

(Through the Bible) 1 Corinthians 3-4

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith teaches on the importance of spiritual maturity and the foundation of the church, emphasizing the need to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ and to be careful how we build.

Duration: 1:21:06

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:10

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, Paul addresses the Corinthians who were boasting about their wealth and status. He contrasts their attitude with his own, stating that he would rather they truly were reigning so that he could share in their glory. Paul then describes the apostles as being appointed to death and being made a spectacle to the world, angels, and men. He emphasizes the importance of not constantly judging and condemning oneself, but rather doing one's best and leaving the rest to the Lord. Paul concludes by reminding the Corinthians that any success or goodness they experience is a gift from God and should not be boasted about as if it were their own achievement.

Transcript

Let's turn now to 1 Corinthians chapter 3, beginning with the 14th verse of chapter 2. Paul here separates men into three classifications, starting in chapter 2 with the natural man, the unregenerate man, the man who knows not Jesus Christ. And concerning him, he said he cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.

So the natural man in darkness, not able to see, not able to know the things of God. In realizing this, in praying for those who are not saved, it is important to realize that Satan, as Paul said, the God of this world, has blinded their eyes that they cannot see the truth. So they cannot receive, neither can they know, because Satan has blinded them to the truth of God.

And as Paul said to Timothy, that we might take them from the captivity of the enemy, who is holding them captive against their wills. So the direction of our prayers for the natural man would be that God would open their eyes to the truth, that God would deliver them from that power of Satan by which they are held, that blindness that Satan has brought over their minds concerning God, and that Satan's work be bound in order that they might be freed and become a free moral agent capable then of receiving Jesus Christ. It is a misnomer to declare that the natural man is a free moral agent.

He is furthest from free moral agency. He is bound and he is blinded by the power of darkness. And so the thrust of the prayers are to deliver him from this power of darkness, to make him a free moral agent in order that he might believe.

Now in contrast to the natural man, you have the spiritual man, and Paul says, but he that is spiritual understands or discerns all things, though he is not understood by men. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. So the spiritual man is a man whose mind is now controlled by the spirit.

Man, a threefold being, body, soul, spirit. If the body is uppermost, then your mind is controlled by the body needs and is occupied by your body needs. And you have what Paul calls in Romans eight, the mind of the flesh or the carnal mind, which is enmity against God.

Neither can it know him. When a person is born again by the spirit of God, he becomes spirit, soul, and body. And when the spirit is uppermost, then you have the mind of the spirit, the mind that is under the control of the spirit.

As Paul said here, we have the mind of Christ. Now, as we get into chapter three, Paul introduces us to a third classification. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual.

Now he's talking to those in Corinth, those in the church in Corinth, those who are presumably born again. And yet they are not spiritual. For he says, I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

Now the issue arises and people often question, is it possible to be a carnal Christian? A carnal Christian is one who has received Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, but does not yet have victory over the flesh. And thus still walks many times under the control of the flesh. He does believe he has received Jesus as his Lord or take that back.

He has received Jesus as his Savior, but not as his Lord for the flesh is still ruling over him. And he needs deliverance from that power of the flesh that has a hold on his life. So Paul describes this as the conditions of those in Corinth.

He cannot talk to them as spiritual for they are still carnal, but he does call them babes in Christ. And so he acknowledges that they are in Christ, but unfortunately they are babes. There is a natural development and growth physically, even as there is and should be a natural development and growth spiritually.

There is a time when being a babe in Christ is a beautiful, glorious thing. I love to see natural babes in Christ. To me, it's beautiful when a person has just come to the realization that Jesus is Lord and their sins are washed away.

And that enthusiasm, that love, that excitement that they have for the things of the spirit is just something that's glorious to behold and they're just fun to be around because the things of the Lord are just so exciting to them at that point, babes in Christ. But there is also a necessity of growing up into a fully matured relationship. There are many marks of the babe in Christ and Paul gives to us some of the marks.

First of all, they need to be fed with milk because they are not able to endure the meat of the word of God. So their first relationship is extremely experience-oriented. And thus, as they relate their experiences, they are usually relating them to the feelings that they have of excitement, of joy, of thrill as they come into the

spiritual dimension and for the first time begin to really discern or understand the things of the spirit.

But as we grow and as we develop spiritually, it is God's desire that we come into a full maturity as Paul the apostle declared to the Ephesians, that they might come into that perfect man. And the word perfect is fully matured under the measure of the stature of the fullness of the image of Christ. And so it is God's will that we grow up spiritually into the image of Jesus Christ as we become fully matured.

Now, when a baby is a baby and supposed to be a baby, it is a beautiful, lovely sight. I don't know of anything that can tug at the heart of a person more than a baby. And the first words of a baby are always so exciting.

The first time that your little children say dada and they know what they are saying is a thrilling experience. I'll never forget. We were living in Tucson behind the church and it was a Sunday evening and we just had one big room that we'd partitioned off with curtains and Jan's crib was in the room there with us.

And I think Kay was already out in church and I was going into the closet to grab my coat and Jan was over in her crib and she said dada. And I yelled, I turned, I screamed and I said, what did you say? What was that? But of course she wouldn't repeat it. But she had the cutest, most knowing smile on her face like I said it.

And from that time on, she started calling me dada. But I could hardly wait to get hold of Kay and tell her that our baby said dada just as plain as could be. And it was always such a thrill in the morning to wake up and to look over to the crib and when she'd wake up, she'd say dada.

And I loved it. But now if I should go over to her house and I find her lying there in bed and giving me that beautiful smile and saying dada, it wouldn't thrill at this point, it would pain. Because you see, naturally she should have developed and matured, which of course she has.

And it is thrilling to sit down with her and just to share with her because she has such keen insights on so many things. But our communication now is on a much higher plane. And it should be.

Because in the process of time, there should be the maturation, the development. Now, when a person first is born again by the Spirit of God and they are spiritual babes, babes in Christ, it's just always beautiful to behold that fresh work of the Spirit of God in their lives. But if after 15 years, 20 years, they're still in the crib state, they haven't matured, they haven't developed in their spiritual growth or maturity, then it is painful and it is tragic to behold.

It is important that we grow up. Now, Paul said they were carnal. And because of that, they weren't able to take the meat of the Word of God.

They were interested only still in milk. Another mark of their carnality was the envying and the strife and the divisions that existed among them. Envy, strife, divisions.

Marks of carnality. And Paul said, as long as these exist, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I'm of Paul and another, I'm of Apollos, are you not carnal? This party spirit or denominational spirit is a mark of carnality. To refuse to recognize the whole body of Christ, to break down the denominational barriers and be able to love another man, even though he is a Baptist or even though he is a Nazarene or even though he is a Presbyterian.

To be able to accept him as a brother in Jesus Christ is so important that I not see these differences. And it is tragic to me that so many people, rather than identifying themselves with Jesus Christ, identify themselves with the particular church that they attend. Are you a Christian or I'm a Baptist? Are you a Christian? Well, I'm a Presbyterian.

Are you a Christian? Well, I'm a Catholic. I think that's tragic. Rather than being able to identify with Jesus Christ, are you a Christian? You bet your life.

What church do you belong to? His church. When did you join it? I was born into it by the Spirit of God. To see the whole these quadrants is a mark of carnality.

Some say I'm a Paul, some say I'm a Cephas. Paul said, who is Paul? Who is a Paulus? They are only servants by whom he believed even as the Lord gave to every man. They're only the instruments that God used to bring you to a faith.

I have planted, a Paulus watered, but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that plants anything, neither he that waters, but it is God that gives the increase. So Paul said, who am I? Who is a Paulus? We're only instruments that God used.

You shouldn't identify with us. You should identify with the Lord. It is God who gave life.

All I did was plant seed. All a Paulus did was water seed. All we were is instruments that God used to bring to you salvation.

But it is God who gave to you your life. And thus you should identify with him. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one.

A Paulus and I are one. Why are you trying to create a division? We're one. And every man will receive his own reward according to that labor.

So Paul will receive his reward for planting. A Paulus will receive his reward for watering. And that is the beautiful thing about serving the Lord.

He does reward us for that work that we do, not for the results of the work, because the results belong to him. So I'm on a salary. I'm not commissioned at all.

I'm not paid with a commission. I'm only salaried by the Lord to teach his Word. Whatever comes of it is his.

And it's for his glory. I cannot produce fruit in your life. All I can do is teach you the Word of God.

Water, really, and maybe someone else has planted the seed. But here we are watering, cultivating, in some cases planting. Great.

But it's the work of God that counts. It's God who brings life and gives life to the Word. And thus, I just receive the reward for that which I've done and the results.

And I receive the reward when they're not anything comes of it, because I've been faithful to do what God called me to do. And that's the thing that we need to really realize, that God rewards us for the work that he's called us to do, not for the results of that work. Sometimes we feel so discouraged, because I've

witnessed so many people and they've never believed, you know.

I haven't been able to lead one person to Jesus Christ, and I've talked to so many. Hey, it doesn't matter. As far as your reward is concerned, God only asks you to talk to him.

God didn't commission us to argue people into a faith in Jesus Christ, to get into disputes with people over the inerrancy of the Bible or whatever. I find it rather pathetic that we so often are placed in the position of defending the Word of God. God didn't call you to defend his Word.

God called you to use his Word. If you were in a duel and you pulled your sword out of the sheath, you wouldn't say, Now you be careful, this sword is the sharpest sword in the world. You know, it can cut the hair of my arm.

You know, it's the singing sword or whatever, and it's finest steel and everything else. You're not going to defend your sword, you're going to use it. Don't defend the Word of God, just use it.

The Lord will do the work. Paul, speaking of Apollos and himself, said, We are laborers together with God. You see, I planted Apollos' water, but we are both of us working together with God.

And that to me is always a glorious concept, to realize that I am a worker with God, co-laboring with God in his harvest field. You are God's husbandry, the plantings, the vines. Jesus said, I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit. So really, you are God's husbandry. He is cultivating your life in order that you might bring forth fruit for his glory.

And then he goes on to say, you are God's building. You are the work of God. You're not the work of Chuck Smith, or of Pastor Romaine, or of any other pastor here.

You are the work of God. It is God that has worked in your life through his Word. And so, he who plants is nothing.

He who waters is nothing. But it is God who gives life and brings increase. And so, according to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds thereon.

But let every man take heed how he builds thereon. I planted. You are God's building.

So he takes it from the farm to construction. From the field to a building now. I planted, Apollos watered.

I laid the foundation. Apollos came and built on that foundation. For you are the building of God.

But he warns, let every man take heed how he builds thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, the church is the building of God that has been built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.

And no other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid. It is a sad error of the Catholic Church to declare that Peter is the foundation upon which the church was built. Taking Matthew's Gospel, chapter 16, where at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus said, Who do men say that I am? And they began to say the current concepts that people had about Jesus.

Finally, Jesus said, Who do you say that I am? And Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Or you're the Messiah, you're the Son of the living God. And Jesus said, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona.

For flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto you that you are Petros, you're a little stone. But upon this Petra, the rock, I will build my church.

And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. So, the rock upon which the church was built, the Catholics say, was Peter. He is the foundation.

Not so. Jesus said, You are Petros, a little stone. Upon this Petra, I will build my church.

What is the Petra, the rock upon which the church was built? The confession of Peter that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. That's the foundation upon which the church was built. As Paul here declares, No other foundation can any man lay than that which has already been laid, which is Jesus Christ.

He is the foundation of the church. He is the one upon whom the church is built. But, we must be careful even how we build on that foundation.

Now, if any man build upon this foundation of gold and silver and precious stones, or wood, hay, and stubble, every man's work shall be manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, what sort it is. And if any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward.

And if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss. But he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. Christ, the foundation upon which the church is being built.

Paul acknowledges that there are some who are building with wood, hay, and stubble. Others are building with gold, silver, and precious stones. But there is a day that is coming in which the building is to be tested.

It's to be tested by fire. And when that day of testing comes, then it will be manifested, the materials that were used in the building. Now, I do believe that many of the great religious systems today have been built with wood, hay, and stubble.

I believe that we are living in an age when somehow we have lost true faith in God, and in the ability of Jesus Christ to do what he said he was going to do. For he said to Peter, upon this rock I will build my church. But somehow we've come to the idea that he cannot build his church without our help and our genius.

And so, we're going to help the Lord build his church, and we're going to have fundraising campaigns, and we're going to develop tremendous programs whereby we're going to help the Lord build his church, because surely he wants to build his church, but he can't do it without our genius and our helping him. And so, we go to Madison Avenue and we study their techniques. We study how to write a psychologically enticing letter that will encourage the person to immediately sit down and respond to our appeal.

And I'll trace my hand upon a napkin. And when you get it, you put it on your forehead and pray, and if you send me \$100, you can get whatever you need. That ought to be good for \$100 from these poor simple

little people who can't think for themselves.

Gimmicks. Oh, how I long for the day of purity within the church again. That kind of purity when Ananias and Sapphira came in with a pretense.

They got snuffed by the power of the Spirit of God. That kind of purity that when the tabernacle was set up and they began the worship, when the two sons of Aaron took false fire and went in to offer it before the Lord, the fire from the altar consumed them. There's a lot of false fire today being offered before the Lord.

Wood, hay, stubble. One day it is all to be tested by the fire, and much of the work that has been done in the name of Jesus Christ is going to be consumed and perish. Be careful how you build on the foundation.

Make sure that you're using gold, silver, precious stones. We're the building of God. The church is the building of God.

Christ the foundation. But be careful how you build. The day will come when it will be tested.

Our works, what sort they are. You remember Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, chapter 6, Take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of men. In other words, take heed that you're not doing things in such a way as to receive the recognition and the reward from man.

For he said unto you, you have your reward. So, when you pray, don't make a big public demonstration of it. Don't be always telling others about it so that they know what a prayer warrior you are.

For Jesus said, you have your reward. When you give, don't do it in such a public demonstration that everybody knows what you gave, for you have your reward. When you fast, don't put on the appearance of sackcloth and ashes and long mournful faces so that everybody knows how spiritual you are because you fast.

But do these things rather to your Father, before your Father, in secret before Him, and you'll receive your reward from Him. But Jesus is saying that in the acknowledgement that you receive from man in doing things in a public display, that will be the only reward that you'll get from them. That which comes from man.

So, our works will be judged. What sort they are as the motives of our hearts will be judged when we stand before God. Now, a lot of beautiful, marvelous things that are done, we will be shocked when we realize the motive behind those things.

You know, I've done some things that just really, totally failed. I mean, it was just a total flop. But yet, the motive of my heart was right.

So, it isn't really so much what I have done, but what was the motive behind what I did. Now, Paul goes from the building to the individual. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God.

Two Greek words for temple. The word heron referred to the entire temple complex. It included the buildings, the courts, the porches, even the temple mount.

Satan took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple, the heron. The other Greek word for temple is naos, which is the inner sanctuary, the holy place. It is the word that Jesus used when the Pharisees asked for a sign and he said, destroy this temple and in three days I will build it again.

He used the word naos, this inner sanctuary, this holy place. You, Paul said, are the naos of God. The inner sanctuary was the place of divine activity.

That's where God revealed himself to man. That's where man came into a relationship with God. For the Shekinah dwelt in the naos, in that inner sanctuary.

You, Paul said, are the naos of God. Therefore, your life becomes the center of divine activity. Your life is the instrument through which God reveals himself to man today.

Your life is the dwelling place of God. Your body. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God is dwelling in you? Every believer in Jesus Christ has the Spirit of God dwelling in him.

The moment you ask Jesus Christ to come into your life, the Spirit of God begins to indwell you. Paul said, don't you know you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God is dwelling in you? And then he goes on to declare, if any man defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy. Now, in the sixth chapter, he tells us some of the ways by which the temple of God can be defiled.

As he tells us there, your body is the naos of God. And if I commit fornication, Paul said, I am then sinning against my body. My body, the temple of God, member of Jesus Christ, join unto him.

And if I then join it unto a harlot, I am actually bringing Christ in participation in that relationship. Sinning against the body, defiling the temple of God. And the warning here is, he who defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy.

I believe that we need to honor and respect our bodies as the temple of God. I believe that we should take care of our bodies. I believe that we should seek to eat nutritious food.

I think that we should stay away from junk food as much as possible because I believe that we can defile the temple of God with harmful food products and other harmful things. But basically, though it isn't primarily physical, but spiritual defiling of the temple of God, it is important that we keep ourselves pure and holy. For if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.

For the temple of God, the naos of God is holy, which temple ye are. So it is a call to a holy, righteous life. Let no man deceive himself.

If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he might be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

There is a growing realization that science is a hoax and that men of science are guilty of many times perpetrating hoaxes as they are supposedly dealing with absolutes. And science is supposed to be the accumulation of absolutes and facts. But one of the greatest to arise, Einstein said, there is nothing that is absolute, it is all relative.

And so there is quite an interesting movement now among the intellectuals as again we are beginning to discover that not all science is science and that there is a lot of hoax in scientific circles. Now, to me the biggest hoax that men supposedly of science are trying to perpetrate upon people is that of the theory of evolution, supposedly a scientific theory, very credible and every science accepts it as fact according to those who espouse it so heartily. Even though there are many scientists that are arising now and say, wait a minute, you know there are too many gaps, unexplainable things here and evolution is not a satisfactory

explanation of the existence of life.

But there are men who claim to be scientists who are trying to perpetrate the hoax of evolution upon society and admittedly they have been quite successful in the perpetration of this hoax. But it's not science at all. It doesn't really possess the necessary empirical evidence to prove it as a science.

They have not yet demonstrated how that in a closed system you can have a spontaneous generation of life. In fact, we have billions of evidences that show that you cannot have spontaneous generation of life within a closed system. Now, think for a moment.

If life could be spawned in a closed system every time you went to the store and bought a can of sardines or tuna or peaches or whatever, you would never know what might come out of that closed system of the spontaneous generation of life within it. There you have a closed system. There you have billions and billions and billions of cans of goods that have been sold and we have confidence in the inability of a closed system to spontaneously generate life and so we do can our foods and we seal them up in order that they might be preserved in that state, in order that life forms may not form within it.

Now, unfortunately there are times when they were not correctly sealed or they were not correctly sterilized to beginning and life forms can develop in them and when we were working in the market, quite often in the dog food we would find there was a spontaneous generation of life and whenever the cans would be puffed and pushing out at the end, we'd always toss them back for the salesman when he came to give them back to him because somehow it wasn't sterilized completely when they canned it and there was this formation going on inside that was pushing out the ends of the can and every once in a while you'd get one that would pop in the box and you'd have to just send the whole box back because it would just explode and get all over the rest of the cans. Yet it's being offered to us as scientific fact. It's a hoax in the name of science and the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

He takes the wise in their own craftiness and again, the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise that they are empty. Therefore, let no man glory in men. Now, Paul is saying don't glory in Paul, don't glory in Apollos, don't glory in man.

Man at his best is an empty show. The thoughts of the wise are empty. Don't glory in men for all things are yours.

Whether of Paul or Apollos or Peter or of the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are yours. And ye are Christ's and Christ is God's. So, I can learn and I can gain from Paul or Apollos or Peter or whoever else.

Everyone has something to offer. Of course, with some you've got to sift through so much before you find something that's worthwhile that it's easier just not to listen. But all things are yours and so learn to gain from the whole world around you.

So, let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ or the servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Ministers of Christ, the Greek word there is the under rowers. They were the guys who were down in the bottom of the ship handling the oars.

Usually chained to the oars. And the fellow up on top would call the order for them to row. And which side to row.

The under rowers. And so Paul uses that particular Greek word here. We are the under rowers of Christ.

We're down on the bottom level. We're just pulling the oars. At the command of Christ.

But then we are stewards. And the steward was the one who was in charge of the master's goods. He was the one who ordered the affairs of the household.

He bought for the necessities of the household. It was entrusted into him the goods of the master, though he was still himself a servant. But overseeing the goods of the master.

So, Paul uses the second Greek word as a steward. We are the overseers of those things that belong to the master. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

The one requirement, really, of stewardship is that of faithfulness to that which I've been called to do or that which has been entrusted to me. Your faithfulness to that which God has called you to do is the thing for which one day you will receive your reward or lack of reward. Have you been faithful in the call of God on your life? It's required of stewards that they be found faithful.

Now, Paul said, but with me, it's a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment. I don't even judge myself. Now, evidently, they had been saying that I am of Paul or I am of Apollos or I am of Peter to the exclusion of the others.

In other words, there are people that cannot show, it seems, a loyalty to more than one. Or if they have a loyalty to one, they have to put down everyone else. And so, in saying I'm of Apollos, they were really putting down Paul and judging Paul.

Paul said, ah, it doesn't bother me that you judge me. And so, the first judgment that we do often face is the judgment of man. But man's judgment at best is faulty.

Because one thing that we cannot judge is the motive by which a man did something. Because we cannot judge motives, our judgment is not a true judgment. So, they really didn't know Paul.

They didn't know the heart of Paul. And yet, they were saying things against Paul. And Paul said, hey, I've heard that you've been judging me.

That doesn't bother me. You should judge me. I don't even judge myself.

The second judgment is that of self-judgment. Now, Paul is talking about I don't judge myself in the sense of condemning myself. I think that it's tragic that there are people that are constantly judging themselves and condemning themselves.

Oh, I'm no good. Oh, I can't do anything right. Oh, I'm such a mess, you know.

And they're constantly judging themselves. Paul said, I don't even judge myself. Now, I believe that you should do your best and then just commit the rest.

Hey, it was the best I could do, so it is a mess. It's all I can do. That was my best, you see.

And so, I don't go away and moan and complain because, oh, I really failed. Oh, I didn't do a good job. Oh, I didn't say the right thing.

I did my best. So, I just leave the rest of it with the Lord. Lord, that's the best I can do.

Sorry about that. But, you know, that's the best I can do. So, I don't beat myself or worry about it or fret over, oh, did I do the right thing or should I have done more or whatever.

Yeah, I did my best. I did what I felt was right in the situation. So, I don't go on condemning myself for what came of it.

It was the best I could do. Now, many times the best I can do isn't sufficient, but I can't help that. It's the best I can do.

So, I don't judge myself in the sense of condemning myself. For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified. Now, he's actually saying I don't know anything against myself.

That's quite a statement. But, he said even at that it doesn't justify me. It doesn't mean that I'm righteous just because I don't know anything against myself.

That doesn't make me righteous. But, he that judges me is the Lord. Now, here's the third judgment and this is the important one.

This is what I'm concerned about. I don't care what you say about me. I do, but I, you know, so what? I can't help that.

I'm not even concerned about my own opinion of myself, but I am deeply concerned of the Lord's opinion of me. You may judge me for what I've done. It doesn't bother me.

I may judge myself. That isn't important. I stand before the Lord and He is my judge.

And, that is the judgment that I am concerned with. What is the Lord's opinion of me and what I have done. Therefore, judge nothing before the time.

In other words, wait for the day of God's judgment. The fire will come and the works will be proved. What sort and what manner they are.

The motives behind them. So, don't judge anything before it's time. Don't prejudge.

Until the Lord comes, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. And then shall every man have praise of God. Notice how the Lord is going to judge.

The hidden things. The things of your heart. The motives.

Hey, that is heavy duty. The Bible says everything is naked and open before Him with whom we have to do. Oh Lord, I really didn't mean it.

Oh, you didn't? Let's take a look. And God will be able to project what was in your heart and mind as you were doing it on a screen. You remember? Ezekiel was taken by the spirit to the wall and the Lord said, dig a hole through the wall and now crawl in.

And he crawled in and inside he was looking around and all of the pornography. And Ezekiel said, Lord, that's horrible. All the pornography around here.

And the Lord said, I have allowed you to go inside of the minds of the leaders there in Jerusalem. That's what's going on in their minds, Ezekiel. God can see into your mind.

God knows what's going on in your heart. And so the day will come when God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels, the intents, the motivations of our hearts. And then shall every man have the praise of God.

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos. Now, transferring that over to Apollos and to me for your sakes. That ye may learn in us not to think of men above that which is written that no one of you be puffed up for or against another.

Don't become divided over the instruments of God that God may use for His purposes in your life. Receive from all. Be benefited by all.

It doesn't mean that you have to turn against one just because you're gaining from another. For who makes you to differ from another? What makes you so different? Why are you so puffed up? What makes you different? Well, God, I think I'm not like He is. Well, what makes you different than Him? Do you have anything of value? Do you have anything of good? Do you have anything of worth? Where did it come from? You say, well, God gave it to me.

Well, then if it was given to you, why are you boasting as though it wasn't given to you? You see, anything that I have that is of any value, the Lord gave it to me. Anything of my life that is worthwhile, it came to me from God. I know in me that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing.

Anything that is of worth and value has been given to me by God. If it's been given to me by God, then God help me not to go around and act as though it wasn't, like I am somebody. Like I have a great ability or I have a great talent or I have developed this or that or the other.

It's come as a gift from God. And as such, then you can't read a glory in it as though it wasn't a gift from God. How many times the Lord has brought this Scripture to my heart after something I did turned out good.

You know, it's always exciting when something you did turns out to be right. Turns out to be good. And occasionally that happens.

Now it is interesting that when it does happen, I like to act like, well sure, you know, I've got it. I do it all the time, man. Not so.

If it turns out good, it's the Lord. What have you but what you have received? If you've received it, then why do you act like you didn't receive it? Which is quite often the common tendency to act as though it is something that we possess rather than something that was given to us by God. Now you are full.

Now you are rich. You have reigned as kings without us. And I would to God ye did reign that we also might reign with you.

Now Paul is speaking in a satire here. Now you are full. Now you are rich.

Now you are reigning without us. This is the kind of a boast that they were making. But Paul said, I would to God that you really were reigning in order that I might reign with you.

For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last as it were appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men. The word spectacle here is a word that has a lot of color in that when a Roman general would be victorious over the alien armies, he would come back to Rome for the victory march.

And the general would come usually on his chariot into the city of Rome with the crowds of people lining the sides of the road, heaping their praise and adulation upon him. And he would bring back with him the trophies of war, all of the loot that he had captured. But at the rear of the procession, there would be those poor people that had been captured and were being brought back to be the victims in the arena, being tossed to the lions and so forth.

And they were called the spectacle. They were those captives that had been brought back by the general to be sacrificed in the arena to the lions. And so Paul says, you know, I would to God that you did reign.

It seems to me that God has made us apostles sort of last as it were. We're appointed unto death. We're a spectacle.

As these people would come by, the crowd would all jeer and hiss and all, and they would take them to the arena and give them to the lions for the sport of the people. And so, we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ.

Again, speaking with satire here. We are weak, but you are strong. You are honorable, but we are despised.

Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst and are naked and buffeted and have no certain dwelling place. Poor Paul, if he had only known how to make his positive confessions, he would not have had to be this way. Lack of faith.

You know, Paul is still getting it. All the carnal Christians seem to give it to Paul. And today, Paul still gets it.

I had one of these ministers tell me, don't you think that if Paul could have just had victory over his flesh, that he would not have had to have the thorn in the flesh? It's because of the weakness of Paul's flesh. God help anybody who thinks they are more spiritual than Paul or have more on the ball than Paul had. And Paul, speaking of his own personal experience, said even in this present hour, we are hungry, we are thirsty, we are naked, we have been beaten, and we don't have any certain place to live, no certain dwelling place.

And we labor working with our own hands. I don't even make enough from the ministry to be supported by the ministry. I have to work to support my own needs.

But being reviled, we bless. Being persecuted, we accept it, we take it. Being defamed, we entreat.

We are made as the filth of the world and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. Now, I don't write these things to shame you. But as my sons, I seek to warn you.

So here, the heart of the Apostle hurt over the attitude of the Corinthians. Because somehow, they could not accept from Apollos without having to put Paul down. Getting into these little party, petty divisions.

The mark of their carnality. And Paul is hurt over the things that they are saying about him. Hurt over the divisions that exist.

And he said, no, I don't write these things to shame you. But as my beloved sons, I want to warn you. For though you have 10,000 instructors in Christ, you have not many fathers.

For in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel. Now look, you may have 10,000 instructors. They may be 10,000 guys that are coming along and laying some of their trips on you.

And God help us, there's over 10,000 trips out there. Everybody has to have an angle. I received a letter this week from someone who was questioning about a particular paper they had received and they sent it to me.

Wanted me to read it over and give my opinion to them. And this particular paper was this guy's understanding of the prophecy of Daniel. And in the kingdoms that were going to arise, he doesn't see it at all as is traditionally accepted and taught by Chuck Missler and every good Bible scholar.

But he has his own private little twist and interpretation. No one else has seen this. No one else has been able to come to this understanding.

But, oh, he has a special understanding in this particular prophecy of Daniel. And instead of there being four major world governing empires, there are actually five. And he has the insight into the feet of clay.

They are actually the Arab states and so forth. And he goes on to espouse his theory. Yet, Peter said, no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.

Now, when someone comes along and says, you know, friends, I want to reveal some new truths to you tonight. You know, the Bible scholars in the past, they've just not been able to see this. Why is it that they haven't taught you this? You see, here it is.

And they start then giving their unusual little twist. No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. Some guy has some new understanding and truth that has never been discovered before.

You can be sure it's wrong. For God has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. And they're all bound up here in the Word.

And they're not for any private interpretation. Now, in order to espouse their particular doctrinal belief, though, they've got to put down everybody else that teaches anything else. Anybody who teaches contrary to that immediately becomes a false prophet.

There's a fellow here in the area that insists on writing me. He used to come to church here quite regularly. He used to be constantly declaring his love for me.

In fact, he came in one day for God had given him a vision that he was to work side by side with me. But other aspects of his visions were a little weird. And so because I did not concur with his vision that he was called by God to work side by side with me, he then became quite upset and has left the church and now is writing me all kinds of letters accusing me of being a liar, a false prophet, a Jimmy Jones, a cultist, and poor people are all being duped, you know, by the Chuck Smith cult according to his letters.

Sad, isn't it? That those who once felt called of God to work by your side now suddenly have revealed to them by God that your teaching is so wrong and all and of course they often say, well Chuck really knows the truth but he's afraid to teach it. They don't know me because I'm not afraid to say anything that I think is right. But Paul was faced with the same kind of a thing in Corinth.

They were putting Paul down. Though he said, hey, you may have 10,000 instructors that have come along and trying to teach a different slant, but you only have one father and I begot you into the faith. It's sort of sad to see those that you have brought to birth in their spiritual walk get caught up and carried away with some of these teachers of exotic things.

So Paul said, I beseech you, I beg you, be followers of me. For this cause have I sent Timothy unto you, who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ as I teach everywhere in every church. Timothy, Paul said in another epistle, was the only one that he had that was like-minded as was he.

I have a real empathy for Paul's position here. Having brought these Corinthians to a faith in Jesus Christ, having laid the foundation of Jesus Christ, to see men coming along and building wood, hay, and stubble hurt. Some of the Calvary chapels that have sprung out of our church here in their desire to develop buildings, facilities and all, have gone to fundraising techniques, fundraising dinners, pledges, marathons, telethons, phonethons, phonethons.

And it hurts. It really hurts. Because I have sought to teach them to walk in the Spirit and to trust in the Lord to provide for their needs, for when God guides, God provides.

And if you get ahead of God, then the provision isn't there and it's because you've stepped out ahead of God. Wait upon the Lord. He not only has the plan, but the method by which the plan is to be accomplished.

And the funding. And we don't have to lean upon man, nor do we have to turn to worldly schemes or devices to raise the funds for the work of God. And to see them getting involved in pledges and getting involved in promotional dinners and things like this, it really hurts down deep.

They have not so learned Jesus Christ. But, you know, others who come along and say, hey, this is the way it's done. This is the way you've got to do it.

So, Paul was sending Timothy to reestablish him in the truth that Paul had taught to them. The things that Paul taught in every church everywhere. Now, some of you are upset, puffed up, as though I would not personally come to you.

Oh, yeah, well, it's so important. Why didn't Paul come then? He said, but I will come to you shortly if the Lord wills. Now, James said, don't say, tomorrow we're going to do this and that.

You should rather say, now if the Lord wills tomorrow, we're going to do this and that. And so Paul says, I'm going to come to you shortly if the Lord wills. Good little insertion.

We should always live our lives with that contingency. If the Lord wills. And, I will know, not the speech of those that are puffed up, but the power.

For the Kingdom of God is not in the words that a man can say. The Kingdom of God is in power. Now, what is your will? Shall I come to you with a rod or in love and in the spirit of meekness? How do you desire that I come? With a rod to correct or coming in the spirit of love and of meekness? So, with this, Paul closes his discussion on the divisions that had arisen in the church of Corinth because of the carnality.

Now he's going to start moving into some of the more difficult issues and problems that were existing in the church of Corinth. The problems of immorality. The problems of the saints taking one another to the worldly courts and dealing again with the subject of the body of Christ and that desired unity of the body as we next week move into chapters 5 and 6. So, read ahead and we'll continue next Sunday night.

All things are yours. Learn to draw and to gain from many sources but mostly from Him. As you take the word and as you wait upon the Spirit may your heart be instructed in the things of God that you might grow up into that fully matured person that He wants you to be.

May God be with you and bless you. Keep His hand upon your life and give you a good week. In Jesus' name.

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