

INTRODUCTION

1. Once again we have the privilege of studying God's Word.
2. Please take your Bible and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 3.
3. We saw in verses 5-9 where Paul used agricultural terminology and now in verses 10-17 he uses architectural terminology.
4. The entire passage is talking about "the judgment of the believer's works."
5. In verse 13 he mentions "the day" that is coming for all believers---to "test the quality of each man's work."
6. Listen as I read 1 Corinthians 3:10-17.

7. 2 Corinthians 5:10 mentions that all believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
8. This is the bema seat in Greek.
9. The bema seat was a place where athletes received rewards.
10. Believer's will receive a reward for their service to Christ.
11. It will be based on their motive for service to Christ.
12. Now, the previous section ended by saying that the Corinthians are God's building.
13. This section (3:10–17) ends by saying that they are God's temple.
14. It is this picture of a building that is now developed.
15. In 3:10–15 Paul shows specifically the work of teachers as well as all believers in the church.

LESSON

I. Paul Laid the Foundation (vv.10-11)

A. By the Grace of God

1. Paul was given grace at salvation

(“given” - aor.pass.part.)

- a) He said later in 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 (NASB) For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

- b) He says this again in 1 Timothy 1:12-14 (NASB) to Timothy when he says, I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He

considered me faithful, putting me into service, 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; 14 and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.

2. The Corinthians had it too (1:4,5,7)

a) They were enriched in “all speech” (1:5)

b) They were enriched in “all knowledge” (1:5)

c) They were “not lacking in any gift” (1:7)

B. As a Wise Master Builder (1:10)

1. Paul was skilled at what he was doing (“wise” sophos, originally meant “skilled”)

2. He not only drew the plans but he also built the building

“master builder” (architektōn) refers to somebody who draws the plan and builds the building.

- a) Paul “laid a foundation”

“Laid” (tithemi), aor.act.ind.

The aorist...looks back to when Paul first preached among them.¹

- b) Paul used similar terminology in Ephesians 2:19-22 (NASB) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted

¹ Gardner, Paul. 1 Corinthians. Ed. Clinton E. Arnold. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. Print. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.

together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

- (1) In the eighteen months he had worked among the Corinthians (Acts 18:11) Paul had faithfully preached and taught the gospel and nothing else (1 Cor. 2:2).
- (2) He carefully and skillfully laid the right foundation.
- (3) He had the right motive, the right message, the right power and the right approach; he was a master strategist.
- (4) Though he was primarily the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), his strategy was to go to the synagogue to preach first, because the gospel is first of all for the Jews (Rom.

1:16).

- (5) He also knew that the Jews would listen to him as one of themselves, and that those who were converted could help him reach the Gentiles.
- (6) After winning converts in the synagogue, and often being thrown out, he would begin preaching and ministering among the Gentiles in the community (Acts 17:1–4; 18:4–7).
- (7) He carefully and diligently planned and laid a solid foundation. The footings were deep and would last.²

He also knew that...

II. Others Build on the Foundation (vv.10b-c)

² MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

“And another is building on it.”

- A. All New Churches Lay a Foundation
- B. Others Build on that Foundation
- C. How We Build is Critical (as we will see in v.12)
- D. Paul Didn't Want to Build on Another's Foundation (especially if they were in error)

Romans 15:20 (NASB) And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation.

- E. He Wanted to Preach Where Christ Wasn't Named
- F. He Wanted to Make Sure Others Were Building on the Right Foundation

III. Jesus is the Foundation (v.11)

Paul did not design the foundation, he only laid it down by preaching Christ.³

A. Jesus Established the Foundation

1. Jesus began his ministry with Mark saying in Mark 1:14-15 (NASB) Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
2. After His resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 24:44-47 (NASB) 44 Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the

³ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.

Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

B. The Foundation is Jesus

1. His virgin birth
2. His perfect life
3. His crucifixion
4. His resurrection

C. This is the Foundation Paul Laid

1. Paul preached the gospel of a crucified and risen Christ (1:23; 2:2)
2. This was the foundational message Jesus preached
3. This is the message we are to preach today

4. Anything less is false teaching

Now Paul looks at...

IV. The Materials Used (vv.12-15)

Paul lists two types of materials in verse 12 that believers use to build on the foundation of Christ.

Both are of different quality. One is perishable and the other is not. One withstands the fire, but the other burns up. Anything that is not of the quality of the wisdom of God is wood, hay, and straw and will be consumed in the final judgment.⁴

As long as believers are alive, they *are* building. They are building some sort of life, some sort of church, some sort of Christian fellowship and service. It may be a beautiful structure or a hovel (shack), it may be by intention or by neglect, but it cannot help being something.⁵

⁴ Taylor, Mark. [1 Corinthians](#). Ed. E. Ray Clendenen. Vol. 28. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014. Print. The New American Commentary.

⁵ MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

He says in verse 12 (NASB) “Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw.”

First Paul mentions...

A. Superior Materials (v.12a)

“gold, silver, precious stones”

Here precious stones probably do not refer to diamonds, rubies, or other gems but rather to the granite, marble, or alabaster used in the construction of costly temples.⁶

1. These materials represent faithful ministry
2. They refer metaphorically to a true love for Christ --- loving Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength

⁶ MacDonald, William. [*Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*](#). Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

3. They represent right motives for service in building the church

The second list of materials are...

B. Inferior Materials (v.12b)

“wood, hay, straw”

1. These represent shallow activity with no eternal value
2. They are not evil but inferior
3. They represent wrong motives (James 4:1-3)

C. Testing the Quality of the Work (vv.13-15)

Each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If

any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

V. The Warning given (vv.16-17)

Here is a severe warning to any who would try to interfere with or destroy the building of the church on the foundation of Christ.

A. The Question (v.16)

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1. Every believer is a temple of God and so is His church

Jesus said in Revelation 2:1 (NASB) that He was "The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands..."

2. His Spirit indwells every believer in every church (John 14:16-17; Rom.8:9)

B. The Warning (v.17)

If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

CONCLUSION

1. What are you building your life on?
2. Is it Jesus Christ?
3. Do you love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?
4. Are you building the church in the right way with the right attitude and motive?
5. If you've built it on wood, hay, and straw, it will not last the test of fire. It will burn up. But you will be

saved and not rewarded.

6. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:5 (NASB) Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.
7. The Apostle John said in 2 John 1:8 (NASB) Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.
8. Let's pray.