

November 4, 2018

## Take Care How You Build

### *1 Corinthians 3:10-15*

#### Intro

- If we follow our strongest emotions, we will always find something we are building or protecting.
- When we're busy building our own kingdoms, people become either vehicles to getting what we want or obstacles standing in the way.

Paul to Corinth: "You *are* supposed to be building something, but it's not your stage."

#### The Builders (v. 10)

##### ***"By grace, I built"***

- God's gift / enablement + Paul's effort.

*"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me." (1 Corinthians 15:10)*

##### ***"Like a skilled master builder"***

- What God calls us to do requires wisdom.
- Skillful building involves prayer, the power of the Spirit, depth in the Word of God, humility and courage...

**“And now others are building”**

*“For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. For we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:14)*

➤ *Count Zinzendorf*

- Other hands will touch what we have invested in—by God’s design.

**“Take care how you build”**

**The Foundation (v. 11)**

- The Gospel is not the front door you pass through as you enter the building. It’s the *foundation*. And the foundation determines the shape of the structure.

*“For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.” (2 Corinthians 11:4)*

“If Christ is not the basis of whatever sort of moral life a person may try to live, it is not the Christian life, and if he is not the basis of whatever sort of community men may try to build, that community is not the Christian church. Clearly, Paul’s fear is that they will subtly change the foundation, thinking that they are not replacing Christ but supplementing him with a fuller and richer spirituality. If that happens, then the end product will not be a Christian church. The sufficiency of the gospel of Christ is the issue that is at stake here, and Paul is again fighting against the Corinthian view that the apostolic gospel is somehow inadequate and needs to be supplemented with a form of supernatural triumphalism.”

–David Jackman, *Let’s Study 1 Corinthians*, 56

## The Materials (v. 12)

- Natural materials that are impressive to natural minds...

“Is it not amazing: though we know the power of the Holy Spirit can be ours, we still ape the world’s wisdom, trust its forms of publicity, its noise, and imitate its ways of manipulating men! If we try to influence the world by using its methods, we are doing the Lord’s work in the flesh. If we put activity, even good activity, at the center rather than trusting God, then there may be the power of the world, but we will lack the power of the Holy Spirit.”

–**Francis Schaeffer**, “The Lord’s Work in the Lord’s Way,” *No Little People*, 70

- The materials of the Spirit can be slow and difficult.

## The Lasting Structure (v. 13-15)

- The Corinthians were too shortsighted in their evaluation.

“Whether one’s work will endure awaits more than the test of time; it awaits the test of the end time.” –**David Garland**, *1 Corinthians*, 117

- Eternity is the great difference maker. And Paul could feel it.

## Loss

- Paul isn’t talking about a believer suffering for his sins, either to pay for them or to purify them. It is not the *person* who is burned here but the *work*.

- Sobering reality: some of the work we thought we were doing for God will be lost.

*"...a workman who has no need to be ashamed" (2 Tim. 2:15)*

*"It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored" (Phil. 1:20)*

*"Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God." (1 Cor. 4:5)*

"In addition to teaching us not to seek power, the Lord Jesus taught us not to seek human praise. Those who seek the praise of men, He said, have their reward when they have the praise. We often read this pietistically and miss the point. Jesus meant what he said: if our aim has been praise and power and we have it, either in the world or in the church, we have had it. It is the one who does not seek it now who will have the praise when he stands before the dear Lord's face. Scripture is clear that we must either humble ourselves now or be humbled in the future."

–Francis Schaeffer, "The Lord's Work in the Lord's Way," *No Little People*, 70

### **Reward**

- Mystery: God rewards what his grace produces.

*"He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor." (1 Cor. 3:8)*

*"In the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58)*

"Scripture simply does not teach what most of us seem to assume—that heaven will transform each of us into equal beings with equal possessions and equal responsibilities and equal capacities. It does not say our previous lives will be of no eternal significance. It says exactly the opposite."

–Randy Alcorn, "Believer's Judgment of Works" (Jan. 1994)