

# God's Masterpiece (Real Church – part 7)

## Our Vision Statement:

*To be a vibrant, healthy community of Christ followers, growing and reproducing ourselves to accomplish God's plan for the Church.*

## Mission Statement:

*Building God's house and fulfilling His Commission*

## Opening Text: 1 Peter 2:4-5

I would like to share three thoughts from this passage:

### 1. The church is being built up

*5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house*

God is at work. He is doing something. Jesus said,

**John 5:17** - *'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.'*

God's been working on His masterpiece: the church!

**Ephesians 2:10<sup>a</sup> NLT** – *"For we are God's masterpiece"...*

- a) When Jesus said on the cross, *"it is finished"* indeed the work of salvation was finished: salvation, forgiveness of sins, the atonement, healing, peace, deliverance, redemption from the curse of the law, all that was finished.

However, the Church is Christ's 'unfinished work'. Beethoven has an unfinished symphony, Matisse the famous French painter, left an unfinished painting. The Church is Jesus' unfinished work. Beethoven will never finish his symphony and Matisse His painting, but Jesus will finish what He started – He is the Author and Finisher of our faith.

- b) The church in an *ongoing* work – *"we are being built up into a spiritual house"*. We are a work in progress. If you look around and see imperfection it is only because God is not through with us. However, when He comes, we will be the church *'glorious, without spot or wrinkle'* that Ephesians 5:27 talks about.

**1 John 3:2** – *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

### 2. We are called "living stones"

The Church, God's spiritual house, is made up of living stones **fitted together**, united and built according to the blueprint of our Divine architect.

We are called 'living stones':

- a) **He didn't say bricks** (bricks do not have the durability of stones. God's building will last forever, right into eternity).

Revelation 21:19-21 describes that building and it is made up of precious stones: Jasper, sapphire, emerald, beryl, and pure gold! That is you and me – precious and valuable in the sight of God and angels.

- b) **He didn't say 'plaster board'** either.

A "plaster board church" will not last the distance. *Plasterboard Christianity* will not stand in the evil day, it will not pass the test. It may look like the real thing but lacks substance and toughness. God said 'stones' – that is the real deal, that is real church!

- c) **He called us to be living stones... not fossils**

A fossil carries the image of what used to be but isn't anymore. Fossils carry the image of something that was once alive but now is dead. The real church is alive! We have to watch that we never fossilise.

Jesus said to Sardis: "*you have a name that you are alive but you are dead*" – **Revelation 3:2**

People who lost their hunger for God, their passion, their spiritual vitality probably fit this category. We need to stay fresh, on fire, hungry, enthused, full of faith, zeal and passion! May God help us never to have a fossilised heart.

**Ezekiel 36:26** – *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

A stony heart is one that may look like a real heart but has stopped beating, it is hardened to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and has become desensitized.

### **3. God is still adding living stones to His building**

A few years ago, I felt as if the Lord was saying to my heart:

*"I have got many stones that belong in this wall that I am building. I have many that are yet to come and be part of this church. There are many stones that lie now in rubbish heaps but they will be brought to life and I will complete my work. Look for them. Pick them up. They may look lifeless and burnt but I will make them living stones in My house"*

Immediately the scripture in Nehemiah 4:2 came to mind:

**Nehemiah 4:2** - *2 And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? **Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?**"*

That is precisely what God does: he revives dead stones and turns them into His living stones. There will be a revival of stones! – stones that are now broken, burnt, lifeless among heaps of rubbish and ashes will become living stones in the house of God!

As the Real Church, God is calling us to look for them, to pick them up! He is still a God Who raises the dead, who can bring dead things to life. Those stones can be revived. God can bring them beauty out their ashes.

### **Conclusion**

- a) God's working on His masterpiece: His church. We are being built up.
- b) The Real Church is made up of living stones – alive unto God!
- c) The Real Church has a role to play in the completion of God's masterpiece. We need to gather the broken, the wounded, the sick and bring them in. We are privileged to be called alongside God to finish His work.

This is the vision of the church. This is our mission, to build the church and fulfill the great commission!