

March 8, 2021

Lectionary Passages:

Psalm 84

1 Kings 6:1-4, 21-22

1 Corinthians 3:10-23

Selected Verses:

How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O Lord of hosts!  
My soul longs, indeed it faints  
for the courts of the Lord;  
my heart and my flesh sing for joy  
to the living God. – Psalm 84: 1-2



In the four hundred eightieth year after the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord. 1 Kings 6: 1

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. – 1 Corinthians 3: 16-17

Devotional:

The six acres around the church are being developed into a sub-division. Over the next couple of years, about 28 houses will be built. Over the past several months, brush has been cleared, dirt has been moved, and a new drain has been put in to deal with the water issues. With the recent snow, "Faith Lake" has reappeared. I think this means the water issue is being diverted off the development and down the street. It has been interesting watching the land become ready for houses. All the work done thus far will hopefully build a firm foundation for the houses.

Whenever Janet and I have bought a house, we have had it inspected. Part of what the inspector is looking at is the "bones" of the house. I can notice the room layouts, the windows, the landscape. And, I can decide what I would change. Yet, the bones need to be sound. The foundation, the walls, the roof all need to be strong.

In the case of building the Temple, God required the builders to be strong. In fact, because David was a man of war, building the temple was the job of his son, Solomon, when he had become King. Until this time, the Tabernacle, and the Ark of the Covenant symbolized the presence of God. After 480 years of Israel being in the Promised Land, Solomon would build the Temple. The courts the Psalmist longed for was the presence of God, yet not in the Temple. It had not been built yet. This new Temple would be built with the finest materials, and covered in gold. The laborers would do their best work. Even so, with the Babylonian invasion, the temple was destroyed around 587 BC.

The New Temple, of which the Walling Wall remains, is from the building of the second Temple was completed in 515 BC. The festival of Hanukkah celebrates the cleansing and rededication of the temple in 169 BC. Then, in 20 BC, Herod began rebuilding the Temple, expanding its size on the Temple Mount. Throughout the lifetime of Jesus and the writings of the New Testament, the Temple was under construction.

In his letter to Corinth, Paul used the image of Temple construction for the church, and the individual members with the church family. Both individually and collectively, the gathering of Christians is the Temple of God. Paul was one of the skilled builders of the Temple. As with the original Temple, God choose certain people to do the work of building. These workers in the early church of Corinth, Paul, Apollos and Cephas were craftsmen chosen by God. Yet, the building was built on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ. No other foundation will last. Upon the foundation, materials of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, straw or hay could be used. In other words, good or bad materials could be used. If they are inferior, the fire of judgment will burn them up. So, it is important to build a life of faith upon Jesus Christ using the finest materials.

We are to build our lives with the best craftsmanship. In faith, this is spending time daily in scripture reading, regularly gathering for worship, and growing together as brothers and sisters as the Temple of God. In the midst of that, we need to constantly be dealing with divisions that can arise. It is not the importance of the builders. Some in Corinth were saying, "I am of Paul," others, "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas." When this is done, the building becomes divided and cannot stand on one foundation, Jesus Christ our Lord.

May we celebrate that we are the Temple of God, created by His workmanship through the hands of brothers and sisters building us up in the faith. May we continue to build using the finest materials to be the holy nation of God. Through this, we will be fools for Christ.

Prayer:

Almighty God, we give you thanks for brothers and sisters who have guided us in the faith. For those who first shared your salvation with us and those who have helped shape us into your holy people. Lord, forgive us when we are divided or hold ourselves or others as more important. May we always keep our focus on you, the sure foundation, the author and finisher of the faith. Amen.