

What Part Am I?

Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

When Paul went to Jerusalem after his conversion he met with the church there. He records in **Galatians 2:9** that, "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." These three men were seen as pillars of the church. In a spiritual sense they were, as leaders of the believers.

When we think of a pillar in a building it is the part that supports the structure. Without pillars the building would not stand. So we can see that it is an important part of the building. These three men were helping the church in Jerusalem to stand for God in the face of persecution. They were not all that helped or served but they were an important part of it. What about us, what part do we have in the Lord's church?

Do we try to make ourselves useful in the church? Or, are we, like so many content to just go once in awhile when the notion strikes us? There are a lot of ways we can help in the Lord's work. If we are willing to do so. I think that a lot of people don't want to take on any responsibility because they would be expected to be there.

I'm afraid that in a lot of churches today the pillars are not as many as in the past. I remember the leaders of the past, deacons and elders, who were always at church. If they were not, you knew someone was sick. A few years ago a man was sick and missed church two Sundays in a row. A neighbor who didn't go to church came to see him and said, "I knew you were sick when I didn't see you pass my house on your way to church."

Some of the younger folks are faithful and come when they can but they are few. Is the younger generation as committed to the Lord as they should be? It is not just in going to church, it is standing for the truth and living according to the Bible. A Christian stands for the things that God is for and against the things that God condemns.

Paul writes in **Philippians 1:21-25**, "For to me to live is Christ,

and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;"

Paul was not bragging, but was saying that while he wanted to go home, it was needful for the church that he stay and help them. If a person is not missed when they are not at church is it because they do nothing when they are there? Not everyone teaches, sings, or preaches, but everyone can praise the Lord and help in many ways. Sometimes someone who has a kind word or a smile can be a big help.

I have known people at various churches who were missed as they were called home. They were there, doing what they could to encourage, teach, love, and to be an example to others. I am thankful for those who served in years gone by so that you and I could hear the gospel.

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THE NEAR-EAST'S BALANCE OF POWER IS OF WORLD-WIDE CONCERN TODAY. EGYPT AND ISRAEL FENCE, DIPLOMATICALLY, EACH HOPING TO GAIN A MORE STRATEGIC POSITION. TO THE NORTH, SYRIA, LEBANON, AND TO THE EAST, JORDAN—NOT TO MENTION OTHER ARAB COALITIONS—ALL WATCH NERVOUSLY, MAKING THEIR OWN ALLIANCES AGAINST THE DAY WHEN TOTAL WAR MAY STILL BREAK OUT... AND SCHOLARS OF ANCIENT HISTORY SMILE QUIETLY, SHAKING THEIR HEADS—NOTHING'S CHANGED IN 2,500 YEARS! THE SAME POLITICAL SITUATIONS, THE SAME COUNTRIES, SAME PLANS!

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ISAIAH THE PROPHET (CIRCA 780-700 B.C.), IN TEMPESTUOUS ANCIENT TIMES, PREACHED RELIANCE ON GOD, ADVISING AGAINST POLITICAL ALLIANCE WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. SO SINCERE WAS HE, THAT HE STRIPPED AND, FOR THREE YEARS, WALKED ABOUT BAREFOOTED, WEARING ONLY A LOIN CLOTH TO POINT UP HOW BAD OFF EVERYONE WAS GOING TO BE IF THEY DIDN'T HEED HIS WORDS! BUT THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH WAS IN A VERY DANGEROUS SITUATION....



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... IN THE NORTH, SYRIA AND ISRAEL (SEPARATE FROM THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM) HAD FORMED AN ALLIANCE AGAINST THE THREAT OF A TERRIBLE FOE TO THE EAST, ASSYRIA—THEN AT ITS HEIGHT AS A CONQUERING NATION, LOOTING AND DESPOLING ALL KINGDOMS IN ITS PATH TO WORLD POWER! SYRIA AND ISRAEL INTENDED TO ATTACK JUDAH FOR NOT JOINING THEM BUT, BEFORE THEY COULD, THEY WERE CONQUERED BY ASSYRIA, WHOSE KING, SENNACHERIB, THEN FOCUSED ON JERUSALEM, DEMANDING ITS TOTAL SURRENDER! KING HEZEKIAH SOUGHT ISAIAH'S ADVICE—WHEN HE WAS IN TROUBLE, THEN AND THEN ONLY, DID HE TURN TO GOD AND THE PROPHETS—WHEN EVERYTHING WAS FINE, HEZEKIAH DID AS HE DARN WELL PLEASED! ISAIAH TOLD HEZEKIAH TO ACT LIKE A REAL KING, FOR ONCE, AND DEFEAT ASSYRIA! A HARD THING TO DO WHEN, ALL AROUND HIM, KINGDOMS WERE TOPPLING LIKE TEN-PINS... SO HEZEKIAH STRIPPED HIS TREASURY OF ITS GOLD AND SILVER TO GIVE TO SENNACHERIB, HOPING HE'D GO AWAY! AT THIS TIME, EGYPT TO THE SOUTHWEST, FEARING FOR ITS OWN SAFETY, GOT INTO THE FIGHT AND, EVEN AS ISAIAH SHOUTED DEFIANCE FROM JERUSALEM'S WALLS, SENNACHERIB, WITH NEWS OF A SERIOUS REVOLT IN HIS OWN COUNTRY, HIS ARMY DECIMATED BY SOME SUDDEN PLAGUE OF ILLNESS WHICH KILLED THOUSANDS OF HIS TROOPS OVERNIGHT, LEFT FOR HOME! INSTEAD OF GOING TO THE TEMPLE TO THANK GOD, THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATED IN A SERIES OF WILD ORGIES! ISAIAH'S WORDS FAIRLY DRIPPED SARCASTIC, AS HE WATCHED... "EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY," SAID HE, "FOR TOMORROW," CAME HIS DIRE PREDICTION, "WE DIE!" ISAIAH SAW WHAT THE FUTURE HELD FOR A PEOPLE WHO TURNED TO RIOTOUS REVELS AT THE SLIGHTEST EXCUSE—AND HE WAS RIGHT! IN LESS THAN TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS TO COME OUT OF THE EAST AND END FOREVER "THE POWER AND THE GLORY THAT WAS JERUSALEM."

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