

Talking Points “Continuing to Build On A Firm Foundation” by Pastor Anita 11-15-20
1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 4:1-7 & 11-17; James 4:1-12; **1 Corinthians 3:5-23**

Mt Paran finds itself marking a milestone.

During this season of Thanksgiving, we are thankful to God for 305 years of continuous ministry.

Just last week we have celebrated what God did through the 21 years of ministry of Ed and Lady Terry.

And they have been amazing years.

And as we celebrate their much earned and well deserved retirement, the question that hangs in the air is “what’s next?”

That is the question that we inquire of the Lord in the midst of change.

Whether it’s a change in leadership, or like the entire world is experiencing now a change to it’s normal routines because of Covit.

Whenever there is a change human beings want to know “what’s next”

And God leads us this morning, to 1 Corinthians 3:5-23, where our scripture this morning in verse 10 -12 speak not about what’s next but about what is.

1 Corinthians 3:10-11 says “...I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Paul here refers to himself as a “skilled master builder”. And the Greek word that the NRSV translates “skilled” really points to “wise” or “wisdom”.

Paul doesn’t indulge in the personalities of the builders.

In fact in verse 5 Paul asks “What after all is Apollos, and what is Paul?”

Essentially, they’re just servants assigned a divine task.

Work for the kingdom is ultimately all about the foundation.

And here Paul holds up a mirror for us, to us.

The foundation the church is built upon is Jesus Christ.

And since we are all members of one body we should be able to look and see the reflection of a body of believers.

The one who plants, the one who waters do not outweigh the God who causes things to grow.

We all have a part to play in the building of God’s church.

As we are all a part of the ministry of Mt Paran we are only as strong as our foundation.

But our foundation is Jesus Christ.

We belong to Christ.

And this ministry is His.

Paul refers to himself as “the master builder”, but he’s keenly aware that Christ is the foundation and really, we all function as followers of Christ to be the willing tools to be used by God to continue building His Church.

And Paul’s question to the Corinthians in a variety of ways is “Church, how will you continue to build?”

Will you build wisely?

And here Paul is clear, that what the world may think of as wise. Is really not real wisdom.

Real wisdom Paul tells the Corinthians is found only in following God.

Real wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight.(vs. 19)

The message of the cross is foolishness to the world”

Yet that is the prevailing message of the church is the message of the cross.

The cross that Christ suffered and died upon, it the very place Christ bought our pardon.

Our salvation is through Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone.

We can’t earn salvation. We can’t buy salvation. It’s offered as a free gift from Jesus Christ, and all we can do is accept it.

Yet the message of the cross seems foolish to the world, but it stands as the place of invitation for us to become a part of the Body of Christ, His church.

Paul tells the church, wise builders build on a foundation that is strong, sturdy, unyielding and if you build wisely, then you are continuing to build with Christ.

You’re laying bricks upon a firm foundation.

Paul’s question to us now is “How will you continue to build?”

Our James chapter reminds us that we have to reflect lives that are built on Jesus. James says we should

- Submit ourselves to God.
- Resist the devil
- Come near to God and he will come near to you
- Humble yourselves before the Lord and trust that God will lift us up.

James says that our actions of how we treat one another should reflect the actions of one who belongs to Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12 that we are just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. (vs. 12) Even so the body is not made up of one part but many (vs 14)

The body is diverse and each part is necessary.

Paul reminds us that we are all called to actively participate in ministry.

If we are to continue to build as wise builders upon the foundation laid for us by Christ we have to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit that rest within each of us.

If we are to continue to build as wise builders we must remember that we all share the same God, the same water of baptism, the same Spirit, and we are thus all equally part of the same body.

The church is intended to be a foretaste of the final reconciliation of all things that God promises.

Our scriptures this morning remind us that we must act that way.

We must minister like the disciples of Christ that we are called to be.

We must study God's word because we simply can't tell what we don't know.

Ephesians asks that we make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

As a church we have the humble task of collectively "living a life worthy of the calling we have received"

Many years ago in our 300 year history Mt Paran created a mission statement based on how we saw ourselves in light of the calling we received from God.

As we are looking at our foundation and asking God how to continue God's build, it's a great time to be reminded of our Mission Statement

We the people of Mt. Paran Presbyterian Church seek to be centered in and proclaim the word of God as revealed to us through His Son Jesus Christ. We faithfully strive to follow the Scripture and to be true to the historic principles of our reformed traditions.

This mission statement should excite us! Why?

It's all about Jesus. It leaves no one out "We the people of Mt Paran" includes the entire Mt Paran Church family.

It reminds us that we are all called participate in God's ministry

To minister while being centered in and proclaiming the word of God.

In there is the commitment to "faithfully strive to follow the Scripture".

We are being called to continue building upon a wondrous foundation, laid for us at the beginning of the world by none other than Jesus Christ Himself!

This moment in time I believe is a crucial moment. The world seems so dark in so many places.

But we have been called not to dwell on the darkness but to take the light of the world, Jesus Christ, and allow Him to shine through us so that others may experience the joy of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

I am honored to be called to be your pastor into this chapter of Mt Paran's history.

I don't know exactly how God is writing this next chapter in our collective being as a church family, but I can say for certain that we are to build upon the solid rock that is Jesus Christ.

I may not know what the future holds, but I know God holds our future.

Paul's essentially asks a pertinent question to us now "How will you continue to build?"

How will you build upon the foundation in your own life?

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In your church?

In your family?

Together we will build however God directs.

That has been Mt Paran's strength through all its 305 years. It will be our strength going forward until the Lord returns.

I am so looking forward to the amazing things God is calling for us to do as His servants together.

Amen.

CHALLENGE

Our Challenge today is a reminder that we must seek God first in all we say and do. We must be proactive about building upon the foundation Jesus Christ laid out for us.

We have to reflect lives that are built on Jesus.

- Submit ourselves to God.
- Resist the devil
- Come near to God and he will come near to you
- Humble yourselves before the Lord and trust that God will lift us up.

Build as wise builders.

Amen

BENEDICTION

Our Benediction this morning comes from
2nd Thessalonians 3:16

“Now may the Lord of Peace himself
give you peace at all times and in every way,
the Lord be with all of you.”

AMEN.

Friends, go in peace
knowing you are God’s beloved child.

If you found today’s worship service helpful to you please send us an e-mail at:
yourmtparan@gmail.com

We would LOVE to hear from you!

Announcements

1) Giving Thanks Unto God for the Ministry of Pastor Ed And Miss Lady

Pastor Ed and Miss Lady announced their retirement, effective November 14th 2020.

We are producing a very special video thanking God for the ministry of Pastor Ed and Miss Lady for next Sunday 11/22 that you and your family can participate in. Each of you are encouraged to make a video greeting for them. The video should be no more than 2 minutes just telling them how much you love and appreciate and all that they mean to you. Please send this completed video to Pastor Anita on WhatsApp **no later than Monday November 16th**. All the videos will be compiled and shown as part of our Annual **Thanksgiving Worship Service on November 22nd**. The entire worship service will be posted by 10am on November 22nd and this tribute video will be available to download if you wish to keep a copy for yourself. It will be posted on our Website, FaceBook, YouTube, and Vimeo pages by 10am on November 22nd.

Session and your pastors ask that you please keep

Ed and Lady in prayers as they enter this new and wonderful phase of life God is preparing for them.

God bless you all!!! Here's a reminder of the dates:

November 16th deadline to get your two minute videos sharing your thoughts, praise and well wishes for the retirees.

November 22nd broadcast of our Annual Thanksgiving Worship Service with our home videos to Pastor Ed & Miss Lady.

Next Drive-Thru Communion:

December 6th 12noon – 1pm

Church parking lot located at

10308 Liberty Road Randallstown 21133

Mail and Electronic Tithes and offerings:

BY MAIL: Mt Paran Presbyterian Church

P. O. Box 415

Randallstown MD 21133

BY ELECTRONIC GIVING: Electronic Offering

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Select *YourMtParan@gmail.com* when prompted