

The Church at Corinth - 1 Corinthians

Chapter 3

Intro

- This chapter begins with Paul reflecting on the spiritual state of the Corinthian church. Please note that Paul is talking to “saved” folk (1 Cor. 1:2).
 - They are saved but carnal.
 - Note that he still refers to them as “babes in Christ” (vs. 1)
 - Carnal (sarkikos): temporal, fleshly
 - Very immature in the faith when they ought to be much stronger. (1 Cor. 13:11; Heb. 5:12-13)
- Because of their immaturity in the faith, Paul had to water down, smooth over, simplify his approach to them. (vs. 2) also John 16:12
 - They couldn’t handle deeper spiritual “meat” since they were still choking on milk.

Signs of Carnality in the Church

- Envy – jealousy
- Strife – friction, anger, arguments, disputings, disunity
- Divisions – have found various reasons to divide themselves instead of using diversity to unite and glorify God 1 Cor. 12:13-26
 - What is the Biblical way to deal with those who cause divisions and dissent in the Body?
Mat. 18; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Thes. 3:6; 2 Thes. 3:14
- Paul notes that all who operate in these ways are walking as men. (Gal. 5:16, 24-25)
- Walking as men also relates to how we operate in the Church
 - Man’s wisdom or obedience to the Word of God – 1 Cor. 2:13; Jer. 8:8-9
 - We walk as men when we place our man-made rules, regulations, and unscriptural policies in place of God’s Word! Mark 7:13; Col. 2:8, 20
 - Prime example: Is the Church a democratic society or a kingdom?
 - (who has the better way? Isa. 55:8-9); (voting on membership? Acts 2:47);
 - democracy – **a** : government by the people; *especially* : rule of the majority **b** : a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections
 - kingdom - **a** : a realm or region in which something is dominant **b** : an area or sphere in which one holds a preeminent position
- Note that the Bible refers to these and others signs of carnality as instruments of destruction and harm to the Church.
1 Tim. 3:6: not a novice (neophyte): young or immature convert
1 Tim. 5:22
- These signs were indicators that they were still being led by their flesh and not the Spirit of God
- Choosing favorites and exalting them to supreme leader is of the flesh – vs. 4

Christians are all laborers for God

2 Cor. 5:18

- Both Paul and Apollos were only ministers (diakonos: attendants, servants) of God
- Both the planter and the one who waters are one – vs. 8 but God gives the increase (vs. 7)
 - We must learn to discern what role we are to play in the lives of others so we won’t frustrate them and ourselves operating out of our flesh and trying to accomplish a spiritual work.
- We are God’s husbandry (field)
 - He is the Master and final Authority in all and all
- We are God’s building
 - His temple, His work, built to His Glory
- Vs. 10: Paul has, by the Grace of God, laid the foundation while another added to it but warns that we be careful how we add to the foundation.
Deut. 4:2; Deut. 12:32

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Chapter 3 (continued)

Jesus Christ the only foundation (vs. 10-11)

- Any man-made attempts to lay a foundation to God are futile
Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20; Acts 4:11-12; 1 John 2:18-23
- Note that the foundation is already laid.
- We are cautioned to beware how we build on the foundation (vs. 10)
 - Some had come to the Corinthian church with divisive doctrines and teachings contrary to the Word of God
 - If the foundation won't support it, we should not build with it! Heb. 11, then 12:1

How to determine what foundation I am standing on (vs. 12-15)

- Gives 2 categories of construction materials
 - Gold, silver, precious stones: Three sorts of materials which will bear the fire; true and solid doctrines. (Durable) Mal. 3:3; Prov. 25:4
 - Wood, hay, stubble: Perishable, can not withstand fire when it is tested
 - What are you using to build with? Mat. 6:25; Mat. 7:21-29; 2 Tim. 2:19-21
- The truth will eventually come out, whether it was of God or of the flesh
 - Testing ground is by fire: Can it stand the heat?
 - Will it endure or will it fade away?

What Are We Building?

- Is this a spiritual house that we are building? Are its sacrifices spiritual and accepted of God? 1 Pet. 2:1-5
- Are we using the Master's Plan for building?
Eph. 4:11-16; Mal. 3:10-12; Deut. 8:18; Jude 20; Heb. 13:17
- Note vs. 10: Paul calls himself a "wise master builder" because the Corinthians, like many of us, considered him and others going by the Word of God as weak, unwise, simple and foolish (1 Cor. 4:10, 1 Cor. 3:10)

Are We Building Right?

- **Is it according to code?**
 - Is it a Word thing or a man thing? Mat. 24:35
 - Is it being done in order? 1 Cor. 14:40
 - Is it being done in obedience? 2 Cor. 10:5-6
- **Are we using the best materials? Vs. 11-15; 2 Tim. 2:19-21**
- **Are we building skillfully?**
2 Tim. 2:15; Psa. 33:3; Rom. 12:11

3 Types of Work Discussed

- **Vs. 14: Work that Abides or Endures**
 - John 15:16, Mat. 24:35
 - The worker receives a reward for this type of work. (2 John 8; Rev. 11:18)
- **Vs. 15: Useless Work**
 - This type of work is futile for the believer but **does not cause them to lose their salvation!**
 - Note the believer is saved but through fire.
 - This and other passages has been erroneously used to justify purgatory by the Roman Catholic church
- **Vs. 17: Destructive Work**
 - Were false teachers among the believers at Corinth whose tendencies were to sin and not holiness
 - Didn't think it serious to cause confusion and division in the temple of God
 - NOTE THE WARNING IN THIS VERSE!

You are God's Temple!

- Vs. 16: temple: naos – inner sanctuary, holy place
 - Place of Divine activity
 - In this verse, it refers to the collective Body, not individuals

