

for the week of March 13, 2016: Brick by living brick…

*For we are… God's building… like living stones being built into a house.” (1 Corinthians 3:9; 1Peter 1.5)*

Followers of Jesus Christ do not go to church. Followers of Jesus Christ are the Church. God’s building is no longer the temple, cathedral, sanctuary, or any other structure. The Church is is a people called and set apart by God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God’s building is not a holy place; God’s building is a holy people…

However, God’s building is not complete, it is still under construction— but one day it will comprise all peoples, tribes, and tongues.

Remember, to the untrained eye, most buildings under construction look like a terrible mess until the last stage is reached. The same is true with the Church. The dust and dirt, chaos and confusion, may make it hard to believe that this could really be the temple of God. Yet, if we have faith and patience, we will see that the Architect and Builder is hard at work, and knows very well what He is doing— He is building us into “God’s building.” The apostle Peter observed, "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house.” This has two immediate consequences for every follower of Jesus Christ,

First, the Church is made up of "living stones” not cold, inanimate ones. The building God is constructing is alive to Christ and responsive to its call. It is not ostentatious nor pretentious. It is not constructed for the privileged few or other "bricks” just like us. The bricks are not fixed or inflexible. The building of the Lord is a multipurpose structure designed to be living reference point for the arrival of God’s kingdom. While this analogy may be an archictectual impossibility it reflects God’s design for His Church today. He is building one Church— united, interdependent, and alive— whose impact upon the world shall be contingent upon the stones’ willingness to be built together by the Lord into the house of His choosing.

Second, individual Christians are not the "building,” we are the brick! Individual followers of Jesus Christ may not echo the proclamation of Henry David Thoreau, “I am my own church.” Time and again Scripture exhorts us "not to neglect meeting together, as is the habit of some…” (Hebrews 10.25) Nothing guts the momentum of a Christian fellowship faster then sporadic participation and attendance. How will the bricks be built together if they remain scattered and distant? Scripture is very clear: God expects our faith to be lived out in community. He intends us to be contributors not merely consumers— to do otherwise is to deprive and weaken God’s house.   He desires us to a vital part of something that is much greater than we can ever imagine or implement alone.

The foundation and cornerstone of God’s house is Jesus Christ. His personal oversight insures that the house will be radiant, responsive, and resilient. It is His life which sustains the whole and gives shape to what is built. "In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.” (Ephesians 2:21) Does your commitment to Jesus Christ reflect His high priority and design for the Church? Does your lifestyle reflect a priority for worship and participation in your local congrega­tion? Called Ones, I beseech you to not deprive the Church of the gifts God has given you… it is to this subject— the Church and the gifts that we will reflect upon this week.

Enjoy your LifeGroup!

Mark

Getting to know one another better…

What are your favorite parts of your body and why?

 reflecting on 1Corinthians 12.1-31

First, recall a time when you stubbed your toe. How did the injury affect your entire body?

**READ 1Corinthians 12.1-31.**

Paul does not want the community in Corinth to be uninformed concerning spiritual gifts. However he cannot discuss spiritual gifts without discussing the gathering of Christians as the “body of Christ”. Make two lists as you observe what Paul is teaching:

1. List out Paul's teaching points about spiritual gifts.
2. List out Paul's teaching points on the "body of Christ."
3. Based on your observations above, what negative things do you imagine had been happening among the believers, that Paul had decided to write this message to them?
4. How is the local church like a human body, according to Paul?
5. Based on this passage, what is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
6. Spiritual gifts are given by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit working in and through us. Human skills/talents/abilities are given by God but can be developed and used by anyone for any purpose, regardless of whether the person is a follower of Jesus. How do you think spiritual gifts and human abilities are related? Not related?
7. Based on Paul's writing, what do you think is the relationship among God’s gifts, the individual, and the whole community?
8. What do you think is the impact on a Christian community and ministry when spiritual gifts are overlooked or undervalued?
9. When have you experienced God working through the spiritual gifts of fellow Christians? What was that experience like?
10. Do you know what your gifts might be? If not, how can you discover your spiritual gifts? If so, how have you been using your gifts for the good of the community of believers?
11. Are there some gifts in Paul’s list that are undesirable for you? That frighten you? That you wish you had but don't? Why?
12. What is one way you can use your gifts to bless others this next week?
13. How can your LifeGroup be more intentional about valuing spiritual gifts?

 My prayer requests (think of what you want to share in advance)

Praying for my group…



**Children’s Ministry Palm Sunday Annual Pancake Breakfast Mar 20**

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Children will gather in the lobby before service, to be a part of our Palm Procession on Palm Sunday -

Following opening worship, the children will be dismissed downstairs for our CM Pancake Breakfast at the picnic tables.

**Easter Sunday Celebrations:**

**6am** Sunrise Service/Pancake Breakfast on the playground.

**10am** Easter Celebration in the Worship Center.

**Easter Egg Hunt**

You are the perfect person to host our community at our annual Easter Egg Hunt! Fun, energetic, helpful & inviting people, like you, are what is needed in making this year’s egg hunt the best one yet.  To sign up to host our community, visit faithsandiego.org/eggcited.

**Welcome to Faith Reception April 10, 11:30am -12:00pm Children’s Center**

Our Welcome Reception is the perfect opportunity for you to meet our leaders, ask questions, and meet others.

Highlighting…

*March 20 - Children’s Ministry Palm Sunday
Pancake Breakfast* following opening worship at the picnic tables

*March 20 - Third Sunday Night of Prayer*6:30 - 8:00 PM in the Worship Center

*March 25 - Good Friday Service*

7 PM Worship Center

*March 26 - Community Easter Egg Hunt*

11:00am - 2pm @ Cabrillo Heights Park

*March 27 - Sunrise Service/Pancake Breakfast*6 AM on the playground unless it rains!

*March 27 - Easter Worship 10:00 AM*