**Building for Eternity 5 Jan 2020**

**Intro**

In 1980, I was 6 and in Prendergast infants school and we made a time capsule “not to be opened until the year 2000.”

I remember thinking that I would be 26 in the year 2000 and I couldn’t conceive what it would be like to be that old!

When the year 2000 arrived, I opened what I had made and realised that 20 years wasn’t a very long time - I could remember making a lot of the things, things still seemed very familiar.

In the blink of an eye, another 20 years has passed since that day and I find myself at 46, at the end of another decade and beginning of another

thinking...

what have I done with my life so far?

What have I built of any real value?

Has anything I’ve invested in, poured my time and energies into, will any of it stand the test of time?

Will any of it be of eternal significance?

One of the most valuable things about getting older, is that you gain some **perspective.**

i.e. Things that you once considered important, in the light of eternity, suddenly don’t seem that important anymore.

In the parable of the talents, the Master gave his servants different talents and then He went away for a long time.

When he returned he asked each servant what they had done with the talents he had given them.

One day, very soon, we will stand in front of that Master, the Lord Jesus and he will ask us what we have done with what he has given us.

It occurred to me, that when I stand in that place, nothing of earthly value is going to have survived the transition. We all say things like ‘you can’t take it with you’ …….**so why do we attach so much value and invest so much effort in those things which are not going to last?**

Q = Can you imagine standing before Jesus with empty hands and trying to explain why the things you invested your life in have disintergrated?

Can you imagine explaining that you used the life he gave you to invest in temporary things, things which hold no eternal value whatsoever?

We would stand before him empty handed!

That would be devastating, wouldn’t it?

So!

**Q = How to we build for eternity?**

**How to we build something that will last forever?**

Something that we can present to Jesus and have Him say to us….

Matthew 25:21 ‘You have done well, proven yourself to be my loyal and trustworthy. Because you have been a faithful steward to manage small things, now I will put you in charge of much, much more. You will experience the delight of your master, “Come celebrate with me!”’

**3 building blocks**

I want to suggest 3 building blocks, that will stand the test of time

1. **Faith**

Jesus said “when I return, will I find faith on the earth?”

**Q = How do we build faith?**

In Hebrews 12 Paul instructs the church to “**Fix your eyes on Jesus, He is the author and perfecter of your faith”**

He began your walk with Him, he reached out to you, met you, forgave you, fixed you up, restored you, gave your life meaning and purpose

And the Bible says that “He that began a good work in you will bring it to completion”

But we need to do more than just have Jesus in the background somewhere. Fixing our eyes on Jesus means not getting distracted, it means more than just keeping Him in view or Him being on the horizon somewhere.

He needs to be our focus, our main thing. Because when Jesus really becomes our source, our centre, our answer, our go to person, our reason for living ….. our faith begins to grow.

That leads to the second building block

1. **Hope**

(Hope changes our mental health /our outlook for the better)

I want to show you how faith leads to hope

Abraham provides us with an example of a completely hopeless situation / an impossible situation.

God had said that he and his wife would have a child but they were both far too old and Abraham’s wife was barren. (couldn’t carry a child)

* Physically it was impossible
* Emotionally it must have been extremely confusing / upsetting

But Abraham is called the ‘Father of faith’, listen to what Paul says about him….

Against all odds, when it looked hopeless, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, **19**Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. **20**Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God,

* Which means he didn’t even have a wobble

but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,

* There’s the focus, he was all about giving glory to God

**21**being fully persuaded / fully convinced that God had power to do what he had promised.

* Do you hear the hope he had? He was confident. Full of expectation.

‘being fully convinced that God would do what he promised’

This faith and hope that Abraham displayed, the Bible says “was credited to him as righteousness.”

They had eternal value.

Abraham stood before Jesus with something of worth in his life, something which God valued.

And it actually says ‘the words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us **who believe in him** who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.’

I’m not talking about a general belief ‘that it will work out ok’

or

a passive faith ‘what will be, will be’

– it is about actively believing that Jesus is the Son of God, was raised from the dead and is alive today and wants to walk with you

The third building block, to build something in our lives which has eternal value

is love.

1. **Love**

When Paul talked about faith, hope and love, he said the greatest of these is love. It’s the biggest block of the three. Why?

I thought at first it was because it is who God is. The Bible says “God is love”

So when we love people, we reflect the Father and that’s what we were created to do – we were created in his image, created to reflect Him to others so that they may come to know Him too.

But the more I thought about it, I think now that it is the biggest block, the greatest of the three because love has the potential to affect so many people.

We can have private faith, we can have private hope but it’s impossible to have private love.

Love only works when it’s used on others and there are literally endless opportunities to love other people – almost every hour of every day, there is an opportunity to be kind, or patient or humble, or to rejoice with truth or protect someone or trust someone or hope or persevere.

And it is incredible effective, the Bible says that other spiritual gifts will be forgotten or stop but “love never fails”

Think about yourself for a moment….

* now imagine yourself full of faith, what do you look like?
* now imagine yourself full of hope, what does that change?
* now imagine yourself full of love, what impact would you make?

If I put my own name in here, where it talks about love, listen to the impact this would have on the people around me.

Naomi is incredibly patient.[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+13&version=TPT#fen-TPT-9985f)] Naomi is gentle and consistently kind to all. She refuses to be jealous[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+13&version=TPT#fen-TPT-9985g)] *when blessing comes to someone else*. Naomi does not brag about her achievements nor inflate her own importance. **5**Naomi does not traffic in shame and disrespect, nor selfishly seek her own honour. Naomi is not easily irritated[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+13&version=TPT#fen-TPT-9986h)] or quick to take offense.[[i](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+13&version=TPT" \l "fen-TPT-9986i" \o "See footnote i)] **6**Naomi joyfully celebrates honesty[[j](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+13&version=TPT#fen-TPT-9987j)] and finds no delight in what is wrong.[[k](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+13&version=TPT#fen-TPT-9987k)] **7**Naomi is a safe place of shelter,[[l](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+13&version=TPT#fen-TPT-9988l)] for she never stops believing the best for others.[[m](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+13&version=TPT#fen-TPT-9988m)] Naomi never takes failure as defeat, for she never gives up. Naomi never stops loving.

We’d be so much more like Jesus wouldn’t we?

Faith, hope and love – attributes which carry eternal value

As we begin the 2020’s, will we make these our priorities, our life ambition?

If we’re inspired to do so, they begin with making Jesus our focus and priority.