

# Truth and Spirit Ministries

## Unless The Lord Builds The House

*By Denise Bostic*

Many Churches today have drifted away from the Lord's original purpose for His Church. The Church we read about in the Book of Acts is very different from the religion designed by man that we see today. Even though this may be the case, there is a fresh wind blowing on some in the Body of Christ. Many are weary of stale Church services that have no presence and power of the Lord's Spirit. There are many that are now waking up to the fact that they have purpose as children of God and are no longer content to be just warming a pew on Sunday morning. There are more and more withdrawing from such environments and are searching for the life, purpose and power of God. This is no wonder considering that many modern day Churches are far removed from what the Lord has designed them to be.

There have been a lot of brethren that have left Churches that have no life and love and have oftentimes been branded as backsliders by their leaders and members, not realizing that it is the Lord who is leading the exodus of His people out of the bondage of religion in order to bring them into the Church that He is building. God's people cannot be free sons walking in the liberty of the Spirit as long as they are slaves to religion. The Lord is delivering many in His modern day Church from the bondage of religion, much like He delivered Israel from the bondage of Egyptian slavery thousands of years ago. He is separating a holy people unto Himself in order to glorify His name and fulfill His purpose in the earth.

Much of what we see today is not what the Lord is building, but what man has built. Jesus said, **"Upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."** (Matthew 16:18) Jesus said that **He** would build the Church. Although there are those that are called by God to help be laborers in the building of the Church, there is a difference between the House that the Lord is building and the house that men are trying to build for the Lord through religion and tradition. (Matthew 15:1-9, I Corinthians 3:5-15)

In order for the Church to be effective, we must follow God's blueprints for His building. The Lord can only build us (the Church) as we yield to Him and His workmanship. God has designed each believer in His Body to function as He wills. He has put gifts and callings in each one as He has purposed. Believers in Christ were not meant to sit in Church services in passive silence and not contributing their part in building up the House of the Lord. The opportunity for building up the Body of Christ is given to all of His children.

Of course, there is a time for learning while others are speaking and we must be silent for this, but there are spiritual gifts and callings that God has given each saint to contribute to the overall strengthening of the Church and to reach the world for Christ. We can only function as a whole body when we are each doing what we were created to do. The Apostle Paul wrote I Corinthians 12, 13 and 14 to give proper guidelines for the Church to follow for the use of such gifts through each individual for the edifying of the Church. Everyone needs to recognize that first and foremost, it is God who determines how He will move through His Body because it is He who empowers the believer to do so.

There are many today that actually hinder the Lord working in and through His Church because they are following their own agendas instead of His. The Lord wants to be Lord in His Church. If we do not allow each saint to contribute what he or she has, how can the Church benefit from the ministry of the Holy Spirit? The Church is to move in the power of the Spirit if we are to be effective, both within the Church and when we take the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world. It is vital though, for us to understand that we are to walk in the Spirit and not after the flesh. Many may acknowledge this mentally or verbally but not in action. Jesus said, **"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing."** (John 6:64) Our flesh will not benefit others and in fact will be in conflict with the Lord's plans and purposes.

Many Churches have suffered the consequences of walking in the flesh and the damage can be clearly seen afterwards. There are brethren that have been deeply wounded, abused and rejected by each other as a result of not walking in the fruit of the Spirit but after the works of the flesh. Since the gifts of the Spirit build up the Body, we can understand that the works of the flesh will tear down the body.

When writing to the Galatians, Paul warns them of the destruction that follows the works of the flesh. **“If you keep on biting and devouring one another, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.” (Galatians 5:15)** We can understand that while walking in the Spirit will edify or build up the body spiritually, walking in the flesh can weaken and divide a Church and if not corrected, can eventually do serious damage to the Church. Unfortunately, this has happened all too often in many Churches. This is why Paul admonished the Church to walk in the fruit of the Spirit, so that the Church would be strong in the power of the Lord.

The Lord's house is built out of a labor of love. Love is the defining hallmark of those who have the Spirit of God. When Churches grow cold in their love for the Lord and one another, they are actually in a backslidden state and need to repent and return to the Lord. (Matthew 24:12, I Timothy 5:12, Revelation 2:4-5) Cold indifference to the needs of brethren and a lost world are contrary to the love of Christ. It is so important that we examine our love walk to see if we are in the faith. (II Corinthians 13:5, I John 4:7-21) The love of God in us will reach out to others with compassion, hope and good news.

Our flesh is in direct opposition to the ways of the Spirit. The flesh, not the Lord's Spirit, is ruling a Church where there is division, strife, envying and jealousies. When we submit to God, He will produce His fruit in us of which the greatest is love. (I Corinthians 13, Galatians 5:22) Even though we have been given freedom through Christ, we are not to use our freedom to indulge our flesh. Paul explained it this way, **“For, brothers, you were called to freedom. Only do not (use) the freedom for (an) opening to the flesh. But through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13 (Interlinear Greek-English NT) and read verses 14-26)** It is no accident that Paul sandwiched love (I Corinthians 13) in between the definition of the gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12) and the operation of the gifts of the Spirit within the body of Christ. (I Corinthians 14). Without the operation of true, godly love the gifts of the Spirit are meaningless and will be of no value to our brethren.

Love respects other members in the Body. Love is patient and will take the time to allow others to release what the Lord has placed in their hearts. Love is not selfish but shares speaking and ministry time with others. Love does not envy each other's gifts and callings, but is grateful for what God has given them and others to bless the body of Christ and the world. Love is not easily offended, but forgives easily. Love protects and covers those who make mistakes because they know that we all are growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. If the Church would operate by these truths, we would have a much more powerful and effective Church!

Jesus said, **“A new command I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35)** If we in the Church would realize the impact that our love for one another would have on the world and keep this command as Jesus intended, we would attract many more people to Christ than we could ever imagine! A light shines brighter in the darkness. The world needs the light and love of God and that light and love is within His people. (John 1:6-9, Matthew 5:14-16)

The House of the Lord must be in order before we can be powerful and effective in reaching others for Christ and His Kingdom. Presently, God is beginning to move on some of His people in a fresh, new way to bring restoration, reformation and revival. As we come into alignment with the Lord's building plan, we will see the power of His Spirit released in new and dynamic ways. God keeps His promises as we yield to Him and accept His ways. We are of the house of Christ, not the house of Moses or man. (Hebrews 3:6) We must make sure that we are part of the house that is built upon the Rock, which is Jesus Christ. Should we build upon anything else, our house will not stand. Only the house of Christ is eternal and sure. (Matthew 7: 24-27)

King David understood where his dependence lay when he wrote, **“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain...(Psalm 127:1)** Those of us in the modern day Church should also receive this

wisdom and be yielded to the Master Carpenter so that He may build us according to His eternal plan. God forbid that we should be a part of the houses that the flesh of man is building, but instead, we should be of the house that the Lord is building. We are His house for the scriptures declare, **“And we Christians are God’s house-he lives in us! -If we keep up our courage firm to the end, and our joy and our trust in the Lord.”** (Hebrews 3:6 The Living Bible) Amen to that!