

Sermon Notes & References
Temple Under Construction
Ephesians 2:19-22
June 22, 2008

A. Introduction

- 1. what is it that changes believers?^A
- 2. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (NAS)
- 3. what underlies this text?

B. We Belong as Citizens^B 2:19a

- 1. citizenship with the saints is important to me because ...
- 2. citizenship responsibilities I have are ...
- 3. citizenship privileges I have are ...

C. We Belong as Family^C 2:19b

- 1. being part of a family gives me ...
- 2. being part of God's family gives me ...

D. We Belong as Temple Stones

- 1. the foundation stones^D 2:20a
 - a. what foundation was laid by the apostles and prophets?
 - b. what is the lesson for every church being founded ('planted')?
- 2. the Corner-Stone^E 2:20b
 - a. what are some of the purposes of the corner-stone?
 - b. how does Jesus fulfill these in me?
- 3. the living stones^F 2:21-22
 - a. what marks the pieces making up a complex building like Solomon's temple?
 - b. what does this illustrate as to my part in God's temple?
- 4. Conclusion^G - In response to these truths, my desire is to ...

^A Titus 3:5
^B 1 Samuel 8:7, Hebrews 1:14, Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 12:22-23
^C Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6, I John 3:1

^D 1 Corinthians 3:10-11
^E Matthew 16:16-18, 21:42; 1 Peter 2:4-5; Isaiah 28:16; Psalm 118:22
^F 2 Chronicles 2-7; 1 Peter 2:5;
^G Ephesians 5:25, Hebrews 12:1-2

—{1}. **Ephesians 2:19-22** **Temple Under Construction**

A. Introduction

1. We who are believers, Christians, are not what we once were
 - a. last week we spoke of 'God's Great Merger'
 - b. as God has in the cross of Christ taken two hostile parties
 - c. the Jew and the Gentile
 - d. and formed from them 'one new man,' 'one new humanity'
 - e. and this new body, the church, He has reconciled to God
 - f. so, then, in Christ, Jews are not what they once were
 - g. and also, in Christ, Gentiles are not what they once were
 - h. that is what the word 'new' means!
 - i. Titus 3:5 tells us that this is the Holy Spirit's work: 'He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit'
 - j. if because of this regeneration, this rebirth, this renewing, this new creation by the Holy Spirit
 - (A) we're not what we once were ...
 - (B) ... then what are we? ... then what is the church?
 - k. well, in our text today, Paul tells us that we are a temple under construction, a temple in which God is to dwell:
2. Text: ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
3. Underlying these words is the whole matter of belonging
 - a. when we were without Christ
 - (A) outside the covenant and the promises of God

- (B) without God and without hope
- (C) separated from God and from each other by sin
- (D) we just did not really belong
- b. we were strangers; living in a world of strangers
 - (A) apartment dwellers often do not know their next door neighbour
 - (B) this isn't limited to apartments; one couple relates this:
 - (1) After living in our house for four years, we were moving out of state. My husband had backed the truck up to our garage door so that we could start loading all of the boxes. Just then one of our neighbours came walking across the lawn carrying a plate full of muffins.
 - (2) "Isn't that thoughtful," my husband said to me. "They must have realized that we packed our kitchen stuff."
 - (3) The neighbour stuck out his hand and boomed, "Welcome to the neighbourhood!"—^{2}.
- c. we were aliens – foreigners – and as such were excluded by many barriers from both God, His people, and others
- d. but now, says Paul, we belong, showing this in three ways
 - (A) we belong as citizens
 - (B) we belong as family
 - (C) we belong as temple stones
- e. let us examine each of these briefly in that order

B. We Belong as Citizens 2:19a

- 1. 'Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people ...' (NIV)
 - a. citizenship – it's important
 - (A) ^Ait was important for Paul – in at least two instances he used his citizenship in the face of opposition
 - (B) we do not realize its value until we are in a foreign land – where we have no rights but live by sufferance under the terms of a passport and visa
 - (C) the people of Israel was established as the kingdom of God; God was their king – when Israel asked Samuel to give them a king like other nations, God comforted Samuel by saying: '... Listen

^A Acts 16:37, 21:39

to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.' (1 Samuel 8:7) – God was to be their King

(D) to be fellow-citizens with God's true people is to be part of the Kingdom of God – this is important

(E) We are together part of a new culture, a new race, a new nation, a new society. And every saint of God is part of this new kingdom. In Christ we are citizens in a new kingdom. In Christ we have a new allegiance. —^{3}.

(F) this allegiance from our new citizenship means that we have both responsibilities and privileges

b. citizenship has responsibilities

(A) the Sermon on the Mount is the manifesto of Jesus Christ of the Kingdom of God in which He lays out the attitudes and actions that are to mark its citizens

(B) the NT is filled with injunctions as to the duties of Christians, the responsibilities of citizenship

c. citizenship has privileges

(A) as citizens, we have the privilege of identity

(1) Jesus calls each of us, His sheep, by name

(2) our name is written in the Lamb's book of life

(3) we can sing that hymn of Austin Miles,

... there's a new name written down in glory,
and it's mine, O yes, it's mine!

With my sins forgiven,

I am bound for heaven,

Nevermore to roam. —^{4}.

(B) as citizens, we have the privilege of rights

(1) the right to eternal life, to enter heaven

(2) the right of access to the King – to pray, to praise

(C) as citizens, we have the privilege of security

(1) Paul in a time of danger, as a Roman citizen, could call on the Roman legion for protection

(2) as citizens of the Kingdom of God, we travel under the protection of its hosts, for Hebrews 1:14 tells us this concerning angels: 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?'

d. it is great to remember that we are citizens

- (A) it gives us something to anticipate: 'For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ' (Php. 3:20)
- (B) it gives us the promised possession: 'But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the righteous made perfect*' (He. 12:22-23)
- (C) citizenship in the Kingdom of God, its responsibilities, its privileges, means that we belong; but there is more

C. We Belong as Family 2:19b

- 1. 'Consequently, you are ... members of God's household' (NIV)
 - a. now citizenship is great
 - (A) it hands to us great and precious responsibilities
 - (B) it hands to us great and precious privileges
 - b. intimate association among citizens may only be incidental
 - c. but we do not just belong to the kingdom of God, great as that is, we also belong to the family of God
- 2. here we enter into the sphere of intimate relationships
 - a. that is a work of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of adoption by whom we are able to address God as 'Abba! Father' in the same fashion as Jesus Christ prayed. ^B
 - b. Someone defined home as the place where, when you show up, they have to let you in. So it should be with the family of God. It is God's redemptive community. We don't always agree, and sometimes members of that family get bent out of shape, or headed in the wrong direction, but we are still family. And if we are truly family, then we can touch each other on the deepest of levels, and meet the most pressing of needs. ^{5}.
- 3. being part of the family, assures us of being accepted, loved
 - a. See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such

^B Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6

we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1 Jn. 3:1)

b. Martin Luther said, 'Although I be oppressed with anguish and terror at every side, even though I seem to be utterly forsaken and cast away from God's presence, yet I am His child. He is my father for Christ's sake. I am beloved because of the Beloved.'^{6}.

c. so we are able to sing, heartily and happily, these words

I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God —

I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!

Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod —

For I'm part of the family, the family of God.^{-{7}}.

4. summing up verse 19, Charles Haddon Spurgeon says that being citizens of heaven and members of God's household means that ^{-{8}}.

a. we are under heaven's government. Christ the King of heaven reigns in our hearts; and we obey His decrees

b. we have the honours of heaven

(A) the glory which belongs to beatified saints {ie., at rest}

(B) the spotless robe of Jesus' righteousness

(C) the honours of citizenship

(D) {the rights of family members}

(1) having angels for our servitors

(2) having saints for our companions

(3) having Christ for our Bother

(4) having God for our Father

(5) having a crown of immortality for our reward

(E) so we have common rights to all its property; there is nothing in heaven that does not belong to us

(F) so we may fully enjoy all its delights

D. We Belong as Temple Stones

1. Now, at first sight, this may seem to be impersonal

- a. perhaps less impressive than being a full-fledged citizen
- b. perhaps less satisfying than being a family member
- c. yet from the idea of a household or family, Paul turns to the house itself and the building of this house taking place
- d. on account of the lessons it teaches, and the truth at its heart, this picture is every bit as fulfilling as what precedes
- e. in short, what we learn is that the Father has a specific place for every one of His children, a place for you, a place that you and you alone can fill, in building this house
- f. this house being built is a temple
 - (A) it's under construction at this very moment
 - (B) and like the construction of the temple by Solomon
 - (1) the materials are being fetched from near and far
 - (2) you cannot hear the sound of any hammers
 - (3) the stones are being silently shaped for their place
- g. Paul speaks here of three different courses of stones
 - (A) the foundation stones
 - (B) the corner-stone
 - (C) the living stones

2. the foundation stones 2:20a

- a. 'having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, ...'
- b. it is not the person of the apostles and NT prophets that form this foundation, but the teaching they proclaimed
- c. '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.' (1 Cor 3:10-11)
- d. Paul has just said that the church at Corinth was God's building, a building for which he laid the foundation
- e. the foundation was his proclaiming Jesus, the Christ
- f. a church that is planted or founded upon other teaching, upon man's ideas and not God's word will fail

and fall

g. so the true church consists of those whose faith is based on biblical truth, specifically that about Jesus who is the Truth

3. the corner-stone 2:20b

- a. *'... Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,'*
- b. the cornerstone was the most important part of a building, a massive stone, correct in its rectitude and setting
- c. by its position and shape it set the position and alignment of every other part of the building: foundation, walls, roof
- d. this temple's foundation was laid upon the Person of Christ
- e. so the true church is constructed of true believers, having lives aligned with Christ as Lord; these are

4. the living stones 2:21–22

- a. note how these begin: *'In him each separate piece of building, properly fitting into its neighbour, grows together into a temple consecrated to the Lord. You are, all part of this building in which God himself lives by his Spirit.'* (Phillips)
- b. we are getting very used to the idea of 'big box stores'
 - (A) there are many of these now in Aurora and Newmarket
 - (B) and that is how they are built – just a great, big box
- c. 2 Chronicles 2–7 relates the construction of the temple, revealing that it was not built simply as a big box
 - (A) it consisted of many parts being were put together
 - (B) the sanctuary and behind the veil the holy of holies
 - (C) at the front a porch, a building in its own right,
 - (D) upon the walls round about, three stories of rooms
 - (E) the storehouses
 - (F) all its furnishings of lamps, basins, altar and so on
 - (G) it was a complex rather than a simple structure, of diverse manufacture but forming a unified whole

d. that is how it is with this new temple of God

- (A) 'each separate piece of building', or lit., 'every building' must reside 'in Him' – and is being fitted together by the Master Architect, placing each stone where He will
- (B) 1 Peter 2:5: '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.' In this fashion, each Christian in the community of true believers within the visible, local church is being placed in just the right place by His hand, to His glory
- (C) every believer is being duly shaped and placed as part of this building, first as part of the local church and through that as part of that great communion of all saints of every age – in whom God dwells; His temple

E. Conclusion

1. It is God the Father's will and intention

- a. it is the purpose of Christ's death and resurrection
- b. it is the object of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence
- c. that those who are in Christ: believers, Christians
- d. be united in fellowship with the Father and the Son, members of His body, living stones in the building of His church; the Bride of Christ, who, we read, '... loved the church and gave himself up for her' (Eph. 5:25b)

2. May this, God's will for us in Christ, be accomplished by His dwelling in our lives as we each go out into our world this week

- a. let us heed the exhortation of the writer of Hebrews (12:1-2): 'Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.'
- b. and pray, in closing, that our eyes be fixed on our Lord

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