

## Building and Bridging

January 21, 2018

I believe that there are five major building blocks in life, arenas of life where God is always working in His people. Over the last two weeks we've studied the first three: Broken, Beloved, and Belonging. This week we look at Building and Bridging.

### **DAY 1: BUILDING vs. the quick fix, chasing fantasies, etc.**

1. We live in a generation that wants the "quick fix." Too often, we are like the first two pigs in the fable, The Three Little Pigs. The first two pigs put up their houses quickly, using straw and sticks, respectively. The third little pig made his house of bricks. You know the rest of the story.

2. My mother told me, "Seth, Rome wasn't built in a day." I needed to learn perseverance!

*Proverbs 13:11 Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.*

*Proverbs 12:11 He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.*

3. What strikes you from these two verses from Proverbs?

4. Jesus also instructed our eyes to take seriously the "little things." If we did, the big things would take care of themselves.

*Luke 16:10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.*

*<sup>11</sup> So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?*

*<sup>12</sup> And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?*

5. Jesus gives us three examples of the need to be faithful with something less than spectacular. What are the three examples? (one example in each verse).

6. Do you tend to look for the quick fix, or the quick solution? In what arena of life?

7. In the Luke verses, is there an area that needs your attention?

## DAY 2: BUILDING Christlikeness

1. Once we come to Christ in repentance and faith, broken yet beloved, and Belonging to God and His church, God sets out to build Christ-like character in us. The process will span our lifetime, and will not be completed until heaven.

2. In the following verses, Christ-like character is illustrated as “fruit” by Jesus. Underline the words and phrases that have to do with us bearing the fruit of Christlikeness in our lives.

*John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

*<sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.*

*<sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.*

*<sup>8</sup> This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

*<sup>9</sup> "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.*

*<sup>10</sup> If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.*

*<sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*

3. What stood out to you from this passage?

4. Jesus uses the analogy of a vine and branches. If a branch is lopped off a vine, it will obviously not bear fruit. Jesus says if we “remain” (or “abide”) in Him, we will bear fruit. How does the analogy of a vine and a branch illustrate the fruit-bearing process?

5. Jesus also says this does not happen without obedience.

*Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

*<sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

*<sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*

6. What do these verses say about how we develop fruit?

### DAY 3: BUILDING relationships; offering tastes of grace

1. We talk about “love at first sight,” and just assume that relationships just happen, unless, of course we have to relate to someone who is a “moron.” 😊

2. But the world of relationships has this inescapable truth. Every long term relationship is a bi-product of intentionality, sacrifice, humility, care and many other traits. In other words ...

Relationships are built, not just “made.”

3. While the world primarily thinks of “love” as loving feelings, eventually, every love relationship will need intentionality and actions.

*1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

<sup>5</sup> *It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

<sup>6</sup> *Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

<sup>7</sup> *It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

4. I think of this kind of love as “building love.”

5. Which of these traits comes easier for you?

6. Which of these traits is harder for you?

7. The standard for “love” is not feelings. The standard for which we aim is to love like God loves us!

*John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

8. This begs the question: just how did God love us?

*Romans 5:8 But God demonstrated His love for us in this way: that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

9. What strikes you the most from today’s verses?

## DAY 4: Bridging—living for others' good

1. We, as Christians do not just exist for ourselves and our own interests. Christ calls us to make a difference in the world.

*Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."*

2. Salt was used as a preservative and to make foods more flavorful. What comes to your mind about what it would mean to be salt with some of the people in your life?

*Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.*

*<sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

3. Jesus uses the analogy of light as another metaphor in how we can make a difference with people.

a. What are some of the benefits of light in the physical world?

b. What makes up our light? (verse 16)

c. However our good deeds may look, they have a purpose beyond making ourselves look good. What does Jesus hope will happen as a result of our good deeds?

*Galatians 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

*<sup>10</sup> Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

4. When we set out to be salt and light, we often find that the world is not that responsive to what we've done. It's easy to get discouraged and give up. What promise does Paul want us to remember? (verse 9)

5. God will give you "opportunities" to do good to all people. Why do you think Paul encourages us to not neglect our Christian brothers and sisters? (verse 10)

## **DAY 5: Bridging—living for others' eternal good**

1. Again, we do not live primarily for ourselves or our own interests.

*Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

2. What does Jesus call us to do?

3. What is the scope or parameters of this commission? (verse 19)

*Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

4. A courtroom witness is expected to tell only what he has seen and knows. The same is true, here. To “witness” of Christ is to simply tell your story of coming to Christ. Your story has three pieces:

a. Your life before you came to faith in Christ.

b. How you came to Christ. What led you to Christ? How did you become a Christian?

c. Your story since Christ came into your life. What changes have you seen Him work in you?

5. Jot down your first thoughts in each of the three pieces of your spiritual story.

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?