

Well connected people who brag about their connections are also people who are unteachable.

To build well with skill we must be teachable and willing to learn.

That teaching comes from our own personal Bible reading, from fellowship, from preaching and teaching, from mentoring and from allowing ourselves to be fathered.

1 Corinthians 4:15

For though you have countless guides (or teachers) in Christ you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

To be fathered in Christ is one of the most blessed gifts we can receive as a Christian but many of us don't experience this blessing either because there is no-one willing to father us or we refuse to be fathered.

Fathers push into a son/daughter's life offering advice but also they need to be asked for advice. To build well we need to see more of these relationships in the body of Christ.

3. Faithfulness

Following on from knowledge I believe faithfulness is another key to building well.

Without faithfulness in our commitments to Jesus, with each other and our church we have no hope in building well.

Are you a person who can be relied on?

Are you a person of your word?
Can you keep a confidence?
Can you tough out rocky relationships and work through difficult issues and seasons without giving up?

If you can then you are well on your way to being a skilled master builder.

4. **Submission**

A related characteristic to faithfulness is submission. To build well we must be a people who can be in submission. That is that we are not always wanting to get our own way, but are willing to lay down our own agendas to take up the vision of another. Often that vision is held by our leaders.

Heb13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to them for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account, let them do this with joy and not with groaning as that would be of no advantage to you.

How we submit to each other and those who lead us will be a vital key to how well we build together into the future.

As a leader, I can say that for each one here you have 100% of my heart. That is, I am for each of you even when we may not see eye to eye.

My question to you is do I have your hearts?

If we have any hope of building well together then I need that same level of commitment from you.

Can I ask you all a favour? Settle this matter in your heart today so that we can build well together and build quickly. Let's not waste each other's time by playing games and holding out on each other but rather let's get on with the job that Jesus has given us.

Derek Prince said that we often spend 90% of our time with those who give us 10% of their hearts and only 10% of our time with those who give us 100% of their hearts.

I for one am wanting to INVEST in those who have my heart. I can't build with those who don't or won't and neither can you.

5. **Patience & Flexibility**

And finally patience and flexibility are two characteristics that will allow us to build well and to build long into the future together.

Things are always going to change and no one likes change at the best of times, but being flexible will allow us to get through change with minimum distraction and build well.

Finally to build anything of worth and long standing value requires patience. Patience to see the work through. All too often we want things and we want them now, but I believe we need to be patient, very patient as we build together in God's kingdom.

How many people give up on a relationship, a venture, a strategy, a career, a broken marriage, a church when they were on the verge of breakthrough, if only they stuck with it.

Let's not be those people who give up just before we reach breakthrough.

In finishing off let's ALL become skilled master builders that leave something behind us of worth and significance. Let's leave for our children and their children's children a legacy of building well together over the long haul. Let's pray.