

Untempered Mortar

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FRATERAL GREETINGS FRATRES!

Those who have used mortar in the past know that “untempered” means the mortar ingredients have not mixed properly. If too much water was used, the concrete was weak. If too much sand was used, the mortar lacked stability and was grainy. If too much cement mix was used, the mortar becomes unstable and easily compressed into dust.

In the Lodge when the Senior Warden cautioned the candidate “not to daub with untempered mortar,” what was he talking about? The author of Untempered Mortar¹ uses the Book of Ezekiel and a passage in Scripture² to awaken our faculties and offer, for consideration, a second meaning of “untempered” – “not moderated or controlled.”

In the Book of Ezekiel, untempered mortar has three characteristics:

First, it lacks stability. Scriptures point out God’s virtues and values for human mortar. The Mason is charged with laying a proper foundation upon which to build his moral and Masonic edifice. His “cornerstone” must be done with the proper Mortar of Life otherwise his cornerstone will crack and crumble.

Second, it lacks strength and is weak. If your life’s values and virtues are not held together by those of God, you may trust in the wrong people and the wrong things of life. Masons are taught to encourage intellectual, moral and spiritual improvement in the people we interact with.

And third, untempered mortar lacks security. Masons are taught the lessons of life revolve around in whom they place their trust when we kneel for prayer.

Our egos and pride often get in the way and we “daub” at our Spiritual foundation and use untempered mortar to cover sloppy workmanship. Masonry gently reminds us and shows us practical ways to remove that mortar and replace it with solid, properly mixed mortar so our lives reflect the excellent work our Father in Heaven has started in us.

¹ Douglas Reece, *Untempered Mortar*, The Short Talk Bulletin, Vol., No. 3, March 2013

² Ezekiel 13:10-12, NIV

Freemasonry is a progressive science; a system of ethics wherein moral precepts are taught by lessons based on the allegorical use of the operative craftsman's tools. Symbolic Freemasonry prepares us in the use of symbolic stone for that Spiritual Temple. Capitular and Cryptic Freemasonry instructs us in the allegorical use of additional operative tools of the craftsman. Finally, Chivalric Freemasonry instructs us in the allegorical use of the weapons in the discharge of the duties of knighthood whereby the Moral Temple, built and restored in Symbolic, Capitular and Cryptic Freemasonry, can be defended and beautified by the precepts of Christianity.

The honor and prestige of Templar Masonry emanates from its lofty standards of morality, its moral teachings, the fact that those teachings are exemplified in the lives of men, who not only believe in them, but demonstrate them in their lives, morally and socially. In other words, we need to take the business of Templar Masonry seriously and maintain it as the ambitious standard.

The more we study the lessons of Freemasonry, and especially Templary Masonry, the less we can escape the fact that each of us has assumed in every obligation a heavy and binding moral responsibility. We owe this responsibility not only to ourselves, but to our families, our Fratres, our church, our country, our community, and to those who come after us.

Let me close in some words of wisdom from Most Worshipful Stewart Wilson Miner, a Past Commander of Arlington Commandery No. 29:³

Raise up the capstone, place it true,
Atop the arch in common view;
Proclaim to all by word and deed,
That by intent you honor creed;
Maintain the trust, do all you can,
Glorify God by serving man.

So, keep faith in yourself, in your power to do well, and exert a beneficial influence precept and example upon your fellow man. Offer charity with a liberal hand which feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, binds up the wounds of the afflicted, protects the widow, supports and educates the orphan.

“Let the improvement of yourself keep you so busy that you have no time to criticize others.”
- Roy T. Bennett -

³ Stewart Wilson Miner, *Let Your Work Become Your Mark*, Anchor Communications, Highland Springs, Virginia, 1986, p. 75