

THE LORD'S DOINGS

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Psalm 126:3.

Of old, when the people came to make record of an unusual and worthy deed, they said, "This is the day which the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in it." Let us also express our joyful, sincere and deep gratitude to God for His good providence in permitting us to assemble here on this delightful, significant, and historic occasion. As we seek to interpret our text in the light of this occasion, I am anxious for us to note three things.

1. Great things have been done.
This building stands here as one proof of that fact.
2. God did the great things.
He made the world. He created us. He loved us. He redeemed us. He saved us. He preserved us. He blessed us.
3. God did great things for us.
He has blessed us, blessed us greatly, blessed us individually, blessed us collectively, and blessed us assuredly.

He has saved us from our sins, brought us into His family, given us the Bible, provided a church for us, given us the privilege of worshipping Him, and afforded us a wonderful opportunity to work with and for Him. He has also given us food, sustenance, health, homes, friends, etc. As to our spiritual welfare, He has done everything which we needed to have done for us.

He has done greater things for us than we knew, than we deserved, and than we expected. Since He has done so much for us, we are certainly glad, and we ought not to be otherwise. Therefore, we ought to declare and to show our gladness.

This delightful occasion certainly marks an epoch in the life of this church. For each of us, who are members of this church, life certainly ought to be richer and larger and deeper and happier and more useful because of this glorious achievement which calls us together on this dedicatory occasion.

I. The Plans.

Think of how this building came into existence.

1. God gave an increase in attendance which created the need for additional space.
2. God gave some of us a vision of the need.
He opened our eyes to see the necessity of a building if we were to take care of those who came voluntarily. Existing conditions did not encourage our people to visit and to invite others. Undesirable conditions did not encourage others to come. We were face to face with the fact that we did not have the money with which to build.
3. God gave us the faith to believe that we could get the money with which to build.
4. God gave us the desire to build.
5. God impressed us to get some building plans.
These plans were drawn, submitted, explained, and adopted.
Plans were approved unanimously on Sunday morning, April 17, 1949.

II. The People.

1. They decided to build.
Like Nehemiah's associates, they said, "Let us rise up and build!"
2. They agreed to take a special offering.
They did so on May 8th. It amounted to \$13,728.55 in cash and over \$7,000 in pledges.
3. They said, "Let us start the construction."
Excavation began on June 6. Observers commented freely. Some said: "It is too big". "We don't need that much space." "We can't afford such an expensive building." "It will be many a day before that building is finished and paid for." Nobody paid any attention whatever to any discourager.
4. They had an unshakable faith in God.
With faith in God they employed the means at hand, and invoked God's blessings upon the work all the way through. People have rightly been willing for God to have the glory for it. They were happy and grateful as He continued to bless our efforts.
5. They were willing to work.
They loved the Lord, loved our church, realized the need for the building, and wanted to see the task completed with honor to the Lord and credit to the church and community. So many were willing to do anything to help. Happy is the pastor who has a vision of a real task, and who has a people with "a mind to work". Hard work and absolute dependence on God will never fail.
6. They cooperated beautifully.
I shall always be grateful for the fine way in which the people worked together on this project. Our people had sufficient Christianity and good sense to ignore criticism and fault-finding. This remarkable achievement could not have been accomplished without the cooperation of the people. Many were willing and ready to do whatever they could. And they were not seeking any personal glory in it. That reminds us of the old Jesuit motto: "A great deal of good can be done in the world if one is not too careful who gets the credit."
7. They persevered until the task was completed.
They worked and prayed and gave and borrowed and then paid what was borrowed. One has to admire the marvelous way in which the task was finished, and the spirit manifested in the special offerings.

III. The Purpose.

It is the will of God that this building shall be a place where:

1. The Word of God is taught.
2. The power of God is felt.
3. The spirit of God is manifested.
4. The love of God is conceived.
5. The salvation of God is received.
6. The gospel of Christ is proclaimed.
Evangelism is not the only purpose for which it is to be used, but it is the primary one. May it ever be our first concern that the unsaved may know Christ.
7. The people may worship God.
8. The people may have Christian fellowship. (training our people
9. Spiritual inspiration may be received. have, the better work
10. Real Christian service may be rendered. they can do.)
11. The saved may be taught.
"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Christ taught and trained the twelve apostles. The more

12. The saved may be enlisted in doing God's will. This means enlistment in real loyalty to Christ and to the church. He requires our loyalty to Him and to His church. The church is a necessary institution, the best teacher of righteousness in the community, the friend of childhood, the inspirer of youth, the strengthener of middle life, and the comforter of old age. We prove our loyalty to Christ by our attitude toward and support of His church.
13. The Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified. Since all of God's acts in the past, and all of His promises for the future tell out His worth and wealth, ought we not in all we do bring glory to His name? "Unto Him be the glory in the church" Ephesians 3:21. It was a noble and true reply that William Burns, the Chinese missionary, gave to the lady who wanted to know how many souls had been saved through his ministry in China: "Madam," he said, "God did not send me to China to save souls. He sent me to bring glory to His name." To glorify God is the noblest occupation in the world.

An occasion like this calls for us to utilize all out latent powers for glorifying God and for helping other people. We are here, not primarily to make a living, but to glorify God in the building and the living of the right kind of life. He has a right to expect this of us on the basis of creation, redemption, and preservation.

When he was dying, Moody said: "Give me the Bible once more." It was laid on his lap, propped up on pillows as he was, and he read the fifth and sixth chapters of John's Gospel. Then he took his pencil and wrote on the margin: "If God be your partner make your plans large." God is our partner, therefore, let us "attempt great things for God and expect great things from God." The time has come for us to make a great step forward with Christ.

"Forward with Christ" is God's constant injunction to all believers in Him. The law of the Christian life is "advance". The Captain of our salvation never orders a retreat. He never brings His people into the position from which retreat is necessary, or in which advance is impossible. We may bring ourselves into such positions, but our Lord never leads us into them. Nowhere in the Bible can you find a case where retreat had to be made while God's guidance was followed. In proportion as we surrender ourselves to His guidance we may depend on being conducted forward. Why shouldn't the Christian go forward? Everything in nature and history does so. The stream moves forward. Science, art, philosophy, literature, and all species of knowledge move forward; invention following invention, discovery following discovery, one man of genius eclipsing another, to be outshone in his turn. Likewise, the Christian life should be marked by a constant forward march. Our marching orders are to go forward. The gospel of Christ now has the greatest opportunity it has ever had, and it should have the most vigorous application and propagation by those who believe it.

This beautiful educational building is the offering of Christian hearts, and it is intended for the use of God's people in the doing of His work. We see in the dedication of it the frank and joyful confession that Christianity must be taught. It is a privilege greater than we can estimate to dedicate such a place to God. But what do we mean by dedication? We can give to God only what He has first given to us, and we cannot give even this unless we also give ourselves.

IV The Presentation.

How are we going to dedicate this building to God? We make a mockery of this occasion unless we ourselves personally take a great step upward and forward in the dedication of our lives to service for God. There can be no substitute for that. God asks for our lives. "The gift without the giver is bare." If we go our ways, whistle and twiddle our thumbs, today, without renewing the dedication

of our lives to His service, we have failed to meet our responsibility here; Renewed dedication, deeper consecration, and worthier service are called for. If we go away without that conception of this occasion, we have missed the meaning of the whole thing.

God has certainly crowned our efforts with success in a marvelous way. He gave us the people, the vision, the plans, the desire, the will, the determination, the means, the willingness, the materials, the ability, and the fruition of our plans. All with the proper attitude and spirit, certainly appreciate what He has done for us. We want to show Him our appreciation by what we do with it. Therefore, with joyful gratitude and great satisfaction, we cheerfully give it back to Him. We want Him to use it as He sees fit. We trust and pray that it will be a means of blessing, in the hands of the Lord, to thousands of people.

This now brings us to the real purpose of this important and historic service. In order that each and every member of our church may actively participate in the major part of this service, I am going to ask each of you to please take your copy of the program and turn to page eight and join with me as we stand together and responsively dedicate our educational building to our wonderful Lord.