

Things We Say to God

By Pastor Andrew Straubel

In Exodus 3 we read about Moses keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. Suddenly Moses turns aside to see what appears to be a burning bush, and an exchange takes place between God and Moses. God reveals both His purpose for Moses and His plans for delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt. No doubt Moses was perplexed to think that at age eighty he would be the one to perform such a deed, especially after leading an obscure life in the wilderness for forty years.

"Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt" (v.10). What I find fascinating is what Moses says to God. *But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh"* (v.11a). All in all, Moses poses three questions and makes one statement as to reasons why he shouldn't be the one to go to Egypt. Wow! The nerve of the guy! I mean Moses sees a burning bush, hears the voice of the Angel of the Lord call him by name, and then receives revelation of the divine and personal name of God, the GREAT "I AM," or Eternally Existent One.

We might not see burning bushes or hear the voice of the Angel of the Lord, but we have received a *"more sure word of testimony"* (2 Peter 1:19) indicating God's will for our lives. Like Moses we may find ourselves asking the same or similar questions in response to God's charge to us.

Simply put, God says to Moses, *"You will do it!"* It is a declaration. But Moses says, *"Who am I?"* Here Moses questions God's choice and objects by saying he is not the right person. Surprisingly, God does not get angry or chide Moses but graciously assures him of the divine presence, *"I will be with you!"* Sound

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Easter Egg Hunt



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familiar? It should. Jesus said it to his followers when charged with their daunting task to "make disciples" (Mathew 28:20).

The second question goes from "Who am I?" to "Who are you?" Here Moses anticipates a hypothetical situation where people will inquire (v.13). Specifically, they will want to know the meaning of His name. And for the first time in Scripture, the personal and divine name of God is given: I AM! Perhaps it is Moses who really wants to know. Culturally speaking, to invoke the name of a deity was to establish a relationship and act on that name. Verse 15 indicates that the "I AM" is God's name and it is forever. One might remember that this question came up in the life of Jesus and Jesus said, *"Before Abraham was, I AM."* Clearly Jesus identified himself as the I AM of the Old Testament, and the religious leaders knew it and took up stones to kill Jesus (John 8:58).

The third question Moses asks was, *"What if [the people] don't believe me?"* (4:1) Now Moses is getting real! It is an honest question and to some degree justified. In fact, people didn't believe him...at least at first. Even God's people needed some convincing. Humanly speaking the task was a daunting one: lead 600,000 families out of bondage because you, Moses, said a "God" told you. In modern terms, he would be called delusional. But that is in merely human terms. With God nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37).

The last comment made by Moses is a statement and not a question. Moses states, "I have never been eloquent! (4:10) Here, at a last ditch effort to avert responsibility, Moses confesses his inability to speak. But the reality is that God and men can see two different things. 1 Corinthians 1:27 says that *"God chooses the weak things of this world to confound the wise."* Again, in a gracious response God promises to perform signs and miracles which will attest to Moses' authority

and gives Aaron, his brother as his mouthpiece. Interestingly, there are no indications that the people wouldn't have believed him.

Regardless of the excuses we often give to the Lord, they are just that, excuses. When God commands us to do something, He qualifies us as well. Throughout the exchange the only time God gets angry is when Moses asks God to send someone else (4:14). As Jesus' ministry was coming to a close, He charges his followers, *"As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you"* (John 20:21). We may not be going to Egypt to lead a captive people out, but we are going into the world with the Gospel message.

Beloved disciple of Jesus, know and be assured of this, that it is, *"God who is at work in you both to will [give you the desire] and to do [ability] of His good pleasure"* [His will]. (Philippians 2:13) How we respond to God's working in us will determine God's pleasure and our contentment. It is something to which we are told to be confident (Philippians 1:6). Consequently, the promise given to Moses in the desert is given to us as well as Jesus declares, *"I will be with you."* You and I are His "sent ones." Let us go as sent ones together!

Perisseia Spring, 2017 Relationship Workshop

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*For more information, please contact Cindy Bills
cbills@verizon.net; 609-275-9557*

*Meeting Thursday evenings, April 27-June 1
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The Easter Egg Hunt: A beautiful day, amazing crowd, a fun afternoon!



Elder's Corner

By Tom Taylor

"Look upon the Lord Stand in awe of His beauty"

These are the first words to a song written by Paul Baloche that has captured my spirit, soul and body as of late. Please take a few minutes and pull up the song on YouTube and sit back and listen.

As elders we have sensed God calling us to focus on Him this year: to know Him better, to love Him more and to follow Him more closely. The way we get there comes from Acts 6:4, *"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word."* Devotion demands commitment, pursuit, being full of care (aka careful), putting aside other desires and interests.

What I have been finding is the more I pray, the more time I spend with Him, the more I love Him, the more I see His beauty, the more I know His loving kindness, the more I sense His power and glory; the more I know He is the only one worthy of my obedience, my worship, my all.

David knew this and walked in it. He was devoted. *"One thing I have asked from the Lord that I shall seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. To behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple."* (Psalm 27:4) David also experienced God's goodness, faithfulness and fullness of joy. *"You will make known to me the path of life. In Your presence is fullness of joy, in Your right hand there are pleasures forever."* (Psalm 16:11)

Oh, I want that for myself, for my family, for you, for my neighbors and all God brings my way. Please come and follow us as elders in seeking the Lord while He may be found. Let me encourage you to set aside time each day to be with Him: talking, listening, worshipping. Find a prayer partner or small prayer group and build each other up in His presence. You will not regret it.

Men's Breakfast

Join us on Tuesday mornings, from 7:00 to 8:00, at the McDonald's on Brunswick Circle. We are studying Galatians. In this profound letter, Paul proclaims the reality of our liberty in Christ—freedom from the law and the power of sin, and freedom to serve our living Lord. Contact Scott Bruno ([609-213-9545](tel:609-213-9545)) for more information. The food, fellowship and study are great!

*Congratulations to
Pastor Andy and Janice
who have been blessed
with their first grandson.*



*Lucas Andrew Straubel
was born on April 11, at 5:50 am,
and weighed 8 pounds and 9 ounces.
Lucas joins his parents
Charles and Brittany Straubel
and big sister Maddie*

Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*

By Cindy Bills



The Building of a Temple

I find life as a Christian to be an awesome privilege, an amazing adventure, and an awful lot of hard work. It is not easy to maintain spiritual growth as I contend with my brokenness, manage my responsibilities, and negotiate relationships. And although I very much appreciate the support and active help of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the fact remains that I have work to do.

In his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul has this reminder for them: "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." The mysterious synergy of the Holy Spirit and my own will is an incredibly powerful concept, but it still leaves me wondering what it is that the Holy Spirit does and what it is that I am supposed to do.

It has recently occurred to me, though, that the question is not *what* I do, but rather *how* I do it. Do I approach my Christian life as one of the builders of the Tower of Babel or as one of the builders of King Solomon's Temple?

If we look at the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, the people chose to build for themselves a city with a tower that reached into heaven with the expressed purpose of making a name for themselves. The entire operation was their plan, for their purposes, and for their glory.

The building of the Temple by King Solomon was almost certainly a project of much greater proportions. But it differed from the very beginning. Solomon initiated his project in response to the LORD's giving him rest on every side of his kingdom, for the expressed purpose of building a house for the name of the LORD his God, and according to God's plan. While Solomon managed the project—for seven years, the entire operation was according to God's plan, for His purposes, and for His glory.

I find that the comparison between the Tower of Babel and the building of the Temple by King Solomon is compelling as I approach my own Christian life. It allows me to appreciate that God has made me to be intense, energetic, and focused even as it reminds me to submit those gifts to His sovereign will and to use them for His purposes and His glory.

It is easy to think that the building of my life pales in comparison to the building of the Temple. I do not have King Solomon's resources! It is impossible to imagine that my life will be any bit as glorious as the Temple. But the Temple was not eternal. It was destroyed, as was its successor. My life—and yours—is eternal. In fact, the Apostle Paul taught the believers in Corinth that each of them was a temple of the Lord, filled by the Holy Spirit, and holy to Him.

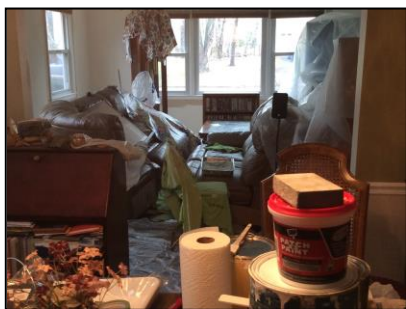
May we not take lightly the privilege and responsibility of working out our salvation under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit, as we become eternal holy temples to the glory of the Lord our God.

Please feel free to contact Cindy (609-275-8557 or clbills@verizon.net) to continue the dialogue....

Something Beautiful

By Janet Berrill

For the past several years, I have used the winter months of January through March to get an indoor project done. Two years ago I worked on our dining room, last year I studied for my insurance exam, and this year I turned my son's room into a guest room. This year's project didn't take as long as others, so since I had some more time before the weather got warm enough for me to want to be outside, I decided to paint the living room as well.



In order to do that, everything needed to be moved away from the walls. At first it was all pushed into the center of the room so that I could get at the walls to repair the holes,

dents, and nicks the walls had sustained over the twenty plus years since we've lived here. When it came time to paint the ceiling, I realized I couldn't do it with all the furniture in the middle of the room so I took the smaller items out and put some in the hall and some in the dining room. By then my home was a mess! Not only were the living room items scattered about, but the living room itself had drop cloths over the couch and on the floor and there were many assorted painting supplies throughout the room.

Things looked pretty bad, but this is a step in making the room better. If I wanted to fix the walls and give them a fresh coat of paint, I've got to move things around first, causing a mess in the process, so that I can do my work. Then I put it back together again so that it will be better than it was when I first started.

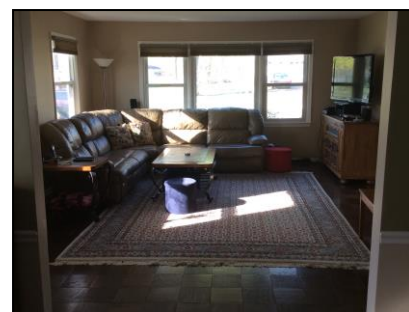
Have you ever felt like your life is a mess like my living room? Everything seems to be in complete disarray; nothing is how it should be; you feel like you're spread out all over the place; there is no order to anything. Well, maybe, just maybe, this is God doing a remodeling job in your life, and He wants to take the mess that you're in and turn you

into something new! In order to get at the places that need work or healing, God has to bring them to the surface and expose them so they can be dealt with. This can be a very messy process, but God has a glorious new you in mind at the end!

Stephen Curtis Chapman sings a song called *Something Beautiful*. The first verse speaks about someone's life being in a mess, and the chorus says:

*"And God's says
I'm gonna turn it into something different
I'm gonna turn it into something good
I'm gonna take all the broken pieces
And make something beautiful like only I could
So put it all in the hands of the Father
Give it up, give it all over to
The only one who can turn it into
Something beautiful
Something really beautiful"*

If someone walked into my home during the project, they would have seen a mess. When I looked at the stuff scattered all over the place, I saw it is as a step toward the new living room I had planned. I saw the end result. I believe God looks at our lives the same way. However messy our lives are now, if we cooperate with Him, God is going to turn that mess into the something beautiful He has planned for you.



If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter please e-mail:

Susan Seiboth at

susan@quiltingsquare.com

Dorothy Soi at

dsoi@windsorchapel.org

Chapel Office (609) 799-2559

www.windsorchapel.org

Contributing photographers:

Pastor Andy Straubel & Janet Berrill