

## 1Corinthians – Week 13

### I. Quick Review:

#### A. Chapter 3

- i. 1Cor. 3:1-3a (ESV), *“But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. (2) I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, (3) for you are still of the flesh...”*
  1. This passage is dealing with Paul first visit to Corinth:
    - a. When Paul first came to them, he bottle-fed them the basics like:
      - i. Faith in Christ, repentance from evil deeds, baptism, the resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment, etc. (see Heb. 6:1-2).
      - ii. The purpose of spiritual milk is to cause one to grow up in his/her salvation (1Peter 2:2)
    - b. But now, about 5 years later, when they should have been able to take in more advanced teachings, they weren’t able to do so.
      - i. In other words, they had not advanced in their faith (v. 2b).
    - c. Paul calls them worldly people and he explains why in the following verses...
  - ii. 1Cor. 3:3b-4 (ESV), *“...For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? (4) For when one says, ‘I follow Paul,’ and another, ‘I follow Apollos,’ are you not being merely human?”*
    1. Characteristics of immaturity:
      - a. Jealousy (envy)
        - i. Some were envying others because they had a certain gift and/or they saw themselves as disciples of certain teachers.
        - ii. Envy leads to...
      - b. Strife (quarrels, contentions, debating, disputes)
        - i. Not getting along with each other instead of loving as Christ loves.
      - c. These are attributes stem from earthly wisdom...
        - i. James 5:13-16 (ESV), *“Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition (KJV-strife) in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. <sup>15</sup>This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where jealousy and selfish ambition (KJV-strife) exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.”*
          1. James explains that disorder (divisions) and evil practices stem from jealousy and strife!
          2. This goes hand in hand with what Paul said in verse 4 regarding the divisions in the church...
        - ii. Partisanship is a manifestation of earthly wisdom
          1. The Greeks had their favorite philosophers
          2. Their students would quarrel who is the best teacher.
          3. You see this in political circles today.
          4. However, this attitude is totally inappropriate when it comes to God’s people.
            - a. The “personality cult” that existed back then, and exists today, are in direct disobedience to the Word of God and to the mind of Christ.
            - b. The only one who should have the place of preeminence is Christ (Col. 1:18).

2. Next, Paul shows the Corinthians how they should view him and the other teachers...
- iii. 1Corinthians 3:5-6 (ESV), *“What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. (6) I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”*
  1. Paul refers himself as simply a servant, a minister
    - a. The term “servant” – then and now – is not a prestigious at all, especially in a time when there were slaves (servants) and masters.
    - b. It’s as if Paul were saying, *“Look guys, I’m merely a waiter who busses tables! Nobody builds a movement around a food service worker! Apollos and I were simply God’s waiters to bring food to you! So don’t try to honor us! Honor the One who prepared the food and delivered it through us! God placed you where you needed to be to hear the gospel! And He put us here with you so that you can come to believe His message! So why place one table waiter over another? That’s foolish!”*
    - c. Paul, along with Apollos and Cephas, were merely instruments, carrying out their God-given purpose.
      - i. In a concert, who receives the praise: the instrument or the musician playing the instrument? Of course, the musician!
      - ii. In the same way, who is to be praised? The one who plants? The one who waters? Or the one who causes the growth?
      - iii. For this reason, Paul goes on to say...
- iv. 1Corinthians 3:7-9 (ESV), *“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. (8) He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. (9) For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building. ”*
  1. In other words, next to God, Paul and Apollos are nothing. So why the partisanship? It is God who gives the growth! Boast in the Lord!
  2. Paul and Apollos were men, like you and I, saved by the grace of God, doing what they were commanded to do:
    - a. Paul was a planter: he was called to establish a church at Corinth.
    - b. Apollos watered: he was called to nurture God’s people as a teacher.
  3. Paul and Apollos, like laborers who work under a common boss, are one:
    - a. Neither one of them is not greater or lesser than the other!
  4. They both depend on God for their wages according to their labor:
    - a. God rewards His servants, not according to the fruit of the labor, but by the labor itself!
    - b. He did not say to them to go and “convert” all nations (fruit of the labor), but rather, go and “preach the gospel” to all nations (the labor itself).
  5. In verses 5-8, Paul is basically saying, *“We are not heroes to be adored; nor are we gods to be worshipped; nor are we masters to be blindly followed. We are simply God’s servants, doing what the Master calls us to do. We are merely His instruments through whom you have come to believe.”*
  6. Paul calls them God’s field and God’s building.
    - a. Lord willing, we will discuss this in the next class, since the next 8 verses (vv. 10-17) deals with this concept.