

The Restoration of Masterpieces 18-7-10

The Creation of a Masterpiece

Great sculptors like Michelangelo can look at a rock and see a “David” in it. They chisel away and eventually as a result of great talent, craftsmanship, inspiration, sacrifice and effort end up creating a masterpiece.

- Composers of music, artists, engineers etc.
- The normal mortal is amazed

A Masterpiece – Something created by a master that is regarded as standing out from the others and as very special and valuable.

God’s Masterpieces

- **Creation** – full of masterpieces
 - The heavens
 - A sunset
 - The treasures of the snow
 - *"Nature is an unlimited broadcasting station, through which God speaks to us every hour, if we only will tune in."*
-George Washington Carver (1864-1943)
- **We are His greatest work!**
 - Master-pieces in a great masterpiece by the Master
 - **God’s Great Plan**

- This world and the spiritual realm of the kingdom of darkness is the setting for *the* masterpiece – the church
 - A glorious shining jewel on a black backing

Ephesians 3:9-10 (New King James Version)

⁹ and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,

THE MASTERPIECE is made up of many master-pieces that make up the whole

- **Each part** shines as it is seen in the setting of the whole church
- **The whole makes sense of the parts**

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (NIV)

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's **masterpiece**. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (New Living Translation)

Psalms 139:14 (New International Version)

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

The Loss and Destruction of Masterpieces

- The sadness of losing a masterpiece, or seeing a masterpiece destroyed
- It is a serious crime to destroy a masterpiece – sacrilege

- Some are beyond monetary value

Destroying “the temple of God”

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

(Singular and plural)

- Satan and sin destroyed that which was declared “very good”
- Before God had completed His masterpiece it was stolen and greatly corrupted – but He planned to redeem and restore it

The Redemption, Restoration and Completing of the Masterpiece
– takes great, sacrifice, skill, care, patience and expertise

The Restoring of a Painting

- Stripping of over-paint to reveal original painted surfaces
- Surface cleaning and varnish removal
- Consolidation of powdering or flaking paint
- Treatment of bloom, blanching, mould
- Tear mending, flattening distortions
- Lining onto new fabric supports
- Strip lining
- Re-stretching, re-tensioning
- Filling and in-painting areas of loss
- Reinstatement of varnishes and surface coatings
- Great care, knowledge and expertise needed

- Easy to destroy a masterpiece

We Need to Understand

1. The masterpiece that God had in mind when He created us

EVERY PERSON A MASTERPIECE

- **Psalm 139:13-16** *For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.14 I will praise You, for I am **fearfully and wonderfully made**; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.15 My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.*

2. The terrible destructive results of sin upon the masterpiece

- **No longer able to be used by God** – separated from God
- **No longer brings glory to His name** – shames Him
- **No longer able to be the habitation of the Holy Spirit**
- Rather than bless the earth; **spoils the earth**
 - The earth cries out!

3. The amazing efforts God went to in order to restore the masterpiece

- The work of Christ on Calvary
- Isaiah 53
- *The Agony and the Ecstasy* – Sistine Chapel (Michelangelo)

4. **The Restored and Completed Masterpiece**

- **Ephesians 5:27** that He might present her to Himself a **glorious church**, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.
- **1 Peter 2:5, 9** you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **His own special people**, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

5. **The Purpose of the Masterpiece**

- **Ephesians 2:10** “For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”
 - **To shine** – with love – **reflecting** God’s love and goodness
 - **A masterpiece** – reflects the genius of the master
- **Revelation 1:6** “and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” – to rule and reign with Him
- **All to Bring Glory to God**
 - Many of the great human artists gave glory to God

- "Every beauty which is seen here below by persons of perception resemble more than anything else that celestial source from which we all are come...."
-**Michelangelo (1475-1564)**
- "The superior reasoning power...revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God."
-**Albert Einstein (1879-1955)**

Therefore

1. Our Purpose is Clear

- "Do you not know that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and you are not your own? For you were bought with a price therefore **glorify God in your body and your spirit which are God's.**" 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

2. Our attitude to the devil and sin

- i. Hate
- ii. Resistance
- iii. Vengeance

3. Our attitude to evangelism and the lost

- We see the **potential**; we look beyond their polluted, sinful present life – we see what they could be

- We are in the business of HELPING TO RESTORE STOLEN, LOST and SEVERELY DAMAGED MASTERPIECES

A Word on Potential

- **Many people's potential is never seen**
 - *"Our graveyards are filled with potential that remained potential. What a tragedy."* Myles Munroe
- **Even Christians!**
- **Why?**
 - Unwilling to humble themselves
 - Unwilling to learn lessons and change
 - **Want to be someone they are not created to be**
 - Some people need to have the inferior cover-up stripped away
 - Since in the garden we have become professional "cover-ups"
 - We become "hypocrites" – actors, acting out a part we were never designed for
 - Unwilling to be "stretched, pruned, corrected..."
 -
 - Unwilling to be hidden away and wait for God
 - The seed that is buried

Fruitfulness – dependent on being a DISCIPLE who abides in the VINE and welcomes the prune shears of the Master Vinedresser.

- **John 15** "Abide in Me...let My words abide in you...be My disciples...be fruitful...bring glory to God."

Conclusion

1. Each one of us is extraordinarily wonderful to God
2. Each one of us is unique – finger-prints / eyes / DNA
3. Each one of us fits best in the place God places them, doing the thing God calls them to do, with those God connects them to
4. Each one of us is a master-piece that has been redeemed
 - a. Is being restored
 - b. Is being transformed
 - c. This happens to the degree we unconditionally humble ourselves and place ourselves in the Master's hands
5. Each one of us make up the amazing masterpiece – The Body of Christ – the Church
6. Each one us, working together with each other, are called to seek out the lost, blind, broken, damaged and warped masterpieces
7. Each one of us is called by God to make disciples of all that come to Him and help them also to be revealed as the amazing, sparkling children of God they were designed to be.