

The Carpenter Who Built a New World

Most folks know that Jesus' earthly dad was a carpenter. It stands to reason that he grew up in the carpenter's shop, handing him nails, holding boards for Joseph to cut, and sweeping up sawdust. They said of him, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?" Matthew 13:55

"Jesus must have had man hands. He was a carpenter, the Bible tells us. I know a few carpenters, and they have great hands, all muscled and worn, with nicks and callused pads from working wood together with hardware and sheer willpower. And his hands—hands that pounded nails, sawed lumber, drew in the dirt, and held the children he beckoned to him. Hands that washed his disciples' feet, broke bread for them, and poured their wine. Hands that hauled a heavy cross through the streets of Jerusalem and were later nailed to it. Those were some man hands." Cathleen Falsani

Carpenters in my family go back a few generations. My dad, Charles, was a carpenter in his spare time, and could swing a hammer with the best of them. He built a workshop behind our house after I grew up, and spent a lot of time there building things for others.

My grandfather, Troy was a farmer in the early to mid 1900's. In the wintertime, it seems that all farmers are carpenters, for there is much that needs to be fixed or built, and they all know how to work with their hands.

I have a hammer formed from the head of a hammer my dad once had and a new wooden handle from the hardware store. A few other tools are in my workshop, and I can use most of them to fair effect. Many of them have the wear and tear of mission trips and projects build for others, and some of them have been used for projects in my household.

When I started out in the Carpenter's Workshop writing arena, I took from Jesus the idea of being a carpenter in that realm and others, and feel a special connection when I am using my tools to help others in his name. From building houses, playgrounds, and other projects to repairing things or buildings which the owner is unable to fix, I have enjoyed picturing my hands as the hands of Jesus in today's world.

This idea does not stop with woodworking projects. Jesus builds people from the ground up. He builds churches and missionary efforts. In fact, most any effort of the church could be described in woodworking terms.

Erasmus wrote in the 1500's that "by a Carpenter mankind was made, and only by that Carpenter can mankind be remade." The world indeed needs the influence of the Carpenter Jesus. Our world is best when it is made and remade by the hands of God. He has written the

directions for holy carpentry called the Holy Bible. The more we follow those blueprints the better quality result we shall have.

The best carpenters,” goes the old English proverb, “make the fewest chips.” That includes chips on our shoulders, chipping away at other people and chipping away at Christianity in the bars and in the classrooms of colleges and institutions of learning which put the human mind over God’s wisdom.

It is much easier to demolish something than to build. But the preferred result is the new creation. “A jackass can kick a barn down,” writes Sam Rayburn, “but it takes a carpenter to build one.”

“Woodworking matters. It's more than a pastime or hobby—being a woodworker means that you know the satisfaction and pride that comes from using your hands and mind to build beautiful, functional objects, and that you're as interested in the process as the outcome. Amid the speed and chaos of the modern world, woodworking gives us a place where we can slow down, pay attention, and take the time to do things right.” ~Aimé Ontario Fraser, *Your First Workshop: A Practical Guide to What You Really Need*, 2005

Whether we have no idea how to swing a hammer, or possess a fully equipped shop and are skilled with every tool therein, we must seek to appreciate what the holy Carpenter of Nazareth wants to build with our hands. It might be a wooden toy or a fine front door. It could be a heart which now stands firm and faithful. It could be a good organization or a vital church. But it must be built with the hands of the carpenter Jesus giving the direction, and our building on his design.

So when in doubt about what to do, build. Join the carpenter who built a new world in the Roman Empire, and who is ready to do the same thing today. Jesus has been doing this for centuries. From the carpenter’s shop to the cross, Jesus calls us to follow him and find eternal life.