

City Parks and Buildings (1 Corinthians 3:5-15)

I. Introduction

- A. *Builders liable in 1994 Northridge, California earthquake*
- B. Review of the context – reasons for the divisions and dissensions in the church; 1Co 3:1-4 transitions from the first reason to the second – *a misunderstanding of the Christian ministry*
- C. Overview and reading the passage; outline of the sermon

II. The ‘Parks Department’ (1 Co 3:5-9)

- A. *What then is Apollos? What is Paul?*
 1. Why “*what*” and not “*who*”
 2. *Servants – δῖάκονοι = table waiters (v.5)*
 3. *Farmhands – a plowboy and waterboy (v. 6)*
 4. *Nothing but God is everything (v. 7)*
 5. *God’s fellow-workers – servants united for God’s purpose (v. 8)*
 6. *Rewarded for their labor (v. 8)*
 - a. Do rewards deny the doctrine of justification by faith?
 - b. God rewards Gospel labor (Rev 2:23, 22:12, Matt 16:27)
 - c. Parable of the talents – reward for diligent labor
 7. *God’s ‘garden’ (Ex 15:17, Num 24:5-6, Is 5:1-2, 61:3, Am 9:15)*
 8. *Let’s get our minds off of the farm-hands and put them on gathering in the harvest!*

III. The ‘Building Department’ (1 Co 3:10-15)

- A. *What goes into building a building? (v. 10-12)*
 1. ἄρχιτέκτων = a general contractor
 2. One foundation – Jesus Christ
 3. Paul expects others to build on the foundation he laid
 4. God is concerned with what materials the builders use
 5. God holds us accountable for how we build His church
 - a. *gold, silver, precious stones* – Gospel material: worship, prayer, the Word of God
 - b. *wood, hay, stubble* – human wisdom: psychology, purpose-driven ideology, church growth techniques
- B. *The quality of the building will be tested by fire (v. 13)*
 1. *What this does not mean (purgatory, hell, the carnal Christian)*
 2. *On the day of the Lord (Mal 4:1, 2 Thess 1:7,8, 2 Pet 3:12)*
- C. *A person is not saved by how good or bad his church is (v.13-14)*

IV. Application

- A. *This raises the bar as to how we approach ‘where we do church’*
- B. *Church membership is not a commitment to a leader, but to the field*
- C. *No man has a corner on all truth*
- D. *Care must be taken in what we “try out” in ministry*
- E. *We must not be followers of men*
- F. *God alone is responsible for the growth of our church*
- G. *Let us be careful and serious in our commission to build our church*