

BUILDING THE CHURCH

Tuesday, April 16

Reading: Ephesians 2:19-22

Ephesians 2:19 *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the Chief Cornerstone.*

Paul uses three pictures to describe our status before God. First, we are **CITIZENS**. Citizens belong! They have rights. There are no second-class citizens in God's kingdom. All stand on equal spiritual footing before the Lord.

Second, we are **FAMILY**. God sees and treats us as He does His own Son. God sees believers through "blood-colored glasses" for He sees us through our relationship with Christ. We are "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17) and will receive all His blessings as sons and daughters of God.

Third, we are a **HOLY TEMPLE**. Believers are being joined together and built together into the house of God (see also 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Every believer is a building block in God's temple and we should all grow together and help each other to measure up to the image of Christ.

LESSON ONE: "Built on the Foundation." The Church is built on the teachings of the apostles and prophets whom God inspired to write the New Testament. But the most important and indispensable Stone in this foundation is Jesus Himself. The cornerstone had to be strong enough to hold everything that would be built on it. It had to be precisely laid because the entire building was lined up to it. The whole church is being "joined together" with Christ. He is the Guide to which every believer must measure their life. We do not gage our progress in the faith by looking at other believers. We measure our spiritual growth by how much closer we are to Jesus Christ. Are you standing on the firm foundation of Christ and His Word? What areas in your life might you need the Holy Spirit to work on to make you more like Christ?

LESSON TWO: "A Dwelling in Which God Lives." How often do you think about the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells within you? Wherever we go or whatever we do, He is with us! Whatever we say or whatever we think, He is there! This should have an impact on our daily lives. While the Spirit is present in the individual believer, He is also present in the Church as a whole. When we gather together to worship, He is there! How should this affect the way we worship together? In what ways does the Spirit build up the church? What part should you play in this building project?