

A Wise Master Builder

By Mark Mayberry

12/18/2011

Introduction

Writing to the Corinthians, who misunderstood the work of preaching and teaching, Paul emphasizes these are works of service and skill (1 Cor. 3:5-17). He said, “According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.” What are the characteristics of a wise master builder?

Builds With Quality Workmanship

A wise master builder skillfully uses the tools of his trade (2 Tim. 2:15). Having cleansed himself from all iniquity, he is sanctified and useful for the Master (2 Tim. 2:19-21). Through knowledge of God’s word and personal application of the truth, he is fully equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Accordingly, like Ezra of old, let us set our hearts to study the Law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances (Ezra 7:6-10).

Builds On A Solid Foundation

A wise master builder will build on a solid foundation. In the parable of the wise and foolish craftsmen, Jesus emphasized the importance of a solid foundation (Luke 6:47-49). Paul stressed the same theme when he said, “According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:10-11). Only the church that is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ Himself as the chief corner stone, is a suitable dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22). Is your life firmly grounded upon Jesus Christ? Are you obedient to His words?

Builds With Quality Materials

A wise master builder will build with quality materials. In this context, quality is measured by their ability to withstand fire (1 Cor. 3:12-17). Testing is inevitable (1 Pet. 1:6-7). Wood, hay and straw will be consumed. Gold, silver and precious stones survive the flames. This refers to the quality of our labors. Some whom we lead to Christ will persevere, others will not. However, the remarkable thing is that wood, hay and straw can be transformed into gold, silver and precious stones. The application of the gospel to our lives produces an inward transformation. However, some are not willing to change. In such cases, a wise master builder will not waste his time on worthless materials (Prov. 9:7-12; Matt. 7:6; 10:5-15), but will seek out those with broken and contrite hearts (Psa. 34:18; 51:16-17; Isa. 57:15). Despite the fact that he was only able to save his family, Noah is counted as a faithful heir/preacher of righteousness (Heb. 11:7; 2 Pet. 2:5).

Builds According To The Pattern

A wise master builder will build according to the pattern. Addressing the Romans, Paul said, “you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed” (Rom. 6:17-18). The Greek word **tupos**, here translated “form,” appears 16 times in the New Testament, and communicates the concept of a pattern. It applies to Moses: He was commanded to follow God’s pattern (Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5). We are under the same obligation: the gospel contains God’s pattern for everything we are required to do (2 Tim. 1:13).

The I.S.B.E. says, “The New Testament uses **typos** (‘type,’ ‘pattern,’ ‘model’) in Hebrews 8:5 (quoting Exodus 25:40, LXX); Moses saw a representation of the true tabernacle in heaven (Heb. 8:2) after which the one on earth was to be modeled. It was clear that although people would make the tabernacle, God determined its shape and form. Since God would be approached through the tabernacle and its services, the pattern had to be followed in every detail. Any deviation would result in the people’s loss of the spiritual truths that a right approach to God would provide.”ⁱ

Conclusion

Are you a wise master builder? Are you building with quality workmanship? Are you building on a solid foundation? Are you building with quality materials? Are you building according to the pattern? Are you a faithful steward of the Lord (Matt. 24:45-51; Luke 12:41-44)? Are you prepared to give account unto God (Rom. 14:12)?

ⁱ *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed. (1986), s.v. “Pattern,” by H. E. Fagal.