

Workin' on a Building

[2 Samuel 7:1-14](#), [Ephesians 2:11-22](#)

I have heard a number of statistics concerning stresses and strains on a marriage. Ironically, the number one stress on a marriage is not money issues, or working shifts, or children. The number one stress on a marriage is building a house. I don't know how many of you have had the pleasure of building a home, but apparently the constant need for decisions on all the various levels; from structure, to perk tests, to wallpaper, to literally the kitchen sink, can be extremely taxing on anyone. You also learn how important accurate communication can be. What we assume our contractor understands and what we expect may in fact be very different things.

I wanted to share a scene from a classic Cary Grant/Myrna Loy movie called, "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House". This particular scene shows an interesting conversation between

the Blandings' contractor and Mrs. Blandings concerning the paint colors for different areas of the house. [Show Movie] It seems there is a slight disparity in what Mrs. Blandings expects and what the contractor hears.

The scripture read for us from 2 Samuel is an interesting one. David appears to be sincere in his concern that the Ark of the Covenant does not have a nice home as David now does. Once David had established Jerusalem as the holy city, later to be known as the city of David, he builds a palace for himself and seems to feel a bit guilty that Almighty God, through the symbol of the Ark, still resided in a tent. On the surface this seems very noble and even fair. Even Nathan, David's advisor, agrees that he should continue with his building plans because God was with David. But David learns quickly that God would not be placed in human terms or contained by human standards.

God quickly establishes the correct order of things – God is in control. God is in charge. Yet God still remains with God's people – God continues to bless those that seek a relationship with their Maker. God appears to Nathan to instruct David that he would not be building a house for God. David is reminded that he came from humble roots. David was the youngest son of his family and a shepherd to boot – not a glamorous or dignified position. Yet God raised up David to be the ruler of Israel, and Israel prospered because David remained faithful to God. Enemies were overcome, and little, insignificant Israel became its own nation established in Jerusalem.

Maybe at times we too feel insignificant. It seems all too easy for us to look around and try to find how we even fit in among the large, thriving churches within a few miles' drive of Mount Tabor. But when each of us came together, we

welcomed the presence of God in our midst. God exists in each of us, and when we come together as a people of God, lives are changed, love is shared, and we become the small but thriving community of faith. We continue to press on into new territory.

I want to thank all of you who joined us last night for our covered dish supper and movie night. What a fantastic way to reach out to our community and welcome our neighbors in a friendly, unthreatening way. It is hard for many of us to understand that for some, the church is a forbidding place where only the holy are welcomed. What a gift it is to share genuine hospitality so that our neighbors will know we are not just worshipping God in name only – we are the people of God and we include them in our caring.

While David was concerned with a physical bricks and mortar building for God, God was concerned for the house of

David. God made a very prominent vow to David concerning his 'house'. God is not talking about bricks and mortar but of David's lineage – David's children and his children's children. Of the seed of David would come the Messiah. Joseph, a humble carpenter, had to return to the city of David to be taxed with his espoused wife because he was of the house and lineage of David. Jesus' earthly father was the result of this blessing God bestowed upon his servant David.

Our scripture from Ephesians addresses another interesting dilemma faced by the early church. There was a very distinct division drawn between Jews and non-Jews. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, noted the difference as the circumcised versus the uncircumcised. The church in Ephesus was largely made up of Gentiles, yet many rogue evangelists of the time tried to convince the Ephesians they needed to literally become adopted

Jews in order to inherit the kingdom of God. This created a great problem for those in the region who could not seem to get past this firmly inlaid division. I am sure many of us have felt similar divisions, particularly in our country where those of many different races, ethnicities, and creeds are all welcomed into the land of the free. Jesus effectively broke down the division between Jews and Gentiles. By accepting Jesus' teachings through faith, we are also a part of the kingdom of God. We are the children of God – heirs and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The strong message of unity came to earth through Jesus Christ our Savior, for all those who believe that only through Christ can we be given the gift of eternal life.

So what about this whole building thing? Should we assume that building anything with bricks and mortar for God is a bad thing? Hardly. I wonder about the driving force behind

the true pioneers that established this church in 1881. Sure, people could conduct devotionals in their own homes, yet there was something to be said about gathering together to worship God. We have numerous examples in the Bible, particularly as we read the book of Acts and the Epistle letters where we get a glimpse of the early church. There was great benefit in coming together and welcoming God in their midst.

We surround ourselves with symbols as ways to remind ourselves of God's presence with us and as ways to embody the blessings of God in our midst. As individuals yes, but more as a body of Christ when we come together in this place. Look around you. What special symbols do you see? There are many beautiful windows here with special inscriptions of the families that truly felt the blessings of God in their lives and their desire to share those blessings with others. Would they have even

imagined that 128 years later we would still be feeling and experiencing those blessings in our own lives within this generation of the Mount Tabor congregation?

If you were not sure when you came in here today I can tell you without a doubt that God is in this place, amen? God is in the midst of God's people. God has established this community of believers in this place at this time for a purpose. I promised a while back that I would have the vision and mission statements before you and they are included in this week's bulletin. Take a look at those now. Our purpose for being here is to help members of our community find a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (our mission statement).

We aren't slowing down. We aren't throwing in the towel. We aren't giving in to the barriers we encounter, whether they are a growing number of those who do not believe in God or

something as tangible as termites. If anything, we are picking up momentum. There is real peace in serving almighty God while experience the true joy of knowing we have a relationship with our Maker. We have the perfect example in Jesus Christ of how we are to extend our hand to the down-trodden, the outcasts of our society that may feel they do not fit in, or can't find the comfort and peace they so desperately seek. Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, the lowest of the low in that society. We may not have a huge sanctuary, but we have the warmth and love of God that cannot be matched by any worldly standard. The Lord liveth – blessed be the name of God. May God continue to strengthen and empower us as we maintain our focus of sharing God's love with our neighbors. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Amen.