



bits from bob....

Do you hear Him? God is calling you to build in 2021!

January 4, 2021

Haggai urged the Jews who had returned from exile to get about the task of rebuilding the temple: "Give careful thought to your ways! You have planted much but harvested little.

You eat but you never get full. You put on clothes but are not warm. You earn wages only to put them in a purse with holes in it." (1:5-7) Less than a century later, the physical wall of Jerusalem was built in record time because the people had a mind to work (Neh. 4:6).

In the New Testament, Christians are called to build spiritual structures. Paul describes Christians as "fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him, the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22). Peter's description is similar: "...you also like living stones are being building into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood.... offering spiritual sacrifices...declaring his excellencies" (1 Pet. 2:5a). In 1 Cor. 3, Paul's instructions to Christians to build can apply to evangelism. Then he describes the church at Corinth collectively as a building or temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16). He also describes individual Christians as God's temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Haggai – it is easy to neglect our responsibility to build.

Nehemiah – we will not build unless it becomes a priority

New Testament – God expects his people to build and be built up.

What will you build in 2021 for God?

Build your own spiritual life. How will you build up your spiritual life? How easily we let physical concerns take precedence over spiritual realities! How easily we become weary. Malachi's words describe the experience of many today: "And you say, 'What a burden!' and you contemptuously slight the Lord" (1:13). When a Christian becomes busy with life and success and maintaining a standard of living, it is hard to find time for the things of God. We are controlled not only by the "tyranny of the urgent" but also by the "tyranny of the obvious." That which confronts us daily, what we see regularly, that which demands our attention easily takes first place in our priorities. Some Christians fail to bring glory to God because they fail to build a vibrant spiritual life.

Build the spiritual house of God, the church. The church is called to offer spiritual sacrifices and declare God's excellencies and salvation. How will you share in sharpening the spiritual focus of the church? If the church is not a spiritual house, it is not God's house. Members are spiritual stones in God's house, called to spiritual action, not to consumerism.

Build the spiritual life of other Christians, your family and loved ones. We can either help or hinder others in their spiritual construction projects. How will you help others with their spiritual building projects?

Build on the foundation of Jesus Christ by sowing and watering. The Bible uses several metaphors to describe the church. God builds the church; members are described as living stones. Christ promised to build his church. We are called to build on the foundation, a description of evangelistic efforts. How will you build? What will you build? We plant and water, and God gives the increase.

Christians are called to build. In 2021, be diligent to make time for the things of God. Less important things easily take the place of God's things. The beginning of a New Year is an opportunity to plan the future.

Where are you spiritually, compared to a year ago?

What kind of spiritual construction projects have you completed in the past year?

What should you do in the coming year to build for God?

How can you help build a stronger and bigger house for God within your church family?

What spiritual construction project can you begin in 2021 that will matter 10 years from now?

What part of your spiritual house is weakest and in greatest need of repair?