

The Judgment of Works

by Dean Taylor

This sermon delves into the importance of being mindful of the foundation we build upon, emphasizing the need to align with the teachings of Jesus Christ. It explores the judgment of works and the consequences of our ministry, urging us to be faithful and diligent in our service. The sermon also highlights the significance of upholding sound doctrine and the fruit of our labor in church planting, cautioning against defiling the temple of God. Ultimately, it calls for a deep commitment to building on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:10, Matthew 7:24, James 3:1, Matthew 28:18, Revelation 21:3, Ezekiel 22:30, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11

Topics: "Foundation in Christ", "Faithfulness in Ministry"

Description

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Transcript

And it was so loud that I remember just being like scared. And here's the weird part, a little guilty. I felt condemned and I had to go to the Lord and say, what what hidden sins do I have that when I heard this loud bang, it literally not just scared me, but made me feel guilty.

You ever have anything like that? I said, God, why did what what's inside of me? And that's just one moment, one boom. What must it be like on that day of judgment? So I'm finally getting back to the Corinthian series, and I'm on First Corinthians chapter three, verses five through 17. And I'm entitled the message, the judgment of works and the foundations of the church judgment of works and the foundations of the church from First Corinthians chapter three, verse five through 17 back in the Corinthian series.

So let's start with a word of prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for these words that it's like going to a doctor that gives us a very sobering message, a very sobering even diagnosis. But yet at the same time, you offer us this incredible cure.

You give us the the prognosis, you give us the diagnosis, but then you offer us this incredible cure that we can have life and have it abundantly. So, God, we we come and we take these hard sayings and about judgment and these different things. And then we just so much.

Lord, we pray that you would give us the grace and the power of God to please you and to walk according as you want us to live. Father, I ask you to be with me today, Lord, as I present this message that you would be represented. It's in Jesus name we pray.

Amen. So First Corinthians chapter three, verse five through 17. I'm going to read it to you first and then I'm going to begin to talk about it.

So beginning at verse five, who then is Paul and who is Apollos? You remember in the other messages were coming out of all the faction of Corinth and everything. And he's rebuking them for that for several, several passages, several chapters. And now we get to this.

But who is Paul? Who is Apollos? But ministers through whom you believed as the Lord gave to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

Now he who plants and he who waters are one. And each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers.

You are God's field. You are God's building. According to the grace of God, which was given to me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and other build on it.

But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear.

For the day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is. If anyone's work, which he has built on it, endures, he will receive a reward.

If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. The temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Well, very, very interesting passage and sort of a very sobering one that's coming out of these concepts of affection and pride that he's dealing with. Now, as you look at this passage, I find three common ways to interpret it. And I'm going to kind of touch on each three of those.

The first one is, and I would consider this the most common, if you were just to go look it up on the passage on how it's given, is that it deals with our personal salvation, that it has to do with our personal judgment and how many commentators would talk about that you're saved, but, you know, your different works in your life, you will be saved, but then you'll be judged by these works, which won't affect your eternal salvation. And this is probably the most common popular level of this message, of this interpretation, of this passage. I don't agree with that, but I'm going to discuss some of that.

The other one would be, as I've seen in the early church, would be the judgment of ministers, and that we're seeing here now a judgment of how your ministry would be. And I think this is true, but not entirely

the whole story. And then the final one, which kind of ties with the other one, would be instructions about our doctrine and the judgment of our fruit in church planting, in the whole church life, and what endures, what lasts, and what makes it through these things.

And this is, I see those last two being the way I would interpret it, and I'm going to try to give you some of that. So, first let's look at the most popular conception of this passage, which is just looking at it as personal. So the idea is that when you read this, this is an example that you're saved, but yet your works don't really matter.

And so you're at the end of the day, your works will get judged, but at the end it says there, but if anyone gets burned, their works get burned up, they'll still be saved, yet as through fire. I've said this before, but it's been a while, so I think most of you, hopefully most of you haven't heard it, but it's my example of the most bold, incredible evangelism story I've ever seen in my life. So I'm just out of anesthesia school working at a VA hospital in Dallas, and as I'm there, VA hospitals, they're interesting because they're usually medical schools, so a lot of people are there and working, and everyone at these medical schools are usually in training.

I mean the surgeons and the junior surgeons and the anesthesia and the junior anesthesia and the x-ray guys and the lab techs, the rooms are huge and filled with lots of people in the operating room. And this was a brand-new operating room, and also you have a lot of international, for some reason I think it must help working at a VA to help with your visas or coming to America, so I've always noticed that VAs also have a lot of people working on their visas and coming through the VA hospitals and they're working there. So I'm pretty fresh out of anesthesia school, and I'm there, and the way you kind of imagine where the anesthesia stands, so if you stand here, then the table is there, and the patient usually lays there, and most always, for most things, the anesthesiologist or the anesthesia person is right at the head of the bed.

And so they're laying there, and you're back here, so you can imagine they're laying out here, and the head's right here. So this person was coming in for some kind of a leg surgery. I can't remember exactly what, it was a scope or something on their knee or something like that, and we're getting him on the table, and he comes off the stretcher, and we get him on the table and everything, and he looks up to me, he said, so is this it? I said, yeah, this is it, you're about to go to sleep.

He goes, I've got a question. Oh, okay, yeah, that's not too uncommon. So you have a question.

Well, how can I help you, sir? I want to talk to the surgeon who's in charge of my surgery. Oh. Now, problem is, at a VA hospital, the actual surgeon who's in charge of the surgery is pretty far away.

So all the time, the procedure and everything, the chief residents that are there and the residents that are working, the head guy who's over the surgery will maybe sweep in at the end and go, ah, looks good, and then leave. So we're like, oh, well, how can I help you, sir? Well, no, I just want to talk to the head surgeon who's in charge of my surgery. Okay, so I reach, nurse, he wants to talk to the head surgeon.

Oh, well, let me, so she comes running over. How can I help you, sir? Yeah, are you the surgeon? No, sir, I'm the nurse in charge of the room. How can I help you? Well, I have a question that I need to ask the chief surgeon in charge of my surgery.

I'm like, okay, and I'm thinking, okay, he must be, like, really paranoid that we're going to do the surgery on the right knee or something, you know, see how it goes. So we're like, okay, so now the chief resident

who's actually doing the surgery, you know, comes running in, and he's, you know, getting all his scrubs on and everything, and he comes running up and says, okay, sir, how can I help you? And he's laying on his table. He looks up.

He goes, so are you the chief surgeon in charge of my surgery? Well, sir, I'm going to be the one doing the surgery. Dr. So-and-so, you know, is in his office, but he'll be in here shortly after we get started. No, I want to talk to the chief surgeon in charge of my surgery.

Like, okay, so it's going to be one of those. So, I mean, you know, it's like 10 or 15 minutes. You know, we're getting, they were calling for the other guy, and we're all sitting there, and, you know, everybody in the room now is just wondering, what on earth is this guy going to say? The whole room is held hostage, the whole surgery.

I'm just sitting there ready to put this guy to sleep. You know, we're like, well, this is going to be a doozy. And so finally, finally, you know, the chief surgeon comes in, you know, putting his mask on, and he comes into the operating room and everything, and, you know, he's trying to not act irritated.

You know, he comes around and goes, can I help you, sir? So are you the chief surgeon? You know, he's laying down here. Are you the chief surgeon in charge? Yes, sir, I'm Dr. So-and-so. You know, I am the chief surgeon in charge of your surgery.

How can I help you? Room's quiet. Laying there, he looks up from the stretcher. If you were to die tonight, and God was to ask you why he should let you in, what would you say? And my jaw just went, boom.

You've got to be kidding me. I mean, what boldness. I mean, the guy ruled the whole operating room.

And like the whole room was quiet. And to finally, you know, this I think it was like a Hindu guy that was working over here in the anesthesia. He goes, he would say that he did your surgery and then God would let you in.

And everyone kind of chuckled. And that was it. I put him to sleep and we went to the surgery.

But the whole time I'm like, whoa. Now, really incredible story about the boldness of evangelism. The problem is, is that oftentimes these ideas of Judgment Day are brought into us thinking that it's like a theological, a theology test or something or some sort of if you say the right thing, if you if you have a few correct doctrines in your head, then suddenly on that day when they're asking you, you're going to be able to check the box to several of these different things.

And God's going to say, all right, you're good. And particularly with my background, growing up background of of this concept of just like a sinner's prayer salvation, that if you if you said these certain things about God's atonement and you accepted these things, then that was going to give you some sort of eternal security in heaven. And I, I, I bring to you today that I think that is one of the worst works righteousness heresies that have ever come upon the church.

And I call it works righteousness heresy because to think that you can say a prayer and secure your eternal salvation through this one thing is just is just preposterous. So as I look at this passage now and I look at what Paul is talking about, and I consider that most people or a lot of people, if you look to this, the possible redemption of this passage looks at it in this way that it's this personal salvation thing. And and and we'll we'll just skate through this way.

And I want to take a minute, though, and give us give us what the Bible actually says about this Judgment Day stuff, because I mean, like what Jonathan was just given to us, I mean, it's kind of sobering. And so let's look at it. Paul in the next Corinthians, Second Corinthians, gives us a warning.

And with a very soberly, he tells us in Second Corinthians, chapter five, verse 10. He wants to make us sure that we understand this. Second Corinthians, chapter five, verse 10.

For we must all, every one of us, he's talking to Christians here, not just some sort of, you know, judgment of these different judgments or something. He says in First Corinthians 5, 10, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. And he goes on to say this, that what this does to us, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

You know, as I ponder, you know, you know how I'm a history geek and I love to read this. And I told you this before that I mean, sometimes when you read letters to I told you this letters to mom from these guys of different ages that I read these things. And I'm like, I just feel convicted by their piety and so much.

I feel that I have I have to stir up even this concept of a fear of God. And when if you look through every age and every generation, the glib entertainment seeking empty kind of idea, we have a judgment day is so completely different than the generations that come that have come before us. Paul went on in chapter six after he talks about this.

He tells us that God, through his sacrifice for our sins, that we can have free, we can have a freedom and be and be it be one of his children. And he warns us, though, with this fear of God. Working, therefore, with him, then we appeal to you to receive.

We appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says in a favorable time, I listen to you and in the day of salvation, I helped you. Behold, now is the favorable time.

Now is the day of salvation. He lets us know that we can receive the grace of God in vain. Do you believe that it's not just a. I don't know, just an empty word that he's saying, he's appealing to us that God is wanting to pour this grace into our life of salvation, but we can receive it in vain.

And so it's like in both hands, he keeps talking about Christ being the sacrifice for our sins. But there's going to be a judgment day. So he gives us this beautiful treasure.

But he's like, you've got to use this. You've got to use this or it's going to be given to you in vain. In vain.

Working together, he says with him, then we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. And then at the end of that, if the whole part of chapter six, he's saying, therefore, come out from among them and be separate. He says, and if you do that, then God will be a father to us.

And then then follow his whole train of thought into seven. Chapter seven, verse one. Therefore, having these promises, that is, that if we come out from the world, if we receive this grace of God, if we if we don't entangle ourself with the world, that he'll be a father to us.

Therefore, having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. And I just I just I'm so challenged by those passages, challenged by them and how different they are than just having some kind of a a lot of theology test, you know, just some

little doctrine that we agree to some sort of little thing that we agree to, how different they are than that. Let's look at a few of these passages that tell us what it's going to look like.

You know, these the idea of the Judgment Day and sometimes the cartoons and the memes and the different things that they show us. But let's see how they are described to us here in in the scripture. The next one that I want to look at a second Peter three, three and looking at this list of ones.

Do you laugh at this kind of view of of of Judgment Day? Do you scoff at it? Do you caricature it? Do you make a meme of it? Do you do something? Does it or is it even suddenly in us that there's there's things like this? In second Peter three, three through seven, beginning of verse three, it says this. He wants us to know what it's going to look like in the end times. Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lust.

What does that what does that mean to be walking according to your own lust? What do you think it means? So you just you're living your life like what? Just, you know, whatever, whatever suits me, whatever I want to do. And they're saying, where's the promise of his coming? This whole thing, you know, for the since the fathers fell asleep, all things continued as they were from the beginning of creation. For this, these people willingly forget that by the word of God, the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

He's giving us an example of Noah's flood. This is going to happen. But the heavens and the earth, which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

There's a common theology these days that I've read at the seminary level. And it's just popular books, too. Have you heard this term called a cruciform theology? And it's a neat word.

It's a great word. But what it's implying is that we can read the Old Testament and reinterpret all these really bad scenes of the Old Testament in the light that Jesus is loving. That the example is Jesus as a loving God.

We can go back and say, oh, so I see those Old Testament passage that makes God look very grumpy and very upset. I can interpret his sort of stories because Jesus is the fullness of who God is and he lets us see that. So therefore, I reinterpret the Old Testament.

I have a book that I was reading by a Methodist seminary teacher who talks about it. The name of it has something with cruciform theology in it. Is this who Jesus is? Now, we love the fact that he has given us so much and he gives us the grace and he gives us the power and he gives us the Holy Spirit.

He died on the cross for our sins. But what is he? What does he even look like right now? What does he even look like? Again, the whole portion I'm addressing right now is the misconception of this Corinthians passage on this just being this this this empty sort of personal judgment. Who was the apostle that that Jesus loved? John.

And how did he how personal was John with Jesus? Like he did what? Yeah, he leaned on his breast. You can sit there. Yeah.

And here is he heard the probably heard the heartbeat of Christ. You know, I mean, that's tender. That's awesome.

I mean, I just I think of that. Wow. That's got to be the most incredible thing.

But here's the next scene when John, the same person, sees Jesus in heaven. Here's the scene. Look at Revelation one right at the beginning.

Revelation 113. The same John comes up to heaven. Now he's seeing Jesus.

He says in the midst of the seven lampstand, one like the son of man, clothed in a garment down to his feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool and white as snow and his eyes like the flame of fire. His feet were like fine brass as it refined in a furnace and his voice as the sound of many waters.

He had in his right hand the seven stars and out of his mouth when a sharp two edged sword and his countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. That's the same job.

And now the beautiful thing is he lifts him up and tells him not to be afraid. But the point in all this is that we get these messed up thoughts about what heaven is like and what in this awesome. You know, the songs about what am I going to do when I get to heaven? Am I going to dance? Am I going to shout? John, who had this most intimate relationship, fell at his feet like a dead man.

And it's impressive. What have we done with the fear of God? Years ago, we were down in Mexico doing the mission work with Altona. And I told you the story before, but it's the loudest thunder, one of the loudest thunders I ever had.

And something that hit me in all this is it did something to me. So we were there in the mountains and everything. And this lightning struck somewhere right in the compound where we were where we were staying.

And it was so much that we saw electricity shoot out of those, you know, the outlets. And it was so loud that I remember just being like scared. And here's the weird part.

A little guilty. I felt condemned. And I had to go to the Lord and say, what what hidden sins do I have that when I heard this loud bang, it literally not just scared me, but made me feel guilty.

You ever have anything like that? I said, God, why? What's inside of me? And that's just one moment, one boom. What must it be like on that day of judgment? Revelation 20 gives us just a glimpse of this. And all the great sermon writers, John Wesley, the Whitfields, they write about this moment.

And regardless of the theological perspective, so many people through ages found in this passage a sobering reality. That's like, wow. Revelation chapter 20 takes that one bolt of lightning that scared me and made me feel guilty and just turns it into.

Just let me read this. Revelation chapter 20, verse 11. So what John saw now.

Then I saw a great white throne. And him who sat on it. Whose face the earth and the heavens fled away.

He's letting us realize that on this day of judgment, that God is going to completely or at least to some degree release and let us see his glory. And that glory is so incredibly strong that literally the earth and the universe melts away just by him and the revealing of who God is. I mean, you just can think of the how

many million times more than that bolt of lightning.

And there was found no place for them for the earth and the universe. And I saw the dead small and great standing before God. And books were open and another book was open, which is the book of life.

And the dead were judged according to their works by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it. The death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them.

And they were judged each one according to his works. Then death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And anyone not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. It's it's so, so awesome. And the Revelation 21, though, he says he gives us a clear, beautiful thing about who can be in that book of life.

Today, God sits on the mercy seat. There's mercy for all of us. There's mercy for him to give to us and give us the grace and to let us have the ability to repent and come to him.

In Revelation 21, this is towards right at the very end of the Bible. Revelation 21. And he said to me, it is done.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give of the fountain of water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things.

And I will be his God and he shall be my son. Isn't that a beautiful promise? We can have that today. But then he gives us one more little warning.

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable means you've apostatized. You just retrograde murderers, sexually immoral sorcerers, idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. This is the second death.

This kind of fear that brings wisdom. This is kind of fear that brings the love of God. And it's just made for us to understand.

It's not to just scare us into being like this big scary God in heaven with a stick and to keep us in line. He's wanting us to know because he has this cure. He has the grace and he's sitting on the mercy seat today to try to encourage us.

But if we allow the theology of this, well, we've said the sinner's prayer and we'll make it through. And then maybe some of my works will burn up. But then at the end, that's really bad theology.

It's not even what the passage is talking about. And you know what? I don't. I love church history.

And I read these different people. And I will tell you that even some with some of the worst theology, even theology that really, I think, led to this thing, like those of like Moody or Calvin and Luther and some of those. But even in their writings, you would never get any of them trying to just make someone comfortable in sin.

The kind of thing that we have today of just giving in to all the frivolous things and being led by our lust and all the entertainments and all the different things. None of these guys, none of them. They would all be

astounded at it.

They wouldn't believe it. D.O. Moody himself said, we should be weighing our, he said that converts ought to be weighed as well as counted. What's really happening? This idea is something that I think is just something that's so lost.

And it's like we've got to stir it up in our minds, you know, and I have to, I have to stir it up in my mind. Revelation 6, verse 14, And listen to this. And from the wrath of the lamb.

The wrath of the lamb. Now, in Revelation, chapter five, it tells us that the the lamb of God is there interceding for us. He's a slain lamb.

But let's not misread that. This is also the same lamb. Now, in Judgment Day, we know that not everyone will be judged the same way.

It says that some will be hit with, will be judged with many stripes and some will be with few stripes. But this is something that we should pay a lot of attention to. And I just think we're so different than it used to be.

You know, Daniel Webster, the guy who came up with the Webster Dictionary, brilliant man. They asked him, what's the most awesome, you know, all these words, you know, I put together the whole dictionary. What is the most awesome, profound thing you can possibly ever think of? The judgment seat of Christ.

We've just received, we've just come so far from that, so far. The other interpretation, which I think is a lot closer, is the judgment of ministers. So let's read it now with this thought.

How as a minister are you going to be judged? And your ministries and the things that you do. And I think we're getting closer to what the text is there about what we're doing. The judgment of ministers.

First Corinthians, let's get it again to our text. First Corinthians 3.2 Now, if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, each one's work will become clear for the day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is.

If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him.

For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. The judgment of ministers. There's a really challenging sermon by Leonard Ravenhill.

Leonard Ravenhill was very common of being very hard on ministers. And he talks about this idea of the higher judgment about when we go into ministry. In James 3, verse 1, we know the passage and it's a strong one to ministers and to anyone teachers.

He says, My brethren, let not many of you become teachers. And he's letting us know, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things.

If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man able to bridle the whole body. And so the idea of this, how serious we need to take the ministry, how serious we need to take getting up on a pulpit and sharing and offering the word of God, how serious of a thing that is. And that's, we need to look at that.

But you know, I don't want us to get, we shouldn't get scared of it though. When I got to this passage, you have a couple of scriptures like in the Ezekiel passage, Ezekiel 22, 30, you know, where God is saying, I sought for a man who could be an intercessor and I could not find one. And God is like upset about it.

Matthew 9, 38, Therefore pray the Lord of harvest. Therefore pray the Lord of harvest and send out labors into the harvest. These passages are talking that God has decided to use men, to use people in this way.

And he encourages us the same way. But several of the early Christians, when I checked out to see how the early Christians saw this, they were very, they were seeming to be consensus around that this passage has to do with either the judgment of the minister and what will happen to him or just the lasting part of his fruit. How serious do we take the ministry? I get another, if it's in the same sermon by Leonard Ravenhill, and he's talking about ministers, and he talks about seminary and the way we train.

And he says, where is the course on wailing before the altar? Where is the course on, where's the class on how to cry? You know, he's quoting from the passage in Joel 2, 17, where it says, Let the priests who minister to the Lord weep between the porch and the altar and let them say, Spare your people, O Lord, and do not give your heritage to reproach that the nation should rule over them. Who should say among these people, Where is their God? And Ravenhill goes on this and just talking about, Do we have this kind of passion in the ministry anymore? Does this even exist anymore? That you have this kind of burden. Now, in the circles that I've been in the last, you know, my adult life with the Anabaptists, one of the things that is common amongst us is the ministers usually have jobs.

And I get it. A lot of abuse has done with professional ministries, and there's a big concern that when we go into professional ministries that we just end up being, you know, doing our time and all this kind of thing. And it's right.

So the correction was that most of the times it's people that are just businessmen or something else, and then they do ministry on top of their busy, busy lives. And I get it. And we'll get to First Corinthians nine where we have some some teachings on this later on.

If I keep going, Lord willing. My caution that as I've seen this in action and as I've experienced it as a young minister is that there's only so much time that you have. And are you sure these ministers that you have the ability and the passion and the pastoral burden that is being asked for here? And then knowing that your judgment will be will be looked at in a higher because of these things.

And if it's just a side thing, you're a busy businessman or you're you're doing it on your side or and you're just you don't have time to to care about the flock and care about those who are sitting among you. It's a serious thing. I'll talk about that in First Corinthians nine, Lord willing.

But ministry, no matter how you slice it, is hard work. It's work. G. Campbell Morgan.

Anybody heard of that name? G. Campbell Morgan was a conservative type of evangelical the turn of the century. And and he was very popular in his days and very busy. And he said this.

He said, young preachers would ask G. Campbell Morgan the secret of his preaching success. How do you how do you do it? You know, some of these guys like, how do you do it? What's the secret? You know, I mean, you're many things that you do. Like, how do you pull that out? How do you accomplish so much? Is it just is it just natural? You know, there's so many brothers that sometimes you just look at you like, how do you pull it off? His is his wording was was very instructive.

He says, I always say to them the same thing. Work. Hard work.

And again, work. It's hard. It's hard.

And dare not we take it lightly. Dare not that we can just frivolously minister in the church or be part of the church and not see this as a hard work. You know, one of the things that just amazes me sometimes, again, these are people that we think have wrong theology, particularly on works and things.

The Puritans, when they came here and right here, right just feet from here, perhaps in 1630, and they came to this to Boston and they were working along here and trying to do the things. And again, we don't agree with how all the difference, particularly with their state and church together. But it blows me away that they were here in five years.

And so concerned that we understand the word of God and that we're teaching the Native Americans and that we're training our ministers. They started Harvard five years. Imagine many of you have probably been involved in church life.

You can imagine five years going by pretty quick, right? You know, you go to Mission Field. Five years kind of goes by. Imagine coming in to native territory, and five years later, you've done such church planning that you've started Harvard.

Here's what the charter says, and it's still, Brother Finney took us to see, and it's still on the wall. If you move the trees back and you look real hard, you can see it. After God has carried us safe into New England, and we had built our houses provided necessary for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government.

They could have left that one out. One of the next things we longed for and looked after was the advanced learning to perpetuate into posterity, dreading to leave, listen to this, dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches when our present ministry shall lie in the dust. And as we were thinking and consulting how to effect this great work, it pleased God to stir up the heart of one Mr. Harvard.

A godly gentleman and lover of learning, and living amongst us to give one half of his estate, it being 1,700 pounds, I don't know how much that is today, towards the erecting of the college and of all of his library. One word was their motto. Other than Brother Finney, what was that word? Veritas, truth.

We're going to stand for this. That's a lot of hard work. And I'm just looking and it was so just, yeah, give my life, what am I going to do today, where do I go for my vacation? Yeah, I'm going to church and all that.

I just, when I look at some of these ages to go, and what's our works when they shall be judged? These guys, I'm sorry they had some theology, but whoa, it's hard for me to throw some stones at them when I see how hard they worked in the kingdom. Massachusetts passed this in 1647, what's called the Old Deluder Satan Act. You know what that was, anybody? Old Deluder's Satan Act of 1647, right around here.

It was the act that said, our people, our children can't read the Bible. We're going to pass a bill that says that we have to learn how to read, because Satan is trying to keep us ignorant. And so it's called the Old Deluder Satan Act.

And so we've got to teach them to read so that our children can read the word of God. Do we take the ministry, do we take church life too frivolously? Too frivolously. Let me read you an account from Tertullian on his description of the heretics.

It's from a work called *The Prescription Against the Heretics*. Listen to the way he describes the heresies in around 200 A.D. I must not omit an account of the conduct also of these heretics. How frivolous it is.

How worldly. How merely human. Without seriousness, without authority, without discipline as suits their creed.

To begin with, it is doubtful who's a catechumen and who's a believer. They have all access alike. They all hear alike.

They all pray alike. Even heathens, if any such happen to come among them, that which is holy they will cast to the dogs and their pearls, although to be sure they are not real ones, they will fling to the swine. In other words, their communion is very loose.

Simplicity they will have to consist in the overthrow of discipline, attention to which on our part they call brotherly. Peace also they huddle up anyhow with all comers. For it matters not to them, however different be their treatment of subjects.

These are doctrines. Provided only they can conspire together to storm the citadel of the one only truth. All are puffed up.

All will offer you knowledge. Their catechumens are perfect before they're full taught. The very women of these heretics, how wanton they are.

For they are bold enough to teach, to dispute, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures, and maybe even to baptize. Their ordinations are carelessly administered, capricious, changeable. At one time they put novices in office.

At another time, men who are bound to some secular employment. At another, persons who have apostatized from us to bind them by vain glory since they cannot buy the truth. Listen to this quote.

Nowhere is promotion easier than in the camp of the rebels where the mere fact of being there is the foremost service. And so it comes to pass that today one man is their bishop, tomorrow another. Today one's a deacon who tomorrow is a reader.

Today he's a presbyter who's tomorrow a layman. And looking at those terms there, it's just, you get an idea of a careless church, an undisciplined church. He said, and it's interesting, how human, how human.

Just a worldly organization. All right, so the final one that I want to look at is the instruction about our doctrine and the judgment of our fruit in church planting. I look at this passage with the ministers and in this.

What are we building, Corinth? So as we're talking about things, what are the important things? What are the things that are going to get burned up and what are the things that we're going to go with as we see in that? And so looking at our passage again, let's read it again. With the instruction of, what's the doctrine? What are the important things that we are building on? Verse nine, chapter three. For we are God's fellow workers.

You are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another one builds it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. When I've been studying, and particularly this year as I teach historical theology, we've tried to add a lot more of the development of Western civilization. And so I've been really having fun digging into some of the architecture and things like that of Rome to give the students.

And one of the most things that I've just been kind of captivated with is looking at the areas where there's like the ancient Rome and they had this brilliance and they had this beautiful architecture. And then like after the fall and later on through different centuries, they just start building little hog huts and different things and bad cement. And it's funny, all that other stuff just falls away and those original, strong, incredible foundations are there.

What is at the basis of our foundation? And I think it's really important that we understand the emphasis that he put here on Jesus and his teaching. Everyone must be careful to build on that. We use the term Christocentric around here, meaning that we read the whole Bible and the idea of Christ.

It says, for no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But what does that mean? What does that mean to you? Let me ask you. What does that look like? What is the foundation of Jesus Christ? It's more practical than you think.

And it has to be more practical. One of the things that just kicks me in the gut, the Mennonites in 1930-something, when Hitler was raising up and starting all his campaigns, the northern part of Prussia and northern Germany met together with a huge conference to discuss Hitler. And as they did this, this church conference in the 1930s met to discuss Hitler, they wrote him a telegram and they wanted him to know something.

And you know what they wanted him to know? We want you to know that we are so excited about your leadership. We want you to know that we stand with you because, and then they say, true to our motto, for no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. What? How do you do that? Now, granted, they didn't know what Hitler was going to become and he just looked like a political leader and all those sorts of things, and he was doing a lot of what seemed to be good things.

I get that, but that's the point. That if we get our eyes off of the basic foundation of Jesus Christ and what he's establishing, you end up supporting an antichrist. And that's what they did.

People who were trained in non-resistance, people who should have been trained in two kingdoms, wrote and gave this verse, right out of our passage today, because, here you go, now Hitler probably doesn't write back everybody. To them, he did. Thank you for your support and what you're doing to help build the fatherland or whatever.

Signed, Adolf Hitler. It's terrible. The teachings of Jesus, he's making here that this is the foundation.

And if we're going to build on this, we have to make sure that's the foundation we're building on. Because everything else is going to get burned up. Everything else is going to be like living in Rome during the 700s or something, when you just got all this crazy, you know, weird thing, they really did good stuff down here.

Or even worse, that we're not even on the foundation at all. The Great Commission in Matthew 28, Jesus made it very clear. And Jesus came, the Great Commission, Matthew 28, verse 18.

And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, all authority has been given to me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make, what? Disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And he stops, right? Oh, and then he goes on teaching them to what? Observe all things that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

This is the Great Commission. The epistles weren't even written yet. The acts wasn't even happened yet.

This is what Jesus said. You must go to all nations and teach them this. This is the foundation, and if we're going to build on this something else, we're going to get off.

He goes on in verse 12, back to our Corinthians passage. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious gold, wood, hay and straw, each one's work will become clear for the day will declare it because it will be revealed in fire and the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is. If anyone's work, which has been built on, endures, he will receive a reward.

As we look at this, we also, there's some also things we can't miss. The disputes need to end that there's different people called to do this work, and he gave the idea that he planted a polished water. One of the early Christians even broke this down in specifics like okay, planting is preaching, pouring water is baptizing, and they broke this out in different things.

Who knows? The point is that we do want to see a bigger understanding of the church, and we don't have to feel like we have to do everything. And even in that, it shows us also that our intentions are looked at. We do everything we can in being faithful.

We don't have, we're not called to be successful. We're called to be faithful, and then here the judgment is on that. I remember another anesthesia example.

I remember one of the things with anesthesia that's hard is when to take the endotracheal tube out of a child who has asthma. It's hard, because if you do it too deep, well then they could aspirate and kind of go into that, and then you don't have a tube and you're in trouble. But if you wait until they start coughing, it's really hard.

I remember I was talking with this anesthesiologist, and we were there, and I was trying to decide when to take this endotracheal tube out of this child with asthma, and I said yeah. And she said, well she said, just do what's right, and don't worry about the consequences. And I said, yeah, well if I knew what the consequences was, I'd know what to do what's right.

And she said, no, that's not what I said. And I went, what? She said, just do what's right, and don't worry about the consequences. And she said that to me about the case, to me it went to my soul.

It hit me, yeah, that's the key in life. We're called to be faithful. We're called to be faithful.

Now God's going to judge our work, so we need to be careful to build upon it. He's given us instruction for how we do our church plan. I will tell you that there's once again with all the incredible miracle that's happening with the refugees coming to Greece, and there's 80 million displaced people today, and all these different things that are happening, that once again, there's a temptation to just kind of get caught

up in different revivals and different things.

In 1940, the Lancaster County Mennonites went to Tanganyika, it's Tanzania now, and they went to Tanganyika, and they went there, and they started doing missionary work amongst them, and there's an incredible thing. In just a few years, they had like 10 churches, and it was really impressive. It was slow, steady work, but it was impressive.

And then, you know what happened? Revival hit. The East African Revival. It's one of the biggest revivals in the history of the world, and it swept through Tanganyika, it swept through these areas, and they were just, they were riding back to Lancaster County going, guys, we have got it all wrong.

These revivalists, I mean, it's just, it's going, and all of our worrying about all this stuff, these things that you're worried about, and you see them, the guys back home, trying to say, no, make sure they've got plaincoats, and you've got the guys over there in Africa going, no, this is just, we need to get into the revival, and the whole thing's a mess, and you're like, ah! But in the midst of that all, that East African Revival and the missionaries there went more and more and more in going into this revival, and it went into Uganda, and it went into Rwanda, and the East African Revival was so popular in Rwanda by the end of the 1960s that they literally said, this is a Christian nation. This is, it's just incredible what's happened. But just like our passage here tells us, the later fruit will be seen by how we build on this foundation.

Did anybody know what happened in the 1980s in Rwanda? Anybody know? 800,000 people were butchered and massacred and not by a bunch of heathen tribes in the churches by different Christian tribes against each other. There had been a revival that went on there, but instead of building on this foundation, they built hay, wood, and stubble instead of that. They got involved, and I think God was sending something in the East African Revival.

I think it was a powerful word of God. And as I do study of revival, it's so many times I'm like, I really do believe that the revival was sent of God. But here's the warning in 1 Corinthians chapter 3. Be careful how you build upon the foundation.

Be careful how you build on that foundation. Now I believe that many people who have good intentions, he says, they survive. Now their works of what becomes of that, you know, gets burned up.

And you think of people who have had some bad theology, but their life was beautiful. I think of, like Jim Elliott down in Quito, or in Ecuador. You know, I don't think he had a very, a teaching on non-resistance, but I heard that he even had rifles with them on the plane.

And he intuitively knew, I can't use a rifle against these people, and he died as a martyr because of it. So even some people who had some bad theology, their life, and I think that this also applies here, in the end they're saved. But in this though, we see the consequences of what follows.

And I look at these cases like Rwanda, and it brings me, it brings me a lot of trepidation. So, but there is a line. And the last verse here that I want to bring us to.

There is a line. There's a line to where the consequences of our ministry, the consequences of our fruit, and our doctrine are going to play itself out. He ends this whole passage, verse 16 and 17, chapter 3. Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in you? Again, we mostly, people, the common thing is just to make this personal.

He's talking about the church, and he's talking about how we're doing our church planting in the church. And he says it, and he warns us right at the end of this passage. If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him.

For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. So, as I look at this passage, and I consider the incredible life that we have in Christ. When I think of this caution, both as individual people going, knowing that one day we shall come before the judgment seat of Christ.

When I think of ministers, and how the work of a minister, and how we're supposed to keep trying to continue to do God's way by His grace is looked at in this. And then most importantly, the word that got me through this passage is how are we building on that foundation? And that years later, centuries from now, people will look at us, and as Jesus says, wisdom is justified by her children. And so how, what becomes of us in our churches will be shown that we truly build upon the rock of Jesus Christ.

So, I'm going to close with prayer, and then I'll hand it back over. Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you, Lord, for these challenging words that we heard today. And I ask you, Father, to give us the grace and the Holy Spirit.

We thank you, Lord, that we don't have to do this alone. You've given us the Holy Spirit. You've given us the Word of God.

You've given us your teaching. Lord, help us not to replace that with something else, but truly let us be surrounded on and built upon your teaching, the teaching of Jesus Christ. You, Lord, you have your way.

And so, God, in the whole thing, Lord, we just pray that you give us grace, that we truly can be acceptable to you, and we can receive the reward, and most importantly, we can just shower you with praise. Thank you with praise. Thank you.

Thank you for your salvation, your grace, the blood of Jesus Christ, for your model, your life. We thank you for these things. It's in Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

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