

1Corinthians – Week 14

I. Quick Review:

A. Chapter 3:1-9

- i. When Paul first came to them, he bottle-fed them the basics of Christianity
- ii. About 5 years later, they were still immature in faith
 1. There was jealousy (envy)
 2. Strife (quarrels, contentions, disputes)
 3. They were boasting in their teachers rather than in Christ
 - a. Those who teach in the Church are mere instruments of God, servants in the lowly sense of the word; table waiters delivering the “spiritual food” that has been prepared by the Lord.
 - b. Does one praise the instrument or the one playing the instrument?
 - c. Does one praise the one who brings the food or the one who prepared it?
- iii. Paul’s point is simple: he, Apollos and Cephas are merely servants of God working in God’s field:
 1. Paul, the planter: Acts 18:1-18
 - a. He was the one who brought the gospel to Corinth
 - b. His preaching reaped converts, thus establishing a congregation there
 - c. After 18 months teaching them, he left
 2. Apollos, the water-er: Acts 18:27-19:1
 - a. Apollos continued to teach (disciple) the new converts at Corinth.
 3. God, the One who causes the seed to grow
 - a. Farming is a partnership with God
 - i. The farmer works hard, planting and cultivating the seeds but he knows that God is the One who designed the seeds to grow!
 1. A God-fearing farmer, when he yields a crop, thanks God!
 - ii. Paul planted, Apollos watered but God caused it to grow – He deserves all the credit for salvation!

II. The Church compared to a building:

A. A building has a foundation

B. A building has building materials resting upon its foundation

i. In this case, God’s building is made up of souls...

1. 1Peter 2:5 (ESV), *“you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”*

C. The fire will test the quality of the building material

D. In context, the terms “planting and watering” are descriptive of the teacher’s work...

i. Chapter 3:10-11 (ESV), *“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. (11) For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

1. The term “grace” refers the God-given gifts and abilities (in context, Paul’s apostleship)
2. In the first analogy, the Church was likened to a field:
 - a. Paul was the planter
3. In this second analogy, the Church was likened to a building:
 - a. Paul was the skilled master builder
 - b. He is the one who laid down the building’s foundation
 - i. The foundation is the most important aspect of the building!
 - ii. Without a strong foundation, the building will fall apart!
Remember the wise and foolish man of Matthew 7:24-27?

4. The foundation is not Paul, Apollos or Cephas (Peter), it is Jesus Christ!
 - a. This includes:
 - i. Christ's identity (that is, the Messiah, the Son of God, Immanuel-God with us)
 - ii. Christ's teachings (doctrines):
 1. Ephesians 2:19-20 (ESV), *"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (20) built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone"*
 - a. Apostles and prophets spoke, out of divine revelation, the very words of God.
 - i. And who did the apostles say the foundation was? Jesus Christ (1Cor. 3:11)
 - ii. Christ is the chief stone!
 - ii. Chapter 3:12-13 (ESV), *"Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—(13) each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done."*
 1. Two types of building materials:
 - a. That which will endure through the fiery trials of this life or at judgment (Gold, silver, precious stones).
 - i. Example: that which proceeds from heavenly wisdom: Righteousness, faith, love, peace (2Tim. 2:22-see "point a" below); meekness, good deeds, sincerity, merciful, impartial, etc. (James 3:13, 17-18)
 - b. That which will perish through the fiery trials of this life or at judgment (wood, hay, straw).
 - i. Example: that which comes from the worldly wisdom: envy, jealousy, division, evil practices, etc. (cf. James 3:14-16).
 2. Since God's Church is made of living materials (souls), the gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and straw represents the character of the converts:
 - a. 2Timothy 2:19-22 (ESV), *"But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.' (20) Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. (21) Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. (22) So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."*
 - i. In this passage, the character of some are honorable (gold, silver) while the character of others are not (wood, clay).
 3. Each man's (teacher's) work:
 - a. What does "work" mean? Paul called the Corinthians his work...
 - i. 1Corinthians 9:1 (ESV), *"...Are not you my workmanship in the Lord?"*
 - ii. KJV says, *"...are not ye my work in the Lord?"*

- iii. Chapter 3:14-15 (ESV), *“If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.”*
 - 1. What is that reward? A certain hierarchy in Heaven? I don’t think so!
 - a. Eternal life is the reward for all true and faithful Christians, not levels of glory or positions.
 - b. So what is this reward? Perhaps it refers to the teacher seeing his converts (that is, his work of gold, silver, precious stones) enter Heaven.
 - i. Paul told the Thessalonians the following...
 - 1. 1Thess. 2:19-20 (ESV), *“For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? (20) For you are our glory and joy.”*
- iv. Chapter 3:15 (ESV), *“If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”*
 - a. If the work represents the converts, then the teacher would experience personal loss should his converts (that is, his work) be proven unfaithful (wood, hay, straw).
 - b. The teacher does not lose his salvation because of the unfaithfulness of his converts, but he must come through the fire, remaining faithful himself!
- v. ***Chapter 3:16-17 (ESV), *“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? (17) If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.”*
 - 1. Although our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:19-20), in the context, “God’s Temple” refers to the Church.
 - 2. A strong warning is given here:
 - a. God will destroy anyone who tries to destroy the Church
 - b. And what destroys the Church?
 - i. Jealousy! Quarreling! Division! Worldly wisdom!
 - ii. The Corinthians were grieving the Holy Spirit by their behavior and by their action, were destroying the Church.
 - iii. Their action, if not repented, would lead to the loss of their souls and grievance on part of those who labored over them, like Paul, Apollos and other faithful teachers.

***Note to the teacher: If you are running out of time, save this section for next class.