

BUILDING GOD'S WAY

Building the New Testament Church

1 Corinthians 8-9

God has already begun work on a building project here at St. Andrew Baptist Church. We are joining Him in that project, and today is our commitment day.

To help us be faithful co-laborers with God, we have looked at three building projects described in Scripture where God invited His people to join Him in the work.

In the building of the Tabernacle we saw

- **How it was God who provided the resources needed by giving them to His people.**
- How God told His people to bring Him an offering out of those resources to provide what was needed for the construction.
- **How God said that the offerings were to come from those who had a willing heart.**

In the building of the Temple we saw

- **How God had King David appeal to God's people to join him in consecrating themselves to the Lord, which meant to willingly come before the Lord with hands full of what God had already given to them.**
- We saw how Jesus affirmed this kind of giving in His commendation of the widow's donation of two tiny copper coins because she gave 100% of what God had provided to her. She gave it all!

In the rebuilding of the Temple we saw

- God once again called upon His people to willingly give out of God's generous gifts to them.
- **When they became discouraged and paused the work, God sent a prophet to tell them, "You've taken care of rebuilding your own houses, now it is time to rebuild the House of the Lord."**
- **God said, "Overcome your discouragement with obedience! Get to work!"**

As the people of God, we can and should learn from each of these building projects in Scripture. What we have read is the Word of the Lord, and we should allow it to instruct our hearts.

But there is SOME difference between what God is doing in His building project at St. Andrew Baptist Church and what God did in the building of the Tabernacle or the Temple.

These days, the Lord is doing more than building buildings.

The Lord is building His Church!

Matthew 16:18 NKJV ... on this rock I will build My church ...

The Lord is building His Church! His church is not made of brick, sheetrock, and paint. The church of Jesus Christ is built out of people, each one a living stone.

1 Peter 2:5 NKJV you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

And **What God is building among us is far more than just a beautiful building.**

- Now, it will be A BEAUTIFUL BUILDING, and when people come in they will think, the folks that built this loved their Lord. They wanted to honor Christ.
- But it will be A FUNCTIONAL BUILDING.
 - First of all, rebuilding our Worship Center will let our students come back to their Student Center on Sunday mornings and have their own space for studying God's Word.
 - And it will give all of us, young and old alike, a better place to worship.
 - Much better for our Choir Led Worship – no wires on the floor to avoid, room for both choir and orchestra on the platform.
 - Much better for our Band Led Worship – not crowded on the platform, fully adjustable lighting.
 - New lighting, New sound
 - Much better for streaming the services for those who cannot come worship in person.
 - It will provide more and better space for Lifechange Groups.

- We thank the Lord for the space we have had since the hurricane, but we are crowded now. We need more small group space, and we will have it.
- Senior Adults will have space without stairs or ramps.
- Their moving into space in the same building as Worship will free up good class space for other adults.
- And we will have much better room for fellowship and community, not only much more than we have now, but much more than we had previously.
- We have enlarged the entrance areas, and new technology has allowed us to take out rooms that just had big HVAC equipment in them to make a wrap-around Commons area, that will have room to sit, visit, and gather, just spending a little more time with fellow members and guests as we come together on Sunday mornings.
- In the rebuilt Worship Center, we will have a most excellent place for worship, sharing the gospel, and teaching God's Word for the making of disciples. Long after the construction is complete, this will still be a place where Jesus is building His church.

And even as we are making our commitments as to what we will give as a partner with the Lord in rebuilding our Worship Center, **the Lord is building US, growing US.**

You see, a part of being a Christian is being a steward, a manager of all God has entrusted to our care.

1 Corinthians 4:1 NKJV Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and **stewards of the mysteries of God.**

So one of the ways the Lord grows us is in our stewardship, which includes our giving to the Lord and His work through the church.

Therefore, in his second letter to the church at Corinth, the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul speaks of the faithful stewardship of the churches in Macedonia as he challenges and encourages the growing of stewardship among the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 NKJV 1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

- **When we give, it is a testimony of the grace of God working in our lives.**

- One evidence of a growing Christian is in their growing giving.
- **Jesus said that where our treasures are reveals where our heart is.** A person whose heart is growing in the Lord, closer and closer to Christ, will demonstrate that by giving back more and more of what God entrusts to their care.
- The Macedonian churches were in a time of great affliction due to persecution when the offering Paul is talking about was taken. Yet **in the midst of great trial resulting in poverty, their growth in Christ caused them to give generously.**

2 Corinthians 8:3 NKJV For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing,

- **They not only gave according to their ability, proportionately, they gave beyond their ability,** which meant they were trusting God's future provision, not just what He had already given them.
- They gave generously during tough times, and they did so willingly!
- **Every example of God's co-laborers giving to God's building project centers upon His people giving willingly!**

2 Corinthians 8:4 NKJV imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

- **The Macedonians considered giving to the Lord and His work a privilege, not an obligation pressed upon them.**

2 Corinthians 8:5 NKJV And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

- **The Holy Spirit now identifies the secret for the growing stewardship among the growing Christians in Macedonia:**
 - **They surrendered themselves first to the Lord.**
 - **Then they did what the Lord wanted them to do.**

The Spirit through the apostle continues His instruction into the next chapter, offering us more insight on the way the Lord builds us as stewards.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 NKJV 6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

- We find David's full hands principle and Jesus' big basket teaching repeated by the Holy Spirit through Paul.
- He says, "The same way you sow is the way that you reap. Sow generously, you reap generously. So you choose what you want to do."
- I read the writing of another pastor who offered this example.

Suppose someone—someone completely infallible and utterly trustworthy—came to you with a surefire offer, saying, "We are starting a new company with contacts, contracts, and customers already in place. We need investors who will give one hundred dollars each, but they should know that this is the best investment in the history of business and commerce. We guarantee that those who invest a hundred dollars now will be multi-millionaires within a few months."

Suppose you knew that this was failsafe, that it was truly an opportunity of a lifetime. Would you vacillate and hesitate? Would you begrudge that one hundred dollars? No! You would say, "Here, take two and three hundred dollars! Let me see if I can come up with a thousand dollars. How much can I give? How much can I invest?" You would be a cheerful investor. God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:8 NKJV And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

- And here the Spirit of God says is the final result of what happens for a faithful steward of the Most High God.
- By His grace, by His unmerited favor upon His faithful steward, God makes His favor abound toward you, so that you have enough of everything.
 - Everything you need
 - Something to share or give to everything God wants you to support
 - So you have plenty to be able to share for every good work

God will do this for any believer who will choose to be a faithful steward. What is a faithful steward?

- One who recognizes that what he or she gives to the Lord, God has first given them. We just give out of the basket of God's gifts to us.
- One who brings his or her gifts to the Lord with full hands and an overflowing large basket.
- Who brings their gifts willingly, joyfully, laughing as they come; they are so very happy that God gives them the opportunity to give to His work again.
- Because they know, **THEY KNOW**, that as they sow bountifully, once again they will reap bountifully.
- They love being a part of this wonderful cycle.

CONCLUSION: So as the Holy Spirit says to the Corinthians,

2 Corinthians 9:7 NKJV So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Everyone gets to decide for themselves. No one telling you that you ought to give this or that except for God speaking to your heart. You listen to Him and decide. Just remember, God's Word is true.

2 Corinthians 9:6 NKJV But this I say: **He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.**

By the way, if you have already decided and turned in a commitment card and you want to change it, either up or down, or some other detail about it, just turn in another card and write a note on it saying that this replaces your previous commitment.

Cards are on the backs of the chairs in front of you. You can fill it out and drop it in the offering boxes at the exits.

Those of you who are online with us, just go back to the welcome page of our site at sabc.org.

Press the Building God's Way button.

Fill out the commitment card. If this is a new card replacing one you have done previously, just say so in the comment section.