

**Sunday July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010. 10.30am Communion .**  
**BUILDING: OUTREACH: BELONGING x28.**

**READ: *Philippians 2: 1 – 5 & 12 – 18.*** (Use the middle section at Table).

**At our Communion service this morning I want to build on what was said last week on the theme of *Stone on Stone.***

We spoke about building a stable Christian life that was not going to fall down/ collapse when we came under pressure from life's struggle and difficulties. Also it would not collapse with the difficulties that might be thrown at us by the world's temptations to greed in its many forms or by opposition from those who seek to follow Jesus and be true to his message.

I spoke from a letter of PETER'S (*2 Peter 1: 2 -11*) and this week I am speaking from a letter by PAUL. Peter realised that Jesus followers are under great pressure to abandon their faith – in that case because of false teachings about distinctive living and Jesus' return. He argued that they would only:

- 1) *escape the destructive lusts of the world* (the fascination we have with sin!) and
- 2) *share the Divine nature* (become more like Jesus) **v4**

IF THEY APPLIED THEMSELVES TO CHARACTER BUILDING STONE ON STONE ADDING TO THEIR INITIAL FAITH OR TRUST IN JESUS (Peter listed the qualities of character that they needed in ABUNDANCE). Peter encouraged the Christians he wrote to to be diligent and co-operate with the grace of God that was at work inside them. (God's power was sufficient if they co-operated. Paul also argued this in many places).

**On the Flame sheet today and for discussion in the week:**

STONE ON STONE – building the church:

**1) *The Christian life must not be an initial spasm followed by chronic inertia. Moffat.***

What do you make of this statement? Why did *Moffat* say it?

***Philippians 2: 1 – 5 & 12 – 18.***

**2) In this passage ongoing work is spoken about: how do these 3 “works” work together?**

V12. Each of us much work to “complete” our salvation

V13 God is always at work in you

V16 We are to work for & with other Believers

**Paul spoke about the different “work”/ effort/ labour that was necessary to build stone on stone:**

He spoke about the practicalities and realities of being a Christian.

**V12. Each of us much work to “complete” our salvation**

You are going to have to labour to see God's work completed – his full work of Salvation in your life. The trouble is that we are prone to have spurts of energy and then get busy with other things – working, making money, indulging ourselves and so on. (God gives us many good gifts to enjoy & profit from but God and his work in us is to come first).

See *Moffat's* quote above – nothing changes. This is a quote from a commentator in my parent's generation. We also are prone to begin well and then lapse. Knee jerk reactions are not the best way of following (copying Jesus).

Jesus has done the work of Redemption – we must fill up the spaces with the actions he calls for. He has drawn out the plan for our lives – we must “fill it in”, “add colour to it” - live it out as he instructs. (Illustration: like a child colouring in, filling up the picture that has been pre-drawn or sketched out). Our attitude – one of awe towards God – “fear and trembling – it is an awesome thing to think God wants to work in my life!

### **V13 God is always at work in you**

God is at work in us – he is able to do that while remaining transcendent. The Holy Spirit of God comes into our lives to enable us to *share the divine nature and to resist the destructive lusts of the world*. (God works inwardly to change us – sin is still at work in us and must be resisted! And also there are outer pressures to conform to this world's values and standards of morality. (Strivings within as well as pressure from without – understand this. This self-awareness is part of Christian maturity).

### **V16 We are to work for & with other Believers**

We also work for the benefit of others in the Church. From this passage we can see that at times Paul must have been tempted to feel all his hard work of teaching, training and encouragement was in vain. He worked for others to enable them to reach maturity as Christians. We all need to work to encourage one another – to build stone on stone. This means of course that our building is not in isolation – I am not building my small pile of stones – in this small corner and you are not meant to building your small pile of stones , of Christian character over there?

No – each of us is to be building good things into one another's' lives.

### **These 3 “works” all work together to build –**

Me as a new person and part of a new community.

With God's work, our own efforts and one another's assistance we will labour to build each person stone on stone. And together we will build a new community – the people of God.

Our labour, our work will not be for nothing. What is built will last forever – not just in this generation or life.

With God's help we will build. Amen.