

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

Praise the Lord Church! Again I say, Praise the Lord! For the Lord is good and His mercy endureth forever. I thank God and this congregation for the opportunity to bring forth the word of God as He has laid it upon my heart. I thank God, because all thanks, all glory, all honor, and all praise be due unto Him. I thank the congregation because without you, there would be no reason for me to be standing here. Without your consent, I would not be the pastor of this church.

If we would all stand for the reading of the word. I have a rather lengthy passage to read, but with the Lord's help, I'll try to make it quick. If you would please turn with me to:

Haggai 1:1-11 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built. Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, *is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *lie* waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

You may be seated (Pause)

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

At this time I would like to ask you three questions about building the house of the Lord.

1. Are you building up the house of the Lord?
2. Are you tearing down the house of the Lord?
3. Or are you just letting the house of the Lord rot away before your eyes?

Praise the Lord Saints of God, whether you know it or not, you're doing one of these three things. If you aren't actively building the kingdom of God you're either tearing it down or just sitting idly by and watching it rot.

- Which one are you doing?
- Which plan of action rules your life?
- Are you planning to do something? Or
- Are you planning to do nothing?
- Are you planning to build or
- Are you planning to tear down?
- Are you laying a foundation, or
- Are you plowing it under, or
- Are you just sitting there and watching it happen all around you.

❖ Tearing Down

If you're planning to tear down the house of the Lord, I have a few words that you need to hear.

Acts 5:34-39 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

If you're in rebellion against the powers that be ordained of God you're in big trouble. Here's just a couple of the reasons why:

1. **You can't win.** Even though you may think you've won, really you've lost. No one fights God and wins. No one! You can fight, kick, scratch, struggle, bite, poke, cuss, or anything else you can think of, but you'll **never** beat God! You might even think you're God's gift to the church, but you're only dreaming if you think that you're a big shot and go against the man of God. There aren't any big shots in hell. Just lost souls burning forever....

- If you can't live under the Pastor at this church, or which ever one you may be a member of, you need to ask yourself why. If it's because you don't want anyone to tell you how to live. No man can Pastor you and you're going to wind up in hell. No ifs, ands, or buts about it! Submit to his leadership and he'll tell you how to get to heaven.

You may say that's hard Pastor Johnson. I don't mean to be hard, or mean spirited, but I have to tell you the truth. All of us need authority in our lives. You need it, I need it. There are men that I highly respect that I can go to for guidance. I can go to these men and know that they'll tell me truthfully if I'm messing things up.

No man is an Island, no man stands alone, no man falls alone. When a man falls away from the Lord he affects others. A pastor who falls affects the members of the church where he served. A saint, who falls away, affects the members of his household, and those he counts as friends, as well as his co-workers. You see, whether we know it or not, there are those who are watching us to see if we are real. There are those who are watching us, and following us as we follow Christ. When you fail to follow God, you can disillusion your family, friends, and those you work with who may have been looking to you for guidance as to what a Christian is supposed to be, and how one is supposed to live.

When you can't follow those in authority over your life, how can you lead someone? You will just lead them down the same path of rebellion that you're heading down.

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

- If there are doctrinal differences. You need to talk them over with the man of God and be **very** careful to listen to his point of view. If after that you don't agree with him on a matter you consider necessary for salvation. Find another church that believes like you do. Make it a point to call that Pastor before ever attending that church. Find out what they believe before you ever walk through the door.

That said, if it's not something that matters concerning salvation. It shouldn't bother you in the first place. We need to learn to quit looking for a reason to complain, or God may give us a real reason to whine. Praise God! I don't know about you, but I would much rather hear praise than complaints, I have no doubt that you feel the same way. I also have no doubts but what God feels the same way as well.

2. Because you've **given up your salvation**:

1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.

Now I know the world says to be a rebel. But if being a rebel means you're being a witch maybe we should look at what happens to witches.

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, **witchcraft**, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, **that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

Since witches don't inherit the kingdom of God. In my mind that means they go to hell. I don't want to be a rebel if it means I have to go to hell. We're supposed to support the ministry in our churches. If we can't support the man of God in our local church we need to find another church.

Don't fight your Pastor! Be his friend! Support him physically, spiritually, and verbally. Every man of God needs to know that he's appreciated! Don't worry about building up his ego too much. There's always someone around with an even bigger ego that will be more than happy to burst his bubble.

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

Notice this passage also talks about wrath, strife, and seditions. If you're stirring up strife in the church, you'll go to hell. If you're seeking to undermine the Pastor of the church you'll go to hell! No **ifs**, **ands**, or **buts** about it! If you can't support the Pastor, get out and find one you can support. But here's a few things you'd better think about before you do.

- Is your new Pastor going to love you like this one does?
- Is your new Pastor going to tell you the truth like this one does?
- Is your new Pastor going to be able to Pastor you or are you just going to be a pain in the neck to him too?

I tell you what you need to do. You need to hit this altar at the close of the service and repent. Oh that's tough talk Bro. Johnson! It may be, but as a book by Dr. James Dobson was titled a few years ago. "Love Must Be Tough". If I love you, I'll tell you the truth whether you like it or not. Any Pastor will do the same thing if he's worth his salt. I'm not trying to beat anybody up; I'm trying to open their eyes so they can receive all that God has for them in this life.

Do yourself a favor. Quit gripping about the preacher, or the youth leaders, or the song leaders, or anybody, or anything else. Start praying for those people until you love them beyond measure. Get the love of God in your heart until nothing matters but showing the love of Jesus to a lost and dying world. Leave the accusations to the devil. He has enough supporters outside the church. Don't be his agent in the church.

If you'll get on fire for God; and fast and pray. You'll be **amazed** at how quickly everybody straightens up. You'll be **amazed** at how quickly your Pastor's preaching gets annointed. And you what's truly amazing? There's probably nothing different about them, the real change was in you....

If you truly want to be a rebel, then be on fire for God. You're no longer a rebel if you're living for the devil instead of God. 95% of the world's population lives for the devil, and a large percentage of that number are doing it while attending church. They go to church, maybe even faithfully go to church, but their heart is not in it. They're just going through the motions, they want it done their way instead of God's way.

Those who are truly rebels are those that live for God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. They're rebels because they do it in spite of the persecution that comes from the majority of society these days. In case you

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

haven't noticed, it's not politically correct to actually believe the bible is true these days. It's not politically correct to allow God to affect your beliefs, to affect your lifestyle, for His word to rule the actions in your life. I don't know about you, I'd rather be biblically correct than politically correct any day!

❖ Rotting Away

Now I want to talk to those people who don't do anything bad, yet they don't do anything good either.

Revelation 3:15-16 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

If you aren't on fire **for** God, you may just end up **in** the fire. The lake of fire! There's no sitting on the fence folks. You have to choose which side you're on! You can be totally on fire and serve God, or you can try to act cool and serve the devil in hell. Because if you aren't on fire for God you'll be cooling your heels with the bad guy....and the last I heard, the lake of fire isn't any too cool!!!

Church, I have to tell you like it is. If the rapture isn't pre-tribulation some people are in serious trouble. They just go to church. They aren't on fire for God so when the trials and tribulations of the kind that's going to hit this world comes their way. They're going to cave in and deny Christ.

If you don't start praying now you won't start then. You'll fall by the wayside because you've dried up from the roots. When your livelihood's at stake, when your life is at stake, when your family's lives are at stake, you'll compromise.

You'd better be sold out, prayed up, filled up, and on fire for the living God or you're not going to make it. God himself said that he would spue you out of his mouth because you aren't on fire for him. Just like a cup of coffee, Hot is great, and some people like iced coffee, but nobody like a cup of lukewarm coffee. They take a sip and they want to spit it out, well at least that's what guys want to do.

Saints of God, you don't have a right to just sit back in church and drink in the goodness of God:

- and not work to save souls,

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

- or practice intercessory prayer,
- or visit the sick,
- or teach Sunday school,
- or any of all the other things that need to be done in the church.

If you just sit back and let the church rot away, whose fault is it if the church doesn't grow? Or if the church is dirty? Or if the singing stinks? Yours, that's who! If everybody will do their part to help out the church, there will be a lot less burnout among the ministry. Pastors by and large have to fight, and struggle, and convince, and plead just to get people to help out!

I heard a man describe his vision of success once. He said "Success is not a few people doing a lot. But success is a lot of people doing a little". If this is going to be a successful church, everyone needs to take a little pride in this church and pitch in to help it grow. If it just means that your part is to be the "Amen Corner" then do it! But if you'll give of yourself and your time to the church you'll be blessed of God for your labor.

Matthew 6:19-21 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

- Where's your treasure today?
- Where's your heart today?
- Where does your heart need to be today?
- Are you building the kingdom of God today?
- Will you build it tomorrow?
- How about the day after?
- Don't wait, start today, because tomorrow isn't promised. We only have today!

Praise the Lord Saints of God; serve the Lord with all your heart, serve Him with all your soul, serve Him with all your mind, serve Him with all your

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

strength! Serve Him with gladness, serve Him with joy, serve Him with all that's within you, bless his holy name!

God isn't just going to take from you and not return to you. He'll take those treasures that you've laid up for yourselves and multiply them to you in heaven **and** in earth.

Mark 10:28-30 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

There's nothing that you could give up for God that he won't return to you abundantly above all that you ever gave to him. Whether of time, or finances, or just the time you spent in prayer for a missionary. God knows what you've done for his kingdom, and He has a treasure laid up for you in heaven. He also blesses you here on earth as well.

Don't just sit back and let the church rot around you! Get with the program and get on fire for God! If you're too laid back to work for God you won't like heaven one bit!!!! When you do things for the kingdom of God, church just seems to get more exciting all the time. You look forward to going to church instead of just doing your duty. You'll want to invite friends to church instead of hiding your Christianity from them.

Now doing these things for God won't save you in and of themselves; but there is certainly ample biblical proof that we're supposed to do them:

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Too many people want to stop at verse nine and forget all about verse ten which says: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should **walk in them.**" God

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

wants us to do good works for his name's sake, and we above all others are the people of the name!!!! Too many people seem to have forgotten what James had to say about good works and it's relationship **to** faith:

James 2:17-18 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is **dead**, being **alone**. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

You say that you're faithful, but you aren't doing anything for the kingdom of God? Scripturally speaking, you have no faith until you actually **do** something for the kingdom of God!

❖ The Builders of the Kingdom

Now for those of you who truly want to do something for the kingdom of God. What's your plan? If you don't have a plan you aren't going to be very effective for the kingdom of God. You need to fast and pray for God to give you ideas on how to win souls. Then you need to put those ideas on paper and make plans on how to accomplish them.

Here are a few ideas on how to make your plans work. I'm not going to tell you what your plans should consist of, I'm just outlining a few ideas on how to implement them.

1. **Fast and pray until God gives you a hunger for souls.** Few if any souls will be won by someone until they have an overwhelming burden to win the lost. That burden is only going to come when you have a relationship with God that's tempered with fasting and prayer. Until you bring your body into subjection to God through fasting. Until you bring your spirit into subjection to God through prayer. Your plans will go nowhere! Only when you're truly submitted to God with your whole being will you be able to fulfill your plans to win souls.
2. **Get together with others who are like-minded about winning souls and make plans.** The scriptures teach us that in the multitude of counselors there is wisdom. Get ideas from others who want to win souls, make lists for everyone to take home with them, and have everybody pray about them. Have another meeting and have every body fill out a ballot with their vote for the

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

top three ideas to pursue. Concentrate on those three items that get the most votes first. Keep all the ideas, just concentrate on the top three first, then go on to the others.

3. **Keep your Pastor informed as to your plans.** He can help you to avoid some serious difficulties sometimes. But if for no other reason than because he's the Pastor, he needs to know what the saints of God in his church are doing to win souls. Believe me, he'll be praying for the success of your evangelistic endeavors! Because above all others, he wants this church to grow!
4. **Form a prayer chain.** It may not be 24 hours a day at first if you're few in numbers. But make the chain one right after another until you run out of people. If there are only four of you, you'll at least be bombarding heaven with prayer for four straight hours with your petitions for souls.
5. **Memorize salvation scriptures.** It may take some of you a little longer than other to memorize them, but do memorize them. Don't get discouraged, God will help you to do it. But please do it! It really helps when you're witnessing! **(If the musicians will please come at this time, I'm closing).**
6. **Ask God for boldness.** When we have an altar call in just a few moments. We all need to come down to this altar for one reason or another.
 - Some of us may need to ask God to forgive us of the spirit of rebellion against the Pastor.
 - Some of us may need to ask God to help us to get on fire for him. To feel the same zeal that we did when we first got saved.
 - The rest of us need to come down here and pray for boldness to win souls. Part of that boldness is coming down here and praying for others. If you can't pray for someone at the altar in church. How are you going to pray for someone on a street corner? You're only going to be as bold as the amount of Holy Ghost that you allow to work within you. If you aren't prayed up, the Holy Ghost can't do as much as He would like to do **in you, and through you.**

At this time I would like everyone to stand. **(Pause)** I would like every head to bow, and every eye to close. I want no one to be looking around. I need to ask you some very hard questions right now. **(Pause)**

Are You Building the House of the Lord?

- Are you building the church? Or
- Are you tearing it down?
- Are you building the church? Or
- Are you just letting it rot around you?
- Do you have any plans to build the church? Or
- Are you waiting for someone else to do all the work?

Now for the really tough questions:

1. **Are you in rebellion tonight?** If you are and you want to get right with God please raise your hand. **(Pause)** Trust me, God and your Pastor already know who you are, and no else should be looking unless they're in rebellion as well. Take this opportunity to come clean before God and man. **(Pause)** O.K. You can put them down.
2. **Are you lukewarm in your heart toward God and the kingdom of God?** If you are and you want to get right with God please raise your hand. **(Pause)** O.K. You can put them down.
3. **Are you lacking in boldness tonight and really want to do something for the kingdom of God?** **(Pause)** If you are and you want to get right with God please raise your hand. **(Pause)** O.K. You can put them down.

At this time I want everybody to come down to this altar. Either you need to pray or you need to be praying for someone who needs prayer.

Come on down saints of the most-high God! Let's give the devil a black eye tonight! He's tried his best to work you over all week. Let's give him the scare of his life as a whole church reaches toward God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Let's be of one mind and one accord as they were on the day of Pentecost. Let's let the Holy Ghost fall right now with a mighty rushing wind and cloven tongues as of fire just like it did on the day of Pentecost.

God's the same yesterday, today and forever, he never changes. If he did it then he can do it now!!! Let bombard the throne room of heaven tonight saints!!! God's wants to move in this congregation tonight, but only if we'll let Him!