

An Architect's Rendering

Philippians 2:1-4, 14-18

Introduction

Have you ever seen an architect's rendering of a proposed building? He starts with a sketch of what he wants the building to look like, what he sees with his mind's eye. The picture is then colored in and landscaping is added. This is how the architect wants his building to look. Paul does something similar here. He gives us a picture of what the church should look like. God is the Architect and Builder of the church. This is His rendering of how it should look.

The Supports—Accord in Christ

Of course, the **Cornerstone** and **Foundation** of the church is Christ. The whole church is built upon Him. The main support, gaining its strength from Christ is full **accord**. The church is to be in one **accord**. To have **accord** means to "be in agreement." There are two aspects of accord that Paul mentions here: being of **one mind** and being of **one heart**. This is important. Having accord is not about "getting along" or even "agreeing to disagree." Accord is finding **love** in **truth**. Many times, in relationships, we look for love and if truth is there, good. If not, well, we can live with that. But the church is about **love in truth**.

The Importance of Humility

Since Christ is the **Cornerstone** and **Foundation**, the next important ingredient in the church is **humility**. A good rule of thumb is *Romans 12:3, For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned*. True humility is not thinking less of yourself or self-abasement but having sober judgment about yourself. It's having a clear picture of who you are. Jesus didn't become a servant because He thought little of Himself, he took on the form of a servant because He knew who He was and that He was the only one who could do what He did.

Working Together

True humility means that we will be able to **work together** without **grumbling** or **complaining**. It also means we will be **looking to the needs of each other** instead of our own needs. Or, to put it another way, we will be living out Jesus' **NEW COMMANDMENT: love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another (John 13:34)**. In short, the Architect's rendering of the church is that it be **united in the truth, working harmoniously together, and caring for each other**.

Renderings and Reality

But buildings don't always turn out like the architect originally planned. I went on a short-term mission trip to Haiti one year to help build a clinic. Our group was there to dig the footer. After the footer was dug, we had to carry these huge rocks to put in it. At the end of the week, the fellow in charge discovered he had measured from the wrong side of the ditch and the building was going to be 2 feet wider and longer than originally intended. The plans had to go back to the architect and be redrawn. The problem we sometimes see in the church is division where there should be accord, strife

where there should be working together, and ambition taking over where there should be caring for one another. It's that old sin nature. What are we to do?

Hold Fast to the Word

Paul gives us the answer in **verse 16**, *Hold fast to the Word*. Jesus is the Cornerstone and Foundation. In His **Word** is where we find life. There is power in the Word. Paul said it in **Romans 1:16**, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*. The Word not only shows us how to live, it has the power of salvation. Jesus works faith in us through the **Word** and **Sacrament**. He instills within us the **humility**, **love**, and **truth** we need to be the **ARCHITECT'S RENDERING** of what we were meant to be.

*May the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
