

Holy Ghost Building  
June 6, 2021  
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2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

*“Therefore, we don’t lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”*

It’s so easy to lose heart. It’s so easy to believe, not that we are children of God, children of the light, but mere bodies, here for a time, wasting away, no longer vital, not very valuable. My mother had a saying, “I feel so unnecessary.” In the latter part of her life, when I came to visit her and would be spinning around, doing stuff for her she could no longer do, she would say that. I would reply with all sincerity, “Mom, you are very necessary. Just to have you sit there means everything to me.” And I meant it. Mom had built over the years a Holy Ghost building. She had worked on herself and her faith to a point that her being just shined there, like sunshine through her windows. And it was comfort. Refreshing. Healing. A Holy Ghost building.

Paul wanted the church at Corinth to shift their focus from what was temporary to what was eternal. From what was fleeting to that which would never die. From that which was illusory to what was real. A Holy Ghost building.

It’s old fashioned language. But that’s okay. Because you and I are in the church. We don’t have to make others speak like us. It’s not the speaking that’s important. It’s who we are that’s important. How we are, who we “be.” Out there, with others, in life, with our families, in our daily activity, on the phone, in person, on Zoom. That’s what matters. A Holy Ghost Building. You have one. Let’s revive it. How?

Commitment – “Until one is **committed**, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, the Providence moves too.” – Goethe

This is why we have baptism vows, marriage vows, any kind of holy vow, actually. A commitment focuses us, empowers us, helps us to remember what our lives are about. We are not always true to our vows, but we remember them and get back on track. A person of substance in this world makes promises, and does their best to keep them.

Community – My greatest teacher said that all people want three things: to be seen, to be heard, and to be acknowledged and appreciated. We, as community, provide that (or are supposed to) for each other. When we are encouraged, loved and known, we are empowered to build that building; to build anything, actually. Think about what you want to build. Better yet, what you want to create along with God. Speak it to someone you know and trust. Speak to

me and to others here. This is our community; we seek, highlight and celebrate our gifts. Then we give them to the world.

There are those we look on and say how much easier it would be if only we didn't have to deal with so and so. There is a story of a group of monks who have trouble with just this one guy. They go to the Abbot and tell him about it. "Can't we get rid of him, please? Things would go so much easier if he were gone." The teacher responded by saying, "If we didn't have this guy, we'd have to go out and get someone like him." The pearl is made by the irritant of sand and grit. The Holy Ghost building is built by patience, tolerance, forgiveness and love, made stronger by trial and (by the way) learning to love and forgive all those "irritating people."

Compassion – Without compassion we don't have a chance to build our Holy Ghost building. We can build lots of other kinds of buildings, but they won't reflect the fundamental tenet of our faith that distinguishes us from the world and everything in it. We are not a business; we are a church. These are very different. (The church *has* business to take care of, but we are not about profits; we are a church, and therefore not about the "bottom line," money.) We are called to have compassion for ourselves and compassion for others. We want to have dignity and be appropriate, to be sure. But it is never a shame or undignified to offer compassion. We have fears perhaps that we will be overwhelmed; but remember God will not let that happen. And if we become tired, weary, overwhelmed, we may have to step back and re-evaluate. Set some boundaries. Everyone should be responsible for his or her own life. But not everyone has the gifts that you do, or I do. I support family members who will never be able to support themselves entirely. I do this because God gave me gifts and opportunities that they don't have. My Holy Ghost building I consider is built, in part, by my helping them, loving them, sharing with them. This is the kind of world I want to live in, a world of compassion, based on God's love that does not dole out everything according to who is deserving and who isn't. If I only got what I deserved in this life, I would be poor indeed. Give grace to others; it will be given to you. Remember that Holy Ghost building.

With compassion comes forgiveness; sometimes it seems endless, this need for forgiveness (overlooking, seeing the good, etc..). But the world is a huge stumbling block and always will be. There's a remarkable scene from a movie where a son asks his father how he faces what he faces every day of his life. "Does it get easier?" wants to know the son. The father replies, "It doesn't get any easier; but you get stronger." You get stronger when you forgive and let go and move on. You have more compassion for others, yourself and yes, the world.