

Knocking Down Walls & Building Bridges

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Text: Luke 17:1-10

Introduction:

Many people try to cope with life in different ways. Some will try to build upon their experiences while others try to protect themselves from more of the same experiences. Some will build and some will hide. God is calling us to be builders.

In this text we see several “issues” that reflect the building process. Jesus introduces these issues; from these issues we can see the need to push forward and not retreat, for what some people call mundane and needless God calls important.

In the movie Karate Kid, young Daniel asks Mister Miagi to teach him karate. Miagi agrees under one condition: Daniel must submit totally to his instruction and never question his methods. Daniel shows up the next day eager to learn. To his chagrin, Mister Miagi has him paint a fence. Miagi demonstrates the precise motion for the job: up and down, up and down. Daniel takes days to finish the job. Next, Miagi has him scrub the deck using a prescribed stroke. Again the job takes days. Daniel wonders, What does this have to do with karate? but he says nothing. Next, Miagi tells Daniel to wash and wax three weather-beaten cars and again prescribes the motion. Finally, Daniel reaches his limit: "I thought you were going to teach me karate, but all you have done is have me do your unwanted chores!" Daniel has broken Miagi's one condition, and the old man's face pulses with anger. "I have been teaching you karate! Defend yourself!" Miagi thrusts his arm at Daniel, who instinctively defends himself with an arm motion exactly like that used in one of his chores. Miagi unleashes a vicious kick, and again Daniel averts the blow with a motion used in his chores. After Daniel successfully defends himself from several more blows, Miagi simply walks away, leaving Daniel to discover what the master had known all along: skill comes from repeating the correct but seemingly mundane actions.

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Through those mundane and needless exercises in Godly living we are many times building bridges that expand our abilities in God.

I. Feelings are to be protected. (1,2)

- A. Offenses will come, for they are inevitable. However, they do not have to catch us off guard. You can be prepared for them.
- B. Offenses will either knock you out of the fight or strengthen you for the fight. Some do not want the confrontation with the devil while others are encouraged by it. They figure if satan is still trying to get them then he has not gotten them.
- C. God will repay the offenders. Notice how satan tries to knock you out of ministry. He brings an accusation against you or tempts you to sin to stain you name. But you can protect your feelings by giving them to God. This is how you build a bridge between you and God's peace.

II. Forgiveness is an absolute. (3,4)

- A. Forgiveness is a requirement. Without forgiving others you cannot be forgiven. Therefore the forgiving of others is as important as your forgiveness.
- B. Forgiveness has no limits in deed or in number. This text reveals forgiveness seven times, but other places we are taught seven times seventy in one day. Forgiveness just needs to be a state of being that no matter who or what, we forgive.
- C. We should create a way to forgive. Whether they apologize or not we will find a way to forgive them. Forgiveness is an action not just a state of mind. We treat others as forgiven. You can build a bridge between you and others by forgiving them of their transgressions.

III. Faith is to be exercised. (5,6)

- A. A little faith goes a long way. Here in this text, a metaphor is used to describe faith. A mustard seed is the smallest seed when planted but grows into a large tree. Faith doesn't have to be great in quantity, just in quality.
- B. One must stand on faith before they can be saved, have a personal relationship with Christ, or be used regularly by the power of God.
- C. Faith is like a muscle; the more you work faith the bigger it gets. Faith comes from reading and hearing the word of God. So, the more you read and listen the more faith you receive. You can build a bridge between you and your miracle with a little faith.

IV. Faithfulness is an attitude as well as an action. (7-10)

- A. Faithfulness does things because God has requested it without looking for the gratification from others. Faithful is as faithful does! Many think that going to church makes them faithful. However, going to church is a privilege and serving God and obeying Him is faithfulness.
- B. Faithful people are not those who look for platitudes. Many give to be seen and many work for praise. But God is looking for the man who will work and be happy to obey the Lord.
- C. A faithful person is a humble person. We just don't meet grumpy, haughty, or proud humble people. A humble person is sweet in their spirit and they love to serve God and others. Humbleness is good material to build bridges out of.

Conclusion:

There are many stumbling blocks in life that can trip us up if we are not paying attention. However, satan cannot get the advantage over a praying, working, and loving Christian. For they are constantly building for the glory of God. They are building bridges in the kingdom of God. They build bridges to bring things together. Some Christians are building walls to block out the world while God is trying to get us to build bridges to win the world.

We have stopped communicating and therefore stopped building.

g Pastor Charles Curtis stresses the importance of really communicating: "My husband does not talk to me," is the complaint of 80 percent of American wives. It has been claimed that "One hundred percent of the people seeking professional help for their marriages have problems of communication." In our world, the power to send and receive messages reaches around the globe (even out into space), and this information is available in seconds! Yet, husbands and wives are unable to successfully communicate across the breakfast table. "Please talk to me" is the request and basic need in many homes.

Communication is a rich source of blessing. What a joy it is to talk and listen! Recently, I had a sore throat and was to preach that night. In order to save my throat, I wrote notes and did not speak for the entire day. It was maddening and frustrating. "A word spoken in season, how good is it" (Prov. 15:23)! "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Prov. 25:11).

The lack of communication multiplies our problems as it destroys bridges over which we need to travel. An old farmer had trouble guiding his mule, but said nothing. When asked why he didn't speak to the mule, he responded, "That old mule kicked me five years ago and I ain't spoke to him since."

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We need to get in touch with God today and re-establish a communication. These "issues" about Feelings, Forgiveness, Faith, and Faithfulness are just a few of the important things we need to communicate to the world. But we can't communicate to the world something that we do not have in our heart. Jesus built a bridge.

References

May, Steve (1999) 1001 Contemporary Illustrations. Raleigh, North Carolina: Heaven Word Inc.