



CROSS CHURCH

DISPLAY THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL

Scripture | 1 Corinthians 3.5-23

From the start, Paul has addressed the slogans of the Corinthian church. 'I follow Paul.' Or, 'I follow Apollos.' Now, Paul counteracts what they were suggesting and provides the clear alternative banner under which all Christians must serve. The work is as varied as the servants addressing the tasks. Yet, all of the gospel construction belongs to God. Using three metaphors, Paul attempts to teach them. What believers are doing together is a weighty, glorious adventure. The reward comes not from men here, but the reward and payment comes from above. Our boast can never be in another man or woman. There is room for only one hero in the church. He bears the victorious wounds of Calvary.

Observation

READ 1 Cor 3.5-9 | All those who build the church are only servants of the Owner of the church.

What had Paul said in 3:4 that makes him begin this new section with his question about Apollos and Paul? How does v5 pick back up on his original concern in 1:12?

How does Paul answer himself in v5? What is important about the two components of his answer?

How do Paul's two components help us as we think about our role at FMFB? How does v6 expand Paul's answer in v5 and our answer about our role?

Why is a farming/ gardening metaphor so appropriate for the church? (Mark 12:1-2, John 15:1-8)

In what sense are neither planter nor waterer anything? In what sense is God everything?

If planter and waterer are nothing, why are there planters and waterers? How are planters and waters both distinct yet one? (v8)

How are distinction yet oneness qualities of the Godhead? How does our distinctness yet oneness in Christ bear witness to the nature of God?

If those who build the church are just servants of the owner of the church, why do each receive wages according to their labor? How is labor for Christ both gift and responsibility?

What point is Paul making in v9 about the relative importance of the servants, the field/building, and the One who owns both? How does Paul's point help us to think well about ourselves and our church, and about the One who's church we are?

READ 1 Corinthians 3.10-15 | Only that which is worthy of Christ may be used to build His church.

What metaphor does Paul switch to here? How does v10 continue what Paul's point was in vv5-6?

What does Paul say his role for the Corinthian church was? How was grace involved?



What foundation is Paul referring to? How does his description of the foundation depend on the cross? (1:22-24, 2:2)

Why would someone else build upon Paul's foundation? In what sense might someone try to lay another foundation for a church beside Jesus Christ?

How does Paul describe the process of building and its significance in v12? Why would the building process "become manifest" at some later point, rather than immediately?

What is "the Day" that Paul is talking about? (1:8; Luke 17:22-24; Phil 2:14-16) How does the outcome of that day make our efforts and approach to building the Lord's church now so important?

What does Paul emphasize about what is and what is not lost on that Day? What would make our work for Christ and His church worthy of Christ?

How did the divisions in Corinth display "Christ-unworthy" work?

What types of approaches to building the church may seem worthwhile but are actually worthless? How can we try to assure that our approach to the church is Christ/ cross-worthy?

READ 1 Corinthians 3.16-17 | The church is the Temple where the Spirit dwells.

How does the building idea get magnified now by Paul? How does knowing that the pronouns in these two verses are plural (you all, y'all) help us understand what Paul is saying?

In what sense does the Spirit dwell not just within individual believers but within a church? How do Paul's words echo what God had already done for His people in the OT? (Gen 2:8, 3:8; Exod 25:8-9; 1 Kings 6:13; Luke 2:22-32; Rev 21:3)

How do Paul's words display what God's plan has been all along? How should we assess the value of our church/ any church?

What do Paul's words warn against that was occurring in the church at Corinth? Why? What might that warning mean for FMFB?

How does gospel construction differ from gospel destruction? Why should we be about gospel construction rather than gospel destruction?

READ 1 Corinthians 3.18-23 | All things belong to the church because all things belong to Christ.

Why does gospel construction require continual self-assessment? What dangers does Paul point out in vv18-20?

How was foolishness showing up in Corinth? (v21) What might you or I be tempted to boast about/ boast in that would be foolish?

What does Paul explain that makes boasting in mere men seem so limited and foolish? What is his logic about why all things are "yours?"

If all things are put under Christ's feet (Eph 1:19-23), and He is our head and we are His body, in what sense are all things ours? Why would that mean that we do not belong to Paul or Apollos or Cephas, but that they belong to us?

Why is gospel construction about the “finish out” of all things for the One who owns the church? Why should we “bother” with being part of FMFB?

Application

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text? How did the Spirit move you to respond?
2. What do you think a church full of people pursuing only the American Dream might look like? How does that compare with God's design for the church?
3. How would you define or describe the church? A body of baptized believers? A building where members assemble for worship and Bible study?
4. Why is the ministry of the gospel a team effort? What is our reward for participating in God's work through the church?
5. What could you do to improve unity at our church?
6. Why does greater maturity naturally lead to greater unity? On the other hand, how does disunity hurt our ministry efforts?
7. What is one great consequence of church conflict? Why?
8. In what authentic and lasting ways can you build on the foundation that God has laid?
9. Why is it so easy to lose our focus on God alone as the one who does the work?
10. In what ways would our church look different if we were more aware of God dwelling in our church body?
11. Are there any younger believers for whom you are modeling how to pursue spiritual rewards? Who has God placed in your life for you to lead in this way?
12. Am I truly giving my heart, soul, mind, and strength to the Lord's service? On what things am I focusing my greatest affections and attentions?
13. If God will judge our construction (how we 'plant' and 'build' his church) some day, how can we judge ourselves today so that we may rejoice on that day?

Prayer

- Thank God for the Holy Spirit coming and giving birth to the church. Thank God for allowing us to be a part of His kingdom's work through the local church. Pray that we would give ourselves wholly to the Lord's service by serving one another together.
- Pray for Ryan & Michelle Tankersley as they begin their first steps in a new country (Japan) with a new mission.

Observations & Prayer Requests

- **MY THOUGHTS** | Record insights and questions from the group experience.

- **MY RESPONSE** | Note specific ways you'll put into practice the truth explored this week.


- **MY PRAYERS** | List specific prayer needs and answers to remember this week.



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