

## **SERMON: A LORD-BUILT HOUSE**

### **Psalm 127:1**

**Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it:  
except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.**

### **Introduction**

I remember as a child, growing up in rural Alabama, the times when a local congregation would enter into a new edifice. Although the occurrences were rare, there were a few things that would always be a part of the ceremony. It was an unwritten anointed agenda. First, the masons, from various lodges, would lay the corner stone. I was blessed to witness this first hand because my father, William Bradford Ward, Sr., was a thirty-third-degree mason and also the master of the local lodge. Secondly, the worshippers would, of course, enter the new facility and worship for the first time. They not only attended church, they “had church.” Thirdly, someone would recite or read our text, Psalm 127:1. Finally, somewhere during the service, someone, usually a deacon, would sing the spiritual ***A Lord-Built House***.

Everyone from miles around would come to worship and look at the new facility. Of course, there was eating before and after the ceremony. There was a “pre-past” and repast. There was fried chicken, potato salad, peach cobbler, banana pudding, collard greens, sweet tea, lemonade, and much, much more.

This spiritual, ***A Lord-Built House***, which is not as well-known as some of the other spirituals, is based on Psalm 127:1. The service was incomplete if it was not sung. This beautiful spiritual had a lot of repetition, a zillion verses, and theme and variation was applied to the chorus. Sometimes verses were composed impromptu. Everybody joined in with great joy and enthusiasm.

Here are some of the words as best I can remember:

“I wanna live in a Lord-built house.  
I wanna live in a Lord-built house.  
I wanna live in a Lord-built house,  
Unless the Lord builds the house,  
The builders labor in vain.  
The builders labor in vain.

Don’t wanna live in a man-built house with the pillars built on sin,  
Brightly painted shutters and doors and all decayed within.

I wanna pray in a Lord-built house.  
 I wanna pray in a Lord-built house.  
 I wanna pray in a Lord-built house,  
 Unless the Lord builds the house,  
 The builders labor in vain.  
 The builders labor in vain.

I wanna live in a Lord-built house with a structure built on love,  
 With the rock foundation under me and the heavenly Father above!

I wanna sing in a Lord-built house.  
 I wanna sing in a Lord-built house.  
 I wanna sing in a Lord-built house,  
 Unless the Lord builds the house,  
 The builders labor in vain.  
 The builders labor in vain.”

I wanna live in a Lord-built house until the day I die.  
 Then I'll live in a Lord-built mansion way up in the sky.

Now back to the Scripture. The house in our text can be many things. It can be a family, a marriage, a friendship, a business, or a real physical structure, such as this one. Yet, if God is not in it, it will not be successful.

This structure built on 2152 Rock Chapel Road is definitely a Lord-built house. It is really a miracle. If you were to see a person walking down the street in a normal way, you would not make much of it. However, if you knew that this person was severely injured in an automobile accident and was told by doctors he would never walk again, you would then be amazed and see it as a miracle. Those that know of the previous false starts and the impediments we encountered, see this beautiful place of worship as a shining miracle. In fact, it is series of miracles. Let's examine why it is miraculous and why it is indeed a Lord-built house. I say again: This is a Lord-built house.

## **Exposition**

### **1. It Was Built In God's Own Time Frame.**

(A God-Ordained Era Specific To The Time.)

(God Put The Right People In The Right Places.)

(The Members Gave Freely Of Their Time, Treasure, And Talent.)

## **2. It Was Built In The Right Place.**

(This Is Holy Ground That God Laid Up For Us.)

## **3. It Was Built For The Right Reason.**

(To Glorify God Through Worship And Service.)

(This Is God's House.)

(Form Follows Function.)

## **Closing Thoughts**

I will close with a celebratory affirmation.

"This house was built on faith,  
Trusting alone in God's Word.  
This house was built through grace,  
Believing the great truth we heard.

We girded this building with prayer;  
We crowned it with worship;  
We filled it with our praise;  
Songs of thanksgiving we ever raise.

May the preaching go forth with power,  
With a message for that hour.  
May the teaching be ever sound,  
Where no doctrinal error is found.

May its doors always be inviting;  
May its windows furnish true light;  
May our music tell salvation's story;  
May God alone receive the honor and the glory.

On Christ the solid rock, we stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
All other ground is sinking sand.”

Give God Glory!  
Give God All The Glory!

### **End Notes**

1. One of our deceased members, Brother Ray Stone, made a request before his transition. He wanted his cremated ashes to be sprinkled on our church grounds. The family and the church officials complied with his request. Brother Stone said, “My soul would be in heaven with the Lord and my remains would be at Antioch. Heaven and Antioch-Lithonia are the best two places I can think of.” This is another reason why I believe this is Holy Ground.
2. As far as I know, there is only one commercial publication of ***A Lord-Built House***. It is arranged by Roger Lentz and published by Beckenhorst Press, Inc. His arrangement is slightly different from the way I heard it in the Abbeville area. Of course, there are regional variations of many spirituals and folk songs.

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