

“Restoring the Temple”

To think of restoring something is to consider returning it to some previous condition; a restored house is one that has been repaired or re-conditioned to some previous or prior state - not new or replaced...but restored. Think of restoring as bringing some vitality or life back to something - as though it was dying or on the verge of death when, through time and attention with intent, life is returned or renewed. Near death is brought back to life.

Old cars, old houses and other old things generally fall into the category or candidacy of restoring; and often, the outcome seems to be very rewarding for both the restorer and the restored. For example, an old car is restored through the tedious and time-consuming care of one who appreciates such antiquities and, as well, has the means and motivation to carry it out. Once complete, the vehicle may be sold or may be kept; but the restorer is still proud of his work and may even follow the restored to its final resting place - if that were possible. All things - or material things - must come to end and, eventually, even restored things will not last; yet still is found the effort and endurance to restore these material things.

When such things as homes are not restored, or maintained, the consequence is an early and sometimes disappointing death. Old buildings, houses and other structures sometimes fall into this premature death due to neglect, obsolescence, or some other cause or reason. Cities and other government agencies may deem the building unsafe for use, impractical for repair or otherwise unworthy for continued or re-constituted use. It is sad that sentiment is sometimes superceded by the sum of all other reasons.

To be sentimental is much more than what is measured or sometimes considered. Sentiment - or being sentimental - is marked by emotions or feelings; it not altogether rational, quantifiable, or objective. The feelings or emotions probably have a deep source of energy from whence drive and determine such. Though sometimes joined with foolishness (i.e. “you sentimental fool”), sentiment can be a powerful force to itself...because it comes from a deeper source, our hearts.

Feelings or emotions have much influence and direction over our actions, our wills and ways. We cannot always trust our own sentiments but, whether we

like it or not, this force or source has much to do with us...and our relationships to people and things. There is (or should be) caution in trusting our own sentiments - as the heart be deceitful - deceiving us and deceiving others. The last thing we probably want to do is mislead ourselves or someone else - contributing to a bad decision or direction. Thus we cannot and should not rely altogether on the sentiment, but must balance it somehow...some way.

As with a house, car or other thing fall into disrepair, our hearts take-on or incur damage as we develop and grow. I don't mean the physical kind such as heart disease or cardiac arrest - but rather the sentimental kind that leaves a mark or scar where hurt and disappointment has been the course or experience. As we grow older, we are certain to incur such damage - as life brings conditions or crisis that causes such damage, such destruction. Like rain and foul weather ages a house (or car), so too does time and events age our hearts in a sentimental, a deep and destructive way.

With this aging action on our hearts comes the need for help, even restoration. I believe that such help and restoration is no where more probable and perfect than with God - who knows the heart(s) of man, his creation. In the book of Acts, we read and are reminded that God is the creator and that he is "calling for a radical life-change" in his created. He is not necessarily asking us to be more sentimental or passionate - although such emotions or feelings do result or occur from the change (or changes) that are made in our lives by God.

God gave us our sentiment; he gave us our heart, emotions and feelings. Jesus was sometimes sentimental in his expressions and actions - such as when cried at the news of Lazarus' death. So despite what may be thought or believed about sentiment, we can (or should) accept that it is good - since it came from God. Still, we cannot rely on our sentiment to the degree that we neglect who gave it to us in the first place, and knows how to restore or repair damaged sentiment or hearts in the second place.

When we see an old item that is neglected, such as the old church shown on the next page, we may pause and consider all that worshipped there - or in someway enjoyed fellowship, prayer and study in such a place. Maybe the church (building) offered a gathering point for the true church, the body of

believers, to congregate and do such things; and maybe lives (or hearts) were changed or restored as a consequence of the power of God through the prayers of the people. But it is only a building and, as accepted, will eventually end or be torn down.

As to our hearts or sentiment, the same end is not certain; but we have God who does restore and, what's more, prepares our hearts or sentiment for eternity. In his preparation, the heart is transformed such that we maintain the sentiment - but it changes to reflect as Christ's feelings and emotions. No longer acting solo - or without God - our hearts are being transformed into "a radical life-change". Not just changed for a season or for natural lifetime of his creation, but changed for eternity - if you can imagine no end to time.

The building in the upper right is, like all buildings or similar tangible things, certain to decay, corrode, crumble and so on. And like the building, so too can the heart if left to ourselves - and not God. Yes, the heart can deceive, it can be deceived and render destruction of all kinds; but with God, the heart undergoes the radical life-change that "Builds-'em Up" instead. The heart or sentiment is powerful indeed - but to what purpose it serves is largely determined by our willingness to let God "Builds-'em Up".

Our hearts also represent the temple of God - as each believer is a temple of God. Restored or being restored over time, the heart or temple glorifies God; it please God because it looks more and more like his son, Christ.



Acts 17...

We live and move in him, can't get away from him! One of your poets said it well: 'We're the God-created.' ...The unknown is now known, and he's calling for a radical life-change.

- *The Message*