

Intro

Today I want us to see a building project – that might give us some insights into how to build a life.

Every one of us wants to build a good life for ourselves.

So many commercials geared at helping us discover, uncover or showcase here's the good life you want – so get this, buy that or go do this and you'll have it.

So we go after it – and all the while we're out building our own story, our life – there is this question that lingers and surfaces at times: is there more than just this?

*Building my own story – making it better – is this really it?
 Is there by chance a greater story we're invited into...? (pause)*

So, today – I want us to look at a building project from long ago – that might give us some insights into building a life and a life we really want...

T Just about all of us have been involved in building project of some sorts before...

I have friends that operate on the elite level:

- they oversee multi million dollar bldg projects for the engineering firms
- they build their own homes - and they're good enough that the people at the county permits office know them by their first name and their favorite coffee.
- these are the people that some of the rest of us call

*My buddy Jim, who helped me build my patio attachment on our home. Or should I say: I kept Jim hydrated as he built the patio.

Then there are the good builders:

- those people that tackle the occasional home improvement projects where between google and Home Depot you can be dangerous enough
- family that builds those large Lego sets that takes up the living room
- it's those who take on the challenge to help with the school homework assignment of constructing a castle/bridge (forgetting that it's THEIR assignment ...) you know who you are...
- or the family that builds the TRI-LEVEL gingerbread house every Christmas

Then there are the limited / select few of us:

- those extremely gifted souls who have the incredible knack of taking mere blocks and creating entire new worlds of entertainment and delight for toddlers. (*because we don't have bldg. techniques within us*)

No matter what your level of expertise - every building project has something in common: **phases/stages**. - nothing gets built in a day, every project is broken down into phases, carried out and finally accomplished.

T As we've been looking Solomon's life. We've seen how he relationally navigated the difficulties and opposition and conflict that came his way as he was installed as King.

Scott, last week – helped us dive into this request for wisdom that he asked of God. That wisdom is one of the gifts of life we all should all seek...

Today – I want us to see the narrative that is Solomon's greatest endeavor. The building of the Temple – something that his father King David had planned to do, but left as the legacy for Solomon to carry out... **we'll see some snapshots and pull out some application for us today...**

The Temple would become THE thing that defines the people of Israel for centuries. Their identity would become attached, b/c this wasn't a tourist stop – this was the dwelling place for God himself. This was all about corporate worship gatherings and the ceremonies/festivals that would take place here that would anchor the people to the story of God and what he was writing in and through them...

Remember several years earlier as God rescued them from slavery in Egypt and they had the tabernacle / ark of the covenant that they carried around in the desert – well that had been with them until now...but now, there was going to be a permanent dwelling place...

From a Tent to a House...

T Solomon stepped into this role with great determination.

1 Kings 4:20, 21 / 30, 34

You can read in chapter 4 – the author is relaying all the glory of King Solomon – the resources, the prestige, the wisdom, the counsel he had with national leaders seeking him out, coming to him... He had wealth, power, clout, peace in the land – things couldn't have been more successful for him...

But with all the accolades & power surrounding him – he didn't let it detour him from building something that wasn't about him... investing into building something that was for God and the greater story around his life...

Solomon is reminding us: that there is a greater story going on around us – don't let the success of your own story deafen you to that reality...

**** there is a pull in the human condition – that wants to pull our hearts adrift and away from living for that greater story...and settling in to live for just our own...**

(King Solomon gets caught in that drift later on)

T So preparation – phase 1 of this building project is all about rallying the resources and talents needed to accomplish the task

1 Kings 5:1

Partnership is formed between King Solomon and King Hiram – to get the lumber needed and materials and some experts/elite builders

Solomon enlisted 30,000 men who were enlisted as lumberjacks – he had 3500 hundred foreman who oversaw 70,00 carriers (grunts) and 80,000 stone cutters who worked in the quarry cutting stone to be used for the Temple

This was no small project...

1 Kings 6:1b-2 (90 ft long/ 30 ft wide / 45 ft high)

*the author gives us extreme details into what exactly this Temple would have looked like

(Picture)

Stats:

2700 square feet approx.

If built today: it would cost 3 billion man-hours or approx: **\$27 billion dollars for one bldg.**

(http://www.sheepdan.net/2007_08_01_archive.html)

***in comparison - 2012 Summer Olympics cost London b/t 14-18 billion (entire event)*

this is not Solomon showing off.

- **this is Solomon showing off His God** and sparing no expense – **determined to honor God...**

Solomon took action to honor the Lord. He built a temple to express how highly they valued and respected the Lord.

-To respect someone – you're looking back on their character, accomplishments and choosing to treat them with great value...

Maybe that's why the Scriptures frequently admonish us to "remember the Lord." Don't lose sight of all He's done for us...allow that to foster gratitude and wonder within our hearts to honor Him...

Out of the blessings God provides, Solomon sets out to bless and honor God. Using the resources he's been entrusted with to the advancement of Gods story (and not just his own story)

Solomon is seeing life as a manager, not the owner –
that's one of the keys as you live for the larger story of God

He's pulled all these people together – to make contributions into this larger story of God – to honor Him...

So many people – with such different abilities, talents, influence... and maybe there in lies a takeaway for us:

As we live for the larger story of God we need to live in this truth:

Not everyone can make the SAME contribution,
but everyone can make SOME contribution.

WE EACH can make a mark, leave an impact --- We ALL have a role to play!

*Using our resources, talents, mind and energy as an offering to God – that our lives would bring Him honor – that we could help build into His story...

Isn't that what we see in the calling from Christ to his followers – “follow me” and I'll use you – I have things planned for you to do...
we're each gifted differently, but collectively - God uses us to contribute into His Story and movement in our world...

It's what the Apostle Paul gets at (1 Cor.) when he talks about the gifts we're given through the Holy Spirit – God is orchestrating those gifts to build something beautiful in this world...

Not everyone can make the SAME contribution,
but everyone can make SOME contribution.

T Here's another snapshot - I don't have time to unpack the details of all that goes into the building of the Temple – but Scott mentioned one gentleman that is highlighted in chapter 7

- Hiram from Tyre – bronze worker, who was very skilled...

1 Kings 7, gives some details of the furnishings of the Temple of God built by Solomon.

In verses 7:15-22, two pillars in the Temple are erected and both pillars are named and described. **(27 feet tall and 18 ft around)**

Interestingly enough, these two pillars were given names: **Jakin and Boaz.**

You'll remember: In those days: names were not meant just to be used as names, but rather as something to identify character.

For example, David meant "well beloved,"
Peter meant "rock,"
Abraham meant "father of nations,"

I looked up my name -- Jack, *interestingly enough means*: "handsome, intelligent, and strong." **Ok. Just kidding...**

These 2 pillars that every Israelite would see, pass as they walked into the Temple

You couldn't miss 'em - **Jakin and Boaz.** When the people of God came to the Temple to worship, they would always be reminded that: **"He shall establish"** and **"In Him is strength."**

These 2 pillars had capitals on top of them – made it 34 ft tall (*that's up into the rafters here*)

34 ft up – thousands upon thousands would enter through this portico – between these pillars of strength and stability...they would marvel at the size, the bronze work – but most would miss the intricacies & beauty of the artistry of the ring of 200 pomegranates...his best work was done where perhaps only God might notice.

Huram carved 200 little pomegranates around the top edge of the capital. Seems kind of strange doesn't it?

That intricate of detail way up there where no one could see it. Where no one could comment on his work – his art – and say, "Good job, Hiram! Absolutely love the pomegranates."

Hiram – did some of his best work for the audience of ONE.

He saw his work as worship. *The pomegranate represented righteousness in this ancient Jewish culture. It was a holy symbol...*

**Hiram saved his most deliberate work – some of his best artistry – for the only one who could really see it up close and personal.

He did it for God.

- Each one of us will have so many opportunities in our lives – to use our time, skills and talents in ways that could/will go mostly unnoticed.
 - Parents – opt to help our kids
 - At your job – to go the extra mile, maybe not get recognized but it helps the company
 - In your neighborhood, school, on the team to make a contribution that won't get the pat on the back, but it does make a difference...
- Yet – we all live in a culture that says – do things to get noticed!
- And it's in those non-descript / un-viewable moments where we can either skimp on our effort or **we can remember that there is ONE who does notice.**
- And I get to worship Him in the way I work and interact and use my skills to honor Him – even when no one else can see me...

Colossians 3:23

²³ **Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,** ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

T So Solomon, Hiram and hosts of others have finished the work on the Temple. It's time for the dedication – grand opening if you will. 7 years of building the Temple

1 Kings 7:1 (6:38)

1 Kings 8 is all about this dedication

1 Kings 8:23, 27-28

Solomon recognizes that God can't be contained...but he's asking for God's special favor to be on this place...this community.

I want us to see a snapshot from the prayer of dedication that Solomon makes because I believe it has some incredible things to say for us in the church today...

Solomon is praying for the people Israel **AND** for people who are not a part of them. He's interceding on their behalf – for God's character to be active and alert to those that are with him and those that he's drawing to himself...

He's thinking & praying for insiders and outsiders

You can read through his prayer and you'll notice that for 'insiders' – the people of God – he's asking that God:

- Be attentive to their prayers
- Be faithful to let forgiveness flow
- Be ready to offer His provision as they need it & pressures come
- Be steady in His support toward them

Beautiful - he's asking God to cover the people who are his special possession

But then He also turns to pray that this place – this new community would be a light to those walking in darkness...who may feel that God is far from them or not even available...

1 Kings 8:41-43

Solomon's asking what Jesus would later show & tell the church to proclaim:

- **God is available to any and all who will turn toward him...**

God is not far from anyone...that's what Paul says

Acts 17:24, 26-27

Solomon is reminding us – the Scriptures are reminding us – that WE (*you and I as followers of Christ*)

WE are the ones who are to declare in how we speak, how we live that God is not far from people – He's available and approachable

– that His love and His grace has made a way for those that feel far from Him...to come home.

The opportunities for us to invest relationally and invite people to experience Him – to give him a chance...because he's a God of second chances...

That this is the kind of Church that God loves:

A gathering of followers who are continually seeking Him

And this gathering that's continually inviting others to be found by Him

T A final snapshot / phase of this project become completed and God visits Solomon a second time - takes place in the beginning of chapter 9

1 Kings 9:1-2

-God has this conversation with Solomon -

*follow me – allow your heart to stay devoted and fixed in following after me

*I want your heart allegiance, not just a project that has been dedicated to me

Let your actions continue to reflect your heart that is seeking me...

Our actions and choices will flow from
what our heart is devoted to.

truth: Devotions can drift...

so we must continually check our hearts.

Part of the human condition is that our hearts were made with the capacity to devotionally drift – our allegiances can change by our choices...

God is saying to Solomon – you’ve been pouring into a greater story – don’t let that drift now that this project is finished. Don’t let your devotion to me, now fade or falter...

Keep following relationally after me.

God has always been about vibrant relational followership more than empty religious activity (9:1-10)

God desires hearts that follow Him more than words that utter pleasantries in His direction from time to time.

Conclusion:

So, in and through these incredible building projects of Solomon – we’re given insights into what it looks like to build a life that God desires.

- That we recognize he’s the true owner, I’m a manager
- That I have a contribution to make into His larger story – it’s not the same as you.
- That I can worship and work for Him – bringing my best, even in those unnoticed times...b/c he will see it. It honors him.
- That God desires my heart to continually stay aligned with him – devoted to him, no matter what project we’re working on...

Closing Prayer