

You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1Peter 2:5

Store In My Heart

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Between 48 & 55 AD Paul penned this letter to churches in the region of Galatia. At some point in his travels he had taught among these brethren. As he states early in the letter, he was surprised that they had been taken in by false teachers promoting Jewish practices even though they knew the truth.

The verse above reminds us of the Gospel taught by Paul to these brethren. These brethren needed to remember that their salvation was through faith in Christ. It is a lesson we need even today. Every part of who I am must be controlled by my belief in Christ as Savior and Lord.



The Strength Of The House We Live In

Warren E. Berkley

Ephesians 2:19-22

To introduce this text, let me bring to our attention two commonly recognized dangers: (1) being a stranger in a foreign land, and (2) being in a building that is falling down.

While preaching in the Philippines in 1981, for an hour or so in Brookspoint on the island of Palawan, I was separated from the group. I had traveled to the country with John McCort, and we were accompanied by a collection of native preachers, guides and helpers. I was waiting for a jeep to be repaired and the group went somewhere with the promise they would return for me in a few minutes. It was almost an hour. There was no immediate threat or danger. But I was alone in a strange place. I was a stranger and foreigner and felt the full impact of that alienation. The American Embassy in Manila -- upon our arrival -- warned us: "You are not citizens of this country and do not have the rights and privileges the natives enjoy. Be careful!" To be in a place you are not familiar with and where you enjoy no guarantee of any protection is unsettling, to say the least. It is commonly recognized as a danger (especially in view of current terrorism) to be a visitor in a place where you hold no citizenship.

People are also dreadfully aware of occupying a building that is falling down! We all remember watching the Twin Towers in New York coming down. Those buildings were occupied by real people, and we saw video footage of some jumping to their death. I was in Houston on that day and my wife was in one of the tall buildings in the downtown area. I was uneasy until they evacuated that building, which they did within minutes after the attack. These are two common fears -- being stranded in a foreign country, and occupying a building that is falling down.

Christians who remain in the house of God are not troubled by either fear. This text established that great truth.

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit," (Ephesians 2:19-22).

When Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, he addressed Gentiles who were now Christians. He wanted them to remember their previous condition, to provoke gratitude to God who brought them near "by the blood of Christ." In that

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For Our Information

Joyce Venable is in rehab in Hot Springs. She is still having some difficulties.

Jerry Henderson is still showing tiny improvements. They plans are to swap vent to trach and feeding tube early next week. He seemed to open his eyes more when spoken to Saturday.

Tonight we start in 2Samuel 4 at 5 pm.

Wednesday at 7 pm in Philippians 2.

Join us for all these studies.

Pray for safety, courage & healing.

context he said: *"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God," (Ephesians 2:19).*

The words *"now"* and *"no longer"* bring attention to their new, changed status as *"members of the household of God."* Because of the blood of Christ, their active faith in obedience to the gospel changed their status. That change is described: *"now . . . no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."* What a cause for joy, gratitude and continued obedience! They were now citizens in the Kingdom, and identified with others who enjoyed the same relationship with God. If you are a member of the household of God, this statement should renew your gratefulness to God and your daily devotion to Him.

"It is as if they who had dwelt in the waste and howling wilderness, scattered defenseless and in melancholy isolation, had been transplanted, not only into Palestine, but had been appointed to domiciles on Mount Zion, and were located in the metropolis, not to admire its architecture, or gaze upon its battlements, or envy the tribes who had come up to worship in the city which is compact together; but to claim its municipal immunities, experience its protection, obey its laws, live and love in its happy society, and hold communion with its glorious Founder and Guardian." (Eadie, quoted in Pulpit Commentary, **Ephesians 2:21**).

The stability of the building depends upon the foundation. Verse 20 affirms the house of God to be *"built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."* Not only can we rejoice that we have been accepted as a member of God's house, we can know that the structure is well built and will stand. The household of God was built on, and stands today on the truth of Jesus Christ (who He is, and what He did). *"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ," (1Corinthians 3:11).*

The household of God is well built, unlike the nations and institutions of men. *"The whole building" is "fitted together," and "grows into a holy temple in the Lord," (Ephesians 2:21).* There is no reason for any member of the household of God to fear the collapse of the structure! It is true, individual members may walk out. We must guard against any attitudes or actions that would lead us out of God's house. But there is no justification to fear that the "building" will be destroyed, or that God will misplace us (see **2Timothy 2:19**). Structural integrity is assured by the builder. As a Christian, you are not just a guest or occasional visitor - but a permanent member of the family, in a house upheld by divine power!

And in this place; as a member of this house, we are *"being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."* God has made it possible for us to enter this building and dwell in Him! Verse 22 is about fellowship with God.

The impact of this passage for Christians is, this is the strength of the house we live in! Whatever may happen to us on earth, as long as we stay in the household of God, we are secure.

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel." (Hebrews 11:22-24).

(From Expository Files 9.6; June 2002)

We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

