

2024 11 10 – *Building with Sacred Love*

Scripture: Psalm 127 (*The Inclusive Bible*)

If YHWH doesn't build the house,
the builders work in vain.

Today's psalm is different than most psalms. It's not a prayer or a song of praise so much as a proverb or a piece of wisdom literature. That's probably why the ancient scribes suggest that it is written by Solomon, a king known for his wisdom and for the building of the first temple, rather than his father King David, who was known as a musician, a poet and an empire-building warrior.

This psalm is about building. It talks about building a house. But what kind of house does it mean? A family home, a place of worship, a home for a business, or maybe even the temple that is our body? Think of all the things that we build in our lives and I'm not just talking about physical things. Can you name a few? (leave time for responses: house, business, cars, relationships, families, service organizations, churches, neighbourhoods, cities, wealth, knowledge, faith). We spend a huge portion of our lives building things, creating things. So what is this psalm saying about those things that we build?

If YHWH doesn't build the house,
the builders work in vain.

I believe this psalm is saying that YHWH or God needs to be involved in all the building that we do in our lives. Now I believe that God is Love, Sacred Love.

So I would suggest that we can make the following word substitution:

If Sacred Love doesn't build the house,
the builders work in vain.

Love, Sacred Love, the love that is in and around us every day of our lives, also needs to be a part of every building project that we do. It doesn't matter what we are building. If we do it with love as our guide, with love as our strength, with love as our purpose, then what we are building will not be built in vain. It will make a difference.

Think of the teacher whose student returns years later and reminds her of the time she showed compassion to a struggling child. Think of the farmer who loved the land and whose children inherit soil that is rich, and streams that flow through marshes that clean their water. Think of the mother who loves her children and encourages them to be themselves and is able to watch her children do the same for her grandchildren. Think of the entrepreneur who chose to build a business that provided excellent service and who was able to give back to the community that supported him.

The psalm goes on to remind us that life is about more than building material wealth. The psalmist writes:

In vain you get up early and stay up late,
sweating to make a living,
because God loves and provides for us
even while we sleep.

Other translators say, "[God] gives sleep to his beloved." Rest and relaxation are also important parts of building and living and being. In the bible it is called Sabbath time. We all know that building up ourselves, loving ourselves, means

setting aside time to care for the body, the mind, and the spirit that we have been given. As much as many of us are driven to work and to build our wealth, our business, our church, this psalmist is reminding us that we also need to trust that God will care for us and those we love while we care for ourselves.

Children are the heritage Sacred Love gives us;
our descendants are our rewards.
Having children when you are young
is like equipping an archer with wonderful new arrows.

The second verse of this psalm reminds us of the importance of family, friends and relationships. It talks specifically about children and compares them to arrows. But we have to remember that this psalm was written in a time when men had multiple wives, and families were large. Many children were essential to guarantee protection in one's old age. There were no other social safety nets.

Today, I would suggest that we can expand this verse to include all the different relationships that we build in our lives, all the different arrows that we can place in our quivers to ward off the enemies that would threaten our health and well-being. Those arrows don't have to be our biological children. In today's world our quivers can be filled with extended family, chosen family, church family, our education, our spirituality and even the social services and other programs (like our military), that are provided by the taxes that we pay and the democratic governments that we support.

Happy are those who have filled their quiver with such arrows!
When they argue with their enemies at the city gate
no one will be able to make them feel ashamed.

Enemies come in many different forms: invading armies, fake news, scam emails, inflation, corrupt politicians, natural disasters, physical or mental illness, the infirmity of old age, and the list goes on. But when we build ourselves, our families, our churches, our communities, our countries with love, with compassion and caring then we will have the means to protect ourselves from whatever may appear at our gate.

If Sacred Love doesn't guard the city,
the sentries watch in vain.

This week our neighbours to the south chose to bring back a president who is known for the chaos that he brought to the White House during his first term and whose many building projects throughout his life have been based on the desire for power and money rather than love and compassion. The majority of voters in the United States are celebrating a win this week, but there are many of our neighbours to the South who are grieving.

One of those people is Rev. Cameron Trimble, a minister, an author, a pilot and an entrepreneur who runs businesses and NGO organizations, both secular and faith-based. In response to the results of the election, she sent out some prayerful emails this week and Friday's email contained a spiritual practice that I thought would help us to answer the question, "How do we ensure that the building that we are doing is done with God, with Sacred Love?"

Here's what Rev. Trimble suggested:

Each morning, set aside a few moments to ground yourself. Take a deep breath and think about one thing you love deeply, one thing worth protecting or nurturing. Let that love fill you, strengthening you from within.

Then, choose one small action that reflects that love. It could be a kind word, a call to a friend, a donation, a moment of advocacy, or a simple prayer. Let this small act remind you that you are part of something larger—a fabric that we are all weaving together, stitch by stitch, with our love and resilience.

End your day with a moment of reflection: ***How did love guide me today?*** Offer a prayer of gratitude for the strength to keep going, trusting that each small act of care is part of a greater work of healing.

May we all build our houses with the guidance, the strength and the purpose of Sacred Love.

May it be so. Amen.