“Cathedral Building” is a current phrase used to ask the question –Are you building your life with things which last forever? Or are you constructing your life with things which are temporary and passing away? How are you investing your life today? It references, of course, the building of the great cathedrals of Europe which took several hundred years to build. Three hundred years was not uncommon for cathedral construction in the Middle Ages. More recently, St. John the Divine in New York City has been being built for more than 100 years and is still incomplete. The National Cathedral in Washington, DC had its groundbreaking September 29, 1907; they imported an entire village of Italian stonemasons and established their homes and families in Washington DC in order to build it. 83 years later to the day the National Cathedral was declared to be completed. The only problem is that the stone that was carved in 1907 now need to be re-carved and refurbished 100 years later. So the grandchildren of the original stonemasons now continue their work to maintain the cathedral their grandparents built.

If you think about it, “Cathedral Building” never ends. It is up to every generation to ride up and be “Cathedral Builders”.

The spiritual metaphor is, of course, that God is constructing cathedrals in our souls. Our hearts are to be high-soaring, stained-glass, light infused sanctuaries of the One, True and Living God. Our souls are to be “temples not built with hands” (Acts 7: 48) as the Bible refers to them. We are to take care with what we build in our lives; “straw and stubble” pass away quickly and are burned up in the fires of life. I Corinthians 3: 12 notes that each person is to take care how we build this sanctuary of our soul. Do we build out of gold and silver and precious stones? Do we build out of those things which endure forever? Or do we build out of wood and hay and stubble? Do we build our lives out of things which are passing and fleeting and last not even our own small lifetimes? No other foundation can anyone lay that is firmer nor better than that which has been laid in Christ Jesus! The great poet and philosopher Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. in his famous poem, “The Chambered Nautilus”, declared “Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul. As the swift seasons roll. Leave thy low-vaulted past! (And) let each new temple (be) nobler than the last!” How are you building your soul today?

There’s nothing wrong with playing a round of golf, but some people live for golf. There’s nothing wrong with taking a child to soccer practice as long as they understand it is just a game and there are many, many things more important. Its okay to have 150 “Friends” on Facebook. Its just that those friendships are like as I just read, the same value as play money is to Monopoly. By the way, I read that on Facebook!!! Try to go out and spend that paper Monopoly money and you’ll see the value of that friendship. Friendship is far more than a text or a tweet. Faith is more than just “liking” some statement on Facebook. All these things are fleeting, ephemeral, ultimately value-less and pass away. And yet we invest HUGE amounts of our time in them. We ignore the things of life which endure. We relegate God to one hour, if that. And then we wonder why our souls feel so empty. Our Cathedrals so small.

This is Father’s Day and I would like us to consider what it means to be, as our scripture from Revelation states, “a pillar in the temple of my God.” (Revelation 3: 12) I remember as a child
when I would ride around Pittsburgh with my grandfather, and he passed away in 1960 when I was in first grade, and he was a very active Methodist layman in his church. He was part of what was called “The Builder’s Society” and they would agree to contribute to every new church constructed in the Pittsburgh area. As we drove around Pittsburgh he would point out this church and that church and say with some deserved pride, “I helped to build that church.” My grandmother passed away in 1998 almost 40 years after my grandfather passed away and I thought to myself, “Who is going to come to her funeral because she is 98 years old? All of her friends and contemporaries are gone. Will anyone be here?” My grandfather taught a young adult Sunday School Class and he spent large amounts of time preparing; I have all of his old lessons which were sermons really. He sowed into that class. So the day of my grandmother’s funeral arrived and there were more than 15 members of my grandfather’s “young adult Sunday School Class” in attendance; now men and women in their 60’s and 70’s. He had built with gold and stone, not hay and stubble. And he had built his own life on the firm foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. 40 years after he had passed away what he had built in those young people’s lives still endured. The collection plates in his church are in memory of my grandfather given by that class. And the large stained glass domed ceiling in the sanctuary he and my grandmother gave. They had built that which shall endure. They had built cathedrals with their souls. They were “pillars” of a church that stands the test of time.

Its interesting, I visited a church that had to completely replace its stained glass windows. There, the church built out of concrete the frame in which the windows sat. The weather came and weakened, crumbled and dissolved the frail concrete. But here, if you look at our windows, you will see that they are framed in carved stone, as were the great cathedrals of Europe; built out of stone which endures, not concrete which passes away. Those who have gone before us have built their lives out of that which endures and is everlasting. They were pillars and cathedral builders. Those who hear my words today are now being challenged to do the same.

So if today you decide you wish to be done with lesser things and commit your time and your life to things which have eternal meaning and significance, if today you decide you want to be and become a pillar in the temple of my God, if today you decide you want to link your life with “cathedral building”, then what must you do???? First and foremost, build your life cathedral on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ; there is no other foundation which anyone can lay than that which has been laid in Christ Jesus. HE is stone, not mere concrete. And then fill your soul with the Holy Spirit, “Do you not know that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit?”, fill your heart and mind and life and soul with the living presence of the Lord God Almighty. Fill yourself with the very strength and creative power of the One, True and Living God. That spirit and creativity that has inspired and built every true and lasting cathedral over time. And then build ye more stately mansions with your soul. Focus on forever. Set your time to things which last and endureth forever. Only God is eternal. Only Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. Only God’s steadfast love endureth forever. Be pillars in the temple of my God. Be cathedral builders. “Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (I Corinthians 15: 58) Build thee, more stately CATHEDRALS, O my soul! Amen and Amen.

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IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!