

SOLID ROCK 6: YOU'RE A BLOCK

In our Bibles when we read "church" it is translated from the Greek word *ecklesia*. That simply means 'ones called out to assemble'. We are called out of our normal routine to gather together for a purpose. We are called out of our place of comfort, our places of familiarity to assemble to worship the Living God. Notice that it is the people not the place that is the Church. Since we call our building a church, we often get confused with what the word means when we read it in scripture. Whenever two or more believers in Christ gather they are 'the Church'. I like the way the brothers of a darker hue say "Now we're havin' Church." That means they are together worshipping Jesus not just shooting the breeze. Are we havin' Church yet?

A lot of effort goes into buildings, as the builders want to glorify God with the structures they build. Some buildings bring you to a reverent atmosphere by the design. But that building is not the church. Acts 7:48 How could we ever build anything that would house God? Only He can do that, and He is. 1 Peter 2:5 You also, yes you, were chosen as a living stone. When you chose Christ, He chose you to be a block in the spiritual house that God inhabits. I lived near some garden rock workers in Japan. They had special trucks with cranes and nylon strapping so as to not scratch the rocks. After hours of careful hunting in a riverbed, they would find just the right rock and go about carefully extracting it to take it to a garden under construction. God has sought you out and used a careful plan to lift you out of the world and into the garden or house that He inhabits. He took great delight in finding you as a special stone. Read Ephesians 2:19-22 What a foundation! What a resident! Look again at verse 21. Being in Christ makes you perfectly fit with the other stones.

Here is where we are most challenged today. Why is it we refuse to fit together with the other stones? Jesus knew this was going to be our greatest challenge and our greatest testimony to the world that He is real. John 17:20-23 Only in humility that He exhibited can we be one building, and that by being in Him. We have to see others as better than ourselves (Philippians 2:1-4) and put away selfish interests. 3John 9 mentions those who will separate themselves because they love to be first. If we are in-filled with the Spirit as a body we will be in unity. Acts 4:32 Mark those that are divisive, Romans 16:17. Divisions

will show who is really a part of the building and who has joined for other reasons. See 1Corinthians 11:18.

Another illustration of the Church is the BODY OF CHRIST. He is the head from which all the body is directed, Colossians 1:18 and we are the members or parts of that body. Ephesians 5:30, 1Corinthians 12:12-27 Notice in that body there are assigned parts that have specific functions (12:18). The body is one to edify one another (14:26), to praise God in song (Hebrews 2:12), and to share testimonies (Acts 14:27). A body does no harm to its members because every part is useful to the whole. Each part is important and needed, and if any part is missing it becomes handicapped.

The Lord also calls us a flock, Luke 12:32. David said, "We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." And Peter called us the flock of God (1Peter 5:2&3). There is an abundance of parallels here, and many books have been written on this topic. Sheep stick close together for protection. They follow the sheep that are closest to the Shepherd (bellweathers)- those that have a keen eye on the Shepherd because of their great love and trust in Him. When one goes off by itself, it is an easy prey.

Are you part of this mystical body, with Christ as the head? If so you should take your directions from Him to function in unity with the rest of the body. Are you following the Shepherd to green pastures? Or do you think you can find them on your own? Many of us have been hurt by following men filled with pride. The pain they inflicted was not God failing you. It was a lesson in learning to put our trust in God alone. We need each other, but remember, God alone will never fail you. You have the greatest calling, to be a habitation for God. Unlike a physical building we don't condemn a structural problem but we work together, like a body, protecting a weak or damaged limb. God will finish this building in perfection. You can read about the finished product in the next to the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 21.

Remember sheep don't live in flocks of one. You need to be with the other blocks to make up the house. It is often painful, but much of the pain is God shaping you to fit together with others. It is a wonderful work. Don't run from it or avoid it. See you in the wall Mr. Block! Psalm 65:4