

Study 12

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH BUILDING PROGRAMME

First Peter 2:4-8

When Christ was incarnate (in the flesh) on earth, He was involved in making things. He was a trained carpenter, a builder. When He spoke to His disciples about His dream for the Church, He spoke about it in building terms. He used words like foundation and good materials to illustrate this.

1. The Church is described as a building. But it contains unique features. Note these-

a) Foundation- (Matt. 16:18; 1Cor. 3:11)

b) Door- (Jn. 10:7, 9)

c) Wise building practices- (Matt. 7:24)

Driving down Burwood Road, near Ferntree Gully, one will see a Lutheran church with the sign out the front reading- *the place where the church meets*. A church is not made of bricks and mortar.

2. According to our text, what is the church made of?

CHRIST THE CORNERSTONE

The cornerstone of a building determined its direction and structural stability. It was the foundational stone of a building, just as important as the foundations itself. Christ described Himself as a Stone on several occasions (note- Matt. 21:42; Rom. 9:33). The implication was that He was the Cornerstone.

3. What difference will building upon *the Stone* make to a person's life?
(Matthew 7:24-25)
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Christ was the chosen plan of God to commence the rebuilding of mankind's relationship with God. Several times the Scriptures predicted that men would reject this "Cornerstone" (or "Capstone" NIV). As such, Christ gave a stern warning to those who were rejecting Him.

4. What was both Christ's plea, and warning found in Matthew 21:44?
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5. Christ was aware of His rejection by men. He gave some comforting words to His followers in Matthew 10:17-25. What were these words?
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A SPIRITUAL HOUSE

With Christ as the Foundation Stone, God is building a spiritual house with His people as the building stones. But these stones are not like other building stones.

5. What is the one outstanding characteristic of these building stones according to verse 5?
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This is no mere institution that Christ is building. It is living! It involves people. Therefore, it is unpredictable. There are no problems in Christ's Church- only challenges. And every challenge is caused by people. In order for Christ to build His Church with living stones, He has to do some preparatory work to each of His living stones. Rough edges need to be smoothed. Odd shapes need to be refigured. Sharp critical tongues need to be turned into sweet encouraging ones. Gifts once used for the Devil or self, are re-worked and re-directed into the service of Christ. Talents are maximised. Independence gives way to co-operation. Pride is put (beaten) to death. Mortar is put between each of the stones to bind them together. Each stone supports the structure and makes the other stones look good. Each member of the Body of Christ compliments the other.

A HOLY PRIESTHOOD

Every believer is a priest! Christ is our High Priest (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1)!

The Old Covenant's system of the Levitical priesthood ended at Golgotha. A priest was someone who stood between men and God. Now there is only one Person who has this honor: Jesus, our High Priest. We now have direct access to God because of Him. We are therefore- priests, holy priests. Some refer to this truth as the priesthood of all believers. It was one of the elementary points of the Reformation that every believer could access God without the need of a priest or ecclesiastical institution (such as the Roman Church). In First Peter 2:5, the Scriptures expose the extent of Christ's work on the cross. Not only are we saved, but we are now brought near to God (Eph. 2:13).

6. Consequently, how can we now approach God? (Hebrews 4:16)

Amen.