

# God's Building Project (Building Dedication Service)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 29 November 2020

Preacher: Matt Coburn

[ 0 : 00 ] It is good to be with you all this morning, both those of you who are here in person and those of us who are joining us on the live stream. Before we come to God's Word this morning, there's one more thank you that needs to be given.

Pastor Nick has spearheaded from a staff and elders point of view this process the whole time, and we just want to acknowledge him and Beth for the many late nights and extra meetings that it took for this project to happen.

And so we just want to give thanks especially to Pastor Nick for his leadership in the building. So let's... It's...

I've had the privilege of being around Trinity for long enough to know what it was like when we were moving out of the Humphrey Street building, that we were renting and looking for a spot and seeing God provide and seeing God continue to provide as we looked and prayed that the God would give us the right spaces in the right places to continue the ministry that he's called us to.

And it's taken a long time to get here, to address needs that we saw from the very start of moving into this building to actually get to this place. And it's exciting.

[ 1 : 16 ] But you know, buildings are not the point of the church as God defines it. They're useful tools. They're important markers for the presence of God's people in a community.

They can be wonderful aesthetic pointers to the beauty and grandeur of God. They serve an important role in providing a place for the church to function in a community.

And they have served as architectural centers for towns and cities and mark the spiritual presence here on earth in important ways. But as we turn to God's word this morning and we look at 1 Peter chapter 2, we're taking a break from our series in the Psalms to look at 1 Peter chapter 2 if you want to look there on your phone or in your Bible.

God is building something better than just a building. God is building something better than just edifices. And that's what we're going to see as we look at this passage this morning.

So we're going to read and I'm going to pray and then we'll look at this for just a few minutes this morning. 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 4 says this. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 48 ] For it stands in Scripture, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious. Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. So the honor is for you who believe, but to those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

They stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do. But you, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you have not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you for this word. Lord, we thank you for the gathering that we are able to do this morning to celebrate your faithfulness and goodness to us.

Lord, we pray that as you speak to us through your word this morning by your spirit, Lord, that you would give us receptive hearts and that we would be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for all that you have done and are doing and will do in and through your church for your glory.

[ 4 : 13 ] We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. God is building a better building. It's not a building made out of stones, but it's a building made out of people.

People who will last forever and a people that God has called to display his glory here on earth. What does God say about this building? This passage gives us three ideas.

This is a rich passage. We're not going to do deep exegesis of all of it, but simply three quick thoughts as we reflect on our thanksgiving for this morning.

What does God say about this building that he is building? The first thing is that you see in the very beginning of verse 4, he says, As you come to him, come to whom? Come to Jesus Christ, a living stone rejected by man, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious.

This is the one we come to. And then in verses 6 through 8, we see Peter unfolding from the Old Testament, who he is, quoting from Isaiah 28 and Psalm 118, to say, This is the cornerstone.

[ 5 : 23 ] Now, what is a cornerstone? We didn't lay a cornerstone next door. They used laser levels and some really cool technology to pour concrete instead. But in the old days, they would put in a cornerstone.

And what a cornerstone would be, the first stone that was laid that would set the frame of the building. It would make it plumb by being level.

It would create the right angles of the walls by its shape. And it would be heavy. It would be weighty, typically, so that it would not be moved easily.

And on this cornerstone, all the other building blocks, all the other stones that were added on top of it, found their place and their lines in order that they might build a solid building that would stand and withstand.

And Peter says, God has laid the cornerstone of his building in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, the one rejected by man as he came to earth, and yet chosen and precious to God.

[ 6 : 28 ] chosen as the one before the foundations of the earth that God would send to be the architect of his salvation and his plan.

Chosen because he is the son of God, precious and loved by the Father. Chosen to be the one through whom, as we see at the very end of verse 6, whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

Pastor Nick laid out earlier the truths of the gospel. Jesus' life, his death and his resurrection have done all that we need for our salvation so that we might be able to come to God and be a part of his building that he is building.

It is Jesus' work that is his salvation that builds this building. And not only is Jesus chosen for this purpose, but he is also precious.

He is precious in the sight of God. And he is precious in the sight of God's people. Because he is the one we are called to adore and to worship, to serve, and to cherish.

[ 7 : 37 ] He is the one precious because he has shed the ultimate price for us. He came and gave up his very own life.

He shed his own blood for us. And this is why he is precious to us. As he has come, as we enter into the first week of Advent and as we think about Christmas, we think this is the one who has come, this precious child who will be the Savior of the world and bring joy to all people.

And he didn't just die, but he rose from the dead so that he might be the first of many living stones. This cornerstone is the one on whom we, his church, stand.

And even if this building and the brand new one next door falls apart, which it probably will at some point, even if those crumble and fall, the church that God is building will stand.

That's why we're going to sing after the sermon the church's one foundation. The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. She is his new creation by water and the word.

[ 8 : 56 ] From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride. With his own blood he bought her and for her life he died. So God is laid for the church broadly and for the church individually.

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, the basis upon which he's building something. But he is building something on top of that. He is building people.

People made in his image. People called by his grace. People who have come to experience him. And so this is what we see in verse 5 as Peter outlays this.

You yourselves, he says, you, you the church, you who are following Christ, you are being built up as a spiritual house. And this is God's plan A.

The church is not about programs. It's not about policies. It's not about aesthetics. All of those things can be good and helpful parts of church life. But that's not the point.

[ 9 : 58 ] The point is people. People. And God wants to make a people. A people who are a royal priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices as Peter goes on in verse 5.

He's bringing up temple imagery. And remember what the temple was in the Old Testament. The temple was the meeting place of God where God manifested his presence on the earth.

The place where God and man could meet. The place where sacrifices were given so that unholy people could approach a holy God and actually know the God of this universe.

And this is what the temple represented in the Old Testament. And the amazing thing that Peter says is now in the New Testament with Jesus Christ this cornerstone the new building is not a place where you have to go in Jerusalem but the new building is the people of God scattered throughout the earth and this is the presence of God among his people.

And this is what he calls us to be. And not only that but he reminds us as you look down to verse 9 and he has these this list of titles almost of chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for his own possession.

[ 11 : 18 ] This is all language that comes from the other great story of the Old Testament that every believer would know the Exodus as God delivered his people the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and brought them through the Red Sea and to the to the brink of Mount Sinai he spoke these words to his people there out of all the peoples of the earth I have chosen you and I will be your God and you will be my people and you will be all of these things in this covenant relationship with me.

And now we know that Jesus worked a greater salvation for us and is building a greater people. The fulfillment of those promises in Exodus 19 are fulfilled in the church and the salvation that we have is greater it's not just from slavery in Egypt but it's from the slavery and bondage of sin and death.

And what God is calling his people to be is to be a distinct people a people who will be fully his in every way and this is what we get to participate this is why we gather and this is why we scatter every week as God's people so that we can be distinctively and fully his people in this world.

You see God is not impressed with buildings that stand empty and beautiful. He's looking for living stones people who will carry out his purposes in the world.

[ 12 : 58 ] Friends, we hope that this is what Trinity will always be about and I think I can speak for the elders to say we want you to hold us accountable if we ever get too caught up in buildings and programs and we forget about people remind us rebuke us call us back to what 1 Peter tells us God is building this building of people for his glory but even now Peter's not done he said God has laid a cornerstone of Jesus Christ and now he's building this edifice this building of people but this people now has a purpose this is what we see in verse 9 in the second half you are all these wonderful things so that that might be a clear translation that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light friends the living stones that God raises up have a story to tell each one of us in his church have a story to tell of how God has met us and how God has shown us the darkness of our own sin and the lostness that we have apart from him and he has brought us into his marvelous light the marvelous light of his son and we have this story to tell and this is what his purpose is for us in this world is to be a place where we now have a mission to broadcast the good news of what God has done in Jesus to all people we who have experiences deliverance are now to be a clarion bell ringing out resounding across the city of New Haven and the region of New Haven

County and the state of Connecticut and to the ends of the earth stones and boards and drywall cannot speak but living stones can and we must this is God's purpose and we pray that it might be true we pray that this pulpit every Sunday would proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ we pray that as we gather we would be strengthened and deepened in our experience and our richness and our appropriation of that and then as we get sent out to live our lives in schools and homes in workplaces and in leisure times in everything we do that the living stones might then be scattered and not only would the message be proclaimed here but it would be proclaimed as we as my seminary professor would call we would gossip the gospel have you heard about this have you heard the latest news Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again from the dead this is the most important thing you'll ever know better than

People magazine that we would be so captured by this that we would be gossiping it for others because we know that as God has called us on this mission he is building a building that one day

will have its completion and the vision that we see in Revelation chapter 5 where God gathers his people from every tongue and tribe and nation across the globe that he's going to gather people from every people group because he is the creator of all things deserves the worship of all of his creation and as he gathers this incredible collection of people the living stones they will worship him and glorify him and that's why he has us on this mission because that's where we're headed and that's where we're going we're on this mission so that God would be rightly worshipped by all of his creation we're on this mission so that more may know his saving power and grace we're on this mission so that God may be glorified and so that Jesus the cornerstone might also be lifted up as the capstone so that he might be seen in all of his glory and so as we come this morning to dedicate a building we remember that God is building a bigger building this physical space is not for our glory it's not so that we can have a bigger footprint in the city but it's that in this in the halls of this building the people of God may be built up that children and adults will be trained and equipped to know more deeply the grace of God in Jesus and sent out on the mission that God has called us to as his church this is our prayer and our hope that this building might be a place where the song of the gospel would be so deeply planted in our heart that it would burst forth in all that we do for his glory amen let's pray

Lord we thank you for calling us to this and we thank you for the amazing work that you have done in Jesus for us Lord we pray that as we continue to give thanks to you this morning Lord that our hearts would be full of gratitude for the work that you have done and are doing and Lord we pray that we would be fervent both in prayer and in service to continue the work that you are doing in this church and through this church for your glory we pray this in Jesus name amen