

1Corinthians – Week 15

I. Quick Review:

A. Chapter 3:10-17

i. The Church compared to a building:

1. Its foundation is Jesus Christ (vs. 11)
 - a. This foundation includes the words of the prophets and apostles, that is, the doctrines of Christ (Ephesians 2:19-20)
2. The building materials are the members
 - a. Peter compares members to living stones (1Peter 2:5)
 - b. The work of the teacher would be his disciples (cf. 1Cor. 9:1)
 - i. Those whose lives reflect the wisdom that comes through the message of the cross are said to be gold, silver, and precious stones.
 - ii. Those whose lives reflect the wisdom that comes from the world are said to be wood, hay and straw.
3. The fire will test the character of the believer
 - a. The gold, silver, and precious stones will come through the fire.
 - b. The wood, hay, straw will be burnt up.
4. The reward is the teacher seeing his work survive the fire (cf. 1Thess. 2:19-20).
5. The teacher, himself, if his life and teaching reflect the wisdom that comes through the message of the cross would be saved, as he goes through the fire.

II. *** The Church as a Temple

A. In 1889, an unusual structure was built for an international exhibition

- i. The citizens of the city called the structure “monstrous” and wanted it dismantled after the exhibition was over.
- ii. But its architect took pride in his work and defended it from its would-be destroyers because he knew that it was destined for greatness!
- iii. Today, the structure is one of the architectural wonders of the world and stands as a landmark of Paris, France.
- iv. The architect’s name was Alexandre Gustave Eiffel
- v. The structure is the Eiffel Tower.

B. In the same way, there is an Architect who takes pride and is loyal to His structure – the Church!

- i. He knows that His structure is destined for greatness when He comes again!
- ii. He entrusted His structure to His apostles and prayed for it in John 17, that many would hear and believe the gospel through the members of this structure!
- iii. Have you ever thought about how much God loves His Church?
 1. Paul is going to inform us that God lives in the Church and values it like no other entity...

C. 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.*”

- i. Although our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:19-20), in the context, “God’s Temple” refers to the Church.
- ii. Notice how Paul asks a rhetorical question: “*Do you not know...?*”
 1. Paul is telling them something that they should know but didn’t, either because they have forgotten this basic principle or have rejected it!
 2. He tells them that God lives in the Church and therefore, they should be maturing in faith and becoming more like Jesus in character!

- iii. Paul then gives a strong warning:
 - 1. God will destroy anyone who tries to destroy the Church
 - 2. Have you ever read the book of Esther?
 - a. The book tells of a certain man named Haman who tried to wipe out God's people from the face of the earth.
 - b. At the end, it was he that wound up being wiped out from the face of the earth.
 - c. The lesson of the book is this: Don't try to destroy God's House!
 - iv. What are some things that destroy the Church?
 - 1. Jealousy! Quarreling! Division! (1Cor. 1:10; 3:3-4)
 - 2. Worldly wisdom and methodology! (1Cor. 1:17-25)
 - a. When someone, especially a church leader, chooses to teach according to the wisdom and the practice of the world, he begins to corrupt and destroy the church.
 - b. When church leaders seek to make the church impressive and powerful by the methods and standards of the world, they are corrupting and destroying the church!
 - 3. Other things that destroy the church are false doctrines and ear-tickling sermons that lull members into spiritual sleep.
 - v. God's destruction may come in various forms:
 - 1. Excommunication (dis-fellowship) -- 1Cor. 5:5, 13
 - 2. Sickness and death – 1Cor. 11:30
 - 3. Cast into hell at Judgment Day
 - vi. Paul is now going to share that God's approval is better than man's applause...
- D. Paul's answer to the question: "How can one truly be wise?"
- i. Chapter 3:18 (ESV), "*Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.*"
 - 1. Paul urges the Corinthians to turn aside from the world's view of wisdom and to adopt God's view of wisdom.
 - 2. In order for that to happen, Paul tells them to give up their own "wisdom."
 - 3. It is better to be God's "fool" than to be man's "genius."
 - 4. So how does one become wise? By living according to the message of the cross!
 - a. By doing so, your deep love for Jesus will make you "out-of-step" with the world!
 - i. The world may call you "foolish" should you submit to your husband, but God will deem you wise!
 - ii. The world may call you "old-fashioned" should you dress modestly, but God will deem you wise!
 - iii. The world may call you "boring" should you live a godly life, but God will deem you wise!
 - ii. Chapter 3:19-20 (ESV), "*For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their craftiness,'²⁰ and again, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.'*"
 - 1. The reason we follow God's wisdom is because, to God, the world's ways are stupid!
 - 2. He quotes Job 5:13, showing, like a hunter who captures his prey, so God traps those who think they are wise!
 - 3. He quotes Psalm 94:11. In the context of this Psalm, we read how man, who thinks he is smart, is really foolish (Ps. 94:2, 4, 8). So when the psalmist uses the term "mere breath," he is denoting how temporal his "wisdom" is.
 - 4. Paul made this point earlier in 1Cor. 2:6, how man's wisdom comes to nothing.

- iii. Chapter 3:21-23 (ESV), “*So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, ²³and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.*”
1. In other words, in Christ, all things are gifts!
 - a. Teachers like Paul, Apollos, and Peter are gifts belonging to them!
 - i. Therefore, stop all this division and fighting as if they belong only to certain groups in the church!
 - b. The earth: It belongs to you; glorify God with it!
 - c. God has given life to you; glorify Him with it!
 - d. Death belongs to you: it will carry you from this life to the next! It will not bring terror to your soul, nor shall it rob you of your spiritual life!
 - e. And remember: you belong to Christ! Therefore, boast in Him!