

The Temple - the Church, Christ Expressed

by Phil Beach Jr.

The church's greatest need today is a fresh acquaintance with the living Christ, not just a reacquaintance with the doctrine of Christ.

Duration: 57:01

Scripture: John 14:6, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 12:29, 1 John 1:5, Revelation 1:8

Topics: "Church", "Christ as Life", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes that Christ is the essence of life and urges believers to seek a genuine relationship with Him, free from the deceptions and darkness of the world. He warns against the dangers of being governed by worldly influences and stresses the importance of acknowledging our need for God's grace and forgiveness. The preacher highlights that true salvation and spiritual growth come from a daily communion with Christ, rather than mere adherence to doctrine. He calls for a renewed passion for Christ, asserting that the church must be a living expression of Him, filled only with what reflects His nature. Ultimately, Beach Jr. reminds the congregation that the greatest need is to see God afresh and to allow Christ to be the foundation and life of the church.

Transcript

Christ is that life. And dear beloved, I believe that the Lord has indeed visited us tonight while we were worshipping Him. And I believe that He would plea with us.

And as a father would plea with his children, He would beseech us and beg us to come to Him and be taught by Him concerning these things. The need to be transparent. The need to be free from being controlled and governed by deception, from lying lips, from darkness.

Beloved, you cannot escape as long as you are in this world the influences that are happening in this world that are those of deception and darkness and deceit. And the tendency to cover up, the tendency to deny, the essential reason why men will be damned and find themselves in a Christless eternity is because of their refusal to acknowledge that they are sinners in need of God's grace and in need of the forgiveness that's provided by the Lamb of God. The very essential reason why they will die and perish is because there is a denial of that essential nature of sin.

And beloved, as a child of God, one of the most important things that we must battle from and that is succumbing to this awful, terrible spirit. This awful, terrible spirit that seemingly works against us in the workplace. It works against us while we're going down the street.

It works against us as we're shopping in the malls. It works against us when we're listening to the radio. It works against us when you pick up a magazine.

Within minutes, within moments, should I say, you begin to see that there is the absence of that sense of purity, that sense of holiness, the sense of light, and there's mixture, there's deception, there is darkness, there's deceit, there's the denial of our need for God. When was the last time you read a secular magazine or went to a secular place and mingled in with the people and felt a need to fall on your knees and cry out to God for mercy? When was the last time? It never happens, does it? Why? Because the nature of this world, John says, is that it is in total dominion to the wicked one, the devil himself. This is part of the warfare that we are engaged in as children of light.

Children of light. We must look to Jesus Christ in order to be governed and motivated by Him and His Spirit, which is always, always, always a movement in us toward the confessing of darkness, the confessing of our need, the confessing of wanting reconciliation in any area of our life, either it's between God or it's between someone that we may have had hard feelings toward. You see, when the Spirit of God is working in us, when the Spirit of God is actively working in us, not when we have the doctrine of the Holy Spirit necessarily.

You can have the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. You can have the doctrine of the Spirit of God. You can have the doctrine of being indwelt by Christ and you can be wholly unmotivated by it.

You can have the right creed. You can have the right statement of faith. You can have the right song books.

You can hear the right sermons. You can know the letter of the Word and yet still be vitally inactivated by the living God. It is not the creed that saves.

It is not the right doctrine that saves. It is an effectual working of the Spirit of God within our life on a daily basis. That is what saves.

That is what keeps us. That is what energizes us. That is what motivates us.

That is what brings us from faith to faith into the conformity of God's own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is any need today that is present within the church of Jesus Christ, and beloved, we ought not to consider the church of Jesus Christ as those out there somewhere, but when the church of Jesus Christ is referred to, that is personalized to our very lives if indeed Christ dwells in us. The greatest need that we have today is a acquaintance with the living Christ, not a acquaintance with the doctrine of Christ, although the doctrine itself is good.

But if the doctrine is not an expression of life that you have, then the doctrine will do you no good because the devil possesses a doctrine. He is a believer, the Bible says. You know, the devil in many ways is better off than a lot of church-professing Christians because the Bible says the devil believes and trembles, and most church people believe and they don't even tremble.

So the devil in many ways is better off than a lot of professing believers. The devil, not saved, has enough sense not only to believe that God is God, even though he denies it, even though he is the author of atheism and agnosticism and all the other isms in the world. He might make you think he doesn't believe, but beloved, the devil is a believer and he trembles.

So he possesses a creed, he possesses a doctrine, he possesses a statement of faith, but yet he is void of the life. And it is so essential as the church of Jesus Christ, the greatest need of the hour right now is not a new plan for evangelism. The greatest need of the hour now is not a new plan for a building so that we can meet in a building somewhere.

The greatest need of the hour is not some new idea on church leadership or church ministries or some new idea on how to put together a ministry team in order to really bring the message of Christ. No, that is not the need of the hour. According to the Bible in the book of 1 John and many of the other places, the greatest need of the hour then and now is a fresh acquaintance with the living Christ.

A fresh acquaintance with the living Christ. A fresh unveiling of the Son of Man in all of His glory, in all of His splendor, in all of His majesty as the exalted Christ. The greatest need of the hour right now for you and I, beloved, is a renewed passion, a renewed love, a renewed longing to know Him and Him alone.

Beloved, the greatest need that confronts us now is a acquaintance with the fact that if we are truly children of God, we are vitally united to the living Christ in our spirit. Beloved, the greatest need of the hour is simply to see God afresh. To see God afresh.

All of the revivals in the Old Testament under the judges and under the different leaders that were raised up by God, even carrying into the New Testament, the greatest moves of God were the results of, number one, they were not the results of the strength of a man. They were not the results of the skills of a group of people. They were not the results of the efforts and labors of men.

They were not the result of men particularly at all. Psalm 33, the Bible says in verse number 16, there is no king saved by the multitude of a host. A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

A horse is a vain thing for safety. Neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. So therefore, the Bible says that a king is not saved by the multitude of a host.

Verse number 17 says, a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. Verse number 17 says, a horse is a vain thing for safety. Neither shall he be delivered by his great strength.

So these verses are indicating that God is saying that we as His people cannot depend upon anything in order for our deliverance, in order for the move of God to come into our life, or the move of God to continue and come into fullness. We cannot depend upon anything that is of an earthly origin. Nothing that is born of the will of man.

Nothing that is born of the flesh. Nothing that is born of blood. Nothing that man births by his own being is going to satisfy God.

It's all rejected of God. It's all totally rejected of God. It's the spirit of human potential.

It's not according to Christ. But verse 18 says, Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our

soul waiteth for the Lord.

He is our help and our shield. So beloved, tonight we've gathered together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And it is His desire, I believe, to encourage us and spur us on unto Himself so that by Him and through Him and in Him we can see a completion to the work that He has begun in us.

Beloved anathema, cursed is anything other than Christ and the working of His life through the energizing power of the Spirit in our lives. Nothing else is significantly important to the Lord when it relates to His work. Remember whose work it is.

It's His work, not our work. It's His work, not our work. It's His doing, not our doing.

Ephesians 2, for we are His workmanship created by Him. It's all of Him, dear beloved. And I believe the Lord would definitely want to encourage us along these lines and help us to see this in a very real way tonight.

So, let's just wait on the Lord for a few moments and just be before Him and let's just look to Him particularly over this issue of darkness and deception. Darkness and deception. And let's ask the Lord tonight to really make this something more than... Let's ask Him to make it something more than just something we hear.

Beloved, I'm asking God to make this so real in my own life. And I'm asking God to make it real in all of our lives so that it affects our home life. It affects what we do at home.

It affects what we do when we're in the car. It affects what we do when we go shopping. It affects what we do wherever we go.

Insofar as our spirits become keenly aware of our need to walk in the light of His countenance and to stay free from anything that would not be in accordance to the light of His countenance. God will never pour out His Spirit upon a people. Absolutely not.

Positively not. Not even a consideration. God will not pour out His Spirit upon a people who have not, by the Holy Spirit, been taught and have had it wrought in them the truth of walking in the light of the countenance of Jesus Christ and staying clear from darkness.

That is an essential need of the hour right now. An essential need of the hour. As we just meditate upon that, listen to this, what Paul says here in Ephesians 2. And you, has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past... See, it's the past tense.

Paul is saying here that it ought not to be something that's occurring now as the children of light, who in times past... Notice what he says about what we used to do. You walked according to the course of this world. That is, according to the age of this world.

According to the impulses of this world. According to the spiritual wickedness and powers that are presently in the heavenlies that are governing all whose minds and hearts are darkened from the saving grace of Jesus Christ. That's what Paul is saying.

He's saying you used to walk according to the course of this world. According to the prince of the power of the air. The spirit that now is working.

That word working actually means to energize something. So this spirit of wickedness that's in the world is literally energizing and motivating and working in the children of disobedience. Literally energizing them.

It absolutely is terrifying to hear what is going on today in the world. Where a young man will go and beat the brains out of someone with a baseball bat, sit down in a police station behind bars, and some man will go in and interrogate the young man. And he'll be questioned, why did you do it? And the young man will say, I don't know why.

I was just compelled to. I just had to do it. My God! My God! Who is the author of murder? Who is the author of violence? But the enemy himself.

Beloved, there is a real true spiritual warfare going on. Even now at this very moment, there's a spiritual warfare going on. And we in no way condone Christianity that's looking for the devil on every side.

We in no way condone the kind of Christianity where you're trying to cast the devil out of everything that barks and everything that burps. We are in no way suggesting that that's of the Lord because it's not. But to be ignorant of the very basic fundamental truths about this is not at all either the Lord's heart either.

So there is that happy balance that the Lord wants us to have. And indeed, we need to know that there is a spiritual wickedness in the air that is now working in the children of disobedience. Verse number 3 indicates and reveals exactly what this spirit of wickedness intends to do.

Now listen closely. What does the spirit of wickedness intend to do? Among whom also we all had our conversation. That word means way of life.

Our entire way of life was under the government and control of the spiritual wickedness that's in the air, in the heavenlies. To what intent, to what purpose was the enemy working in us? We had our conversation in times past, listen, in the lusts of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Oh dearly beloved, please, pray that God will open up our hearts and our ears and listen closely to the word of God.

The whole intention of the powers that are presently working in this world seducing mankind and seeking to seduce the church, seeking to seduce the child of God, the whole intent and purpose is that they may compel us, they may persuade us either by deception or by frankly offering us like they did Jesus. I'll give you everything if you just do this. That wasn't deception, was it? That was just downright, listen, here's the card stacked out.

If you do it my way, I'll give you something that'll really be nice for you. The whole intention of the devil is to get you to obey and serve the lusts of your flesh and the lusts of your natural mind. Because the enemy knows that everything that springs out of the lusts of the flesh and everything that springs out of the natural, soulical part of yourself is contrary to the thought of God and the will of God and is a product of your own creation and as far as God's concerned it is no use to Him in the kingdom of God.

It's no use to Him in the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the product of what comes out of Christ. The sum total of what the church is is what comes out of Christ.

The life of Christ and then spiritual maturity and the will of God is found as the life of Christ is developed in us. So be aware tonight, beloved, that our warfare right now has to do with the enemy seeking to fan into flame the desires of the flesh insofar as to get our life under the government of those rather than the government of the sovereign head, the Lord Jesus Christ who enables us to be obedient to the Word of

God by His power working in us. Oh, how subtle the enemy is! And it is as we are governed by the flesh and governed by the impulses of our natural mind that we fall prey to deception and we start denying sin.

Our hearts become hard. We live lies. We become hypocrites.

There's duplicity in our life. All of this stems out of an insufficient apprehension of Christ and a daily communion with Him. Beloved, Christianity is communion with Him.

And you know there's nothing that can keep you from falling prey to this except God. Some Christians literally baptize themselves, I take that back, drown themselves in Christian music. They drown themselves in Christian books.

They drown themselves in Christian tapes. They buy hundreds and hundreds of tapes from many good Bible teachers. I'm not criticizing the tapes.

I'm not criticizing the Christian music. I'm not criticizing the books. Much, but not all of it.

I wouldn't put it all in a package called Accepted by God. Wouldn't put it all in. But some of it is good, good wholesome music, good wholesome teaching, good wholesome books.

But the problem is Christians are looking to these things as if they in themselves are going to give them the victory that they so long for, when in reality Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. It's only Him.

He alone can do it. So therefore our essential relationship must be with Him. Him.

We must touch Him. That's what we need. We need Him.

He alone can do it. Only as we are connected to Him and we are enabled by His grace and power to walk in communion with Him. Daily walking in His light.

Being religious is not walking in Him. Having a communion with Him daily. Being taught by Him daily.

Being in fellowship with Him and one another who also are walking in the light. That's God's thought for the church. And that's what we so desperately need today.

A renewal. A revival. As I was mentioning before, the revivals that came in the Old Testament, the revivals that came in the New Testament, the great revival that occurred in the New Testament, it was the result of one thing.

People's hearts were opened to see the Son of God. It was seeing Christ afresh. Seeing Christ afar off.

Seeing Christ, no, not afar off, seeing Him near. Seeing Him near. And that's what we so need today.

Let's turn our Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 3. 1 Corinthians chapter 3. As you know, yesterday we talked about, last night we talked about our being crucified with Christ. Our co-crucifixion with Jesus Christ. And we saw that that was a vital part of our salvation.

And that it was insufficient for the believer to only see the cross of Jesus Christ as the place of forgiveness. Though that is essential and we would never take any of that away from it, it is not the totality of what the cross signifies. We must, by the Spirit of God, be brought to the place where the objective work

of the cross is made effectual inside of us on a daily basis to the extent that it is daily removing and putting away the deeds of self and all of the depths and inclinations of the self and natural life, putting it aside and in its place filling us with more and more and more of the stature and nature of Christ ourself, Christ our life.

That's what we need. That's what we need. And basically, that's what we discussed yesterday.

Tonight, we're going to look in light of this awesome truth of God is light and He doesn't want us to partake in any darkness. He doesn't want us to partake in anything that's not according to Him. We're going to look at 1 Corinthians chapter 3 and show you how the Apostle Paul explained this spiritual dynamic.

1 Corinthians chapter 3. We'll begin in verse number 1 and we're going to read through to verse number 16. 1 through 16. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal.

Now remember, carnal indicates fleshly. Carnal indicates soulical. Carnal indicates not that they were not believers.

We already concluded, based on Paul's introductory thoughts, that these people were believers. Now there's a certain man on the radio who's all over the country who teaches that when Paul talked about the carnal believers in Corinthians, he was talking to unbelievers. He said they really weren't even Christians.

But he can't substantiate that by the Scriptures because the Bible is very clear that he addressed them as partakers of grace, those who evidenced salvation in their life. The word carnal does not indicate they were not Christians. It indicates they were Christians who were yet being governed by things other than Christ, the sovereign head, who was supposed to be governing the Christian.

So they were carnal, and as a result, Paul said, they were even as unto babes. That word babe means an infant. Those who are unable to walk.

I have fed you with milk and not with meat. For hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal.

For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul and who is Apollos but the ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gives the increase. So then, neither is he that plants anything, neither is he that waters, but that God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one, and every one shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.

Now beloved, before we read verses 9 through 16, it's vitally important that we understand something about the book of Corinthians. This is essential, so please listen, okay? Please listen. God has taken the book of the first Corinthians and he has wonderfully shown us a tremendous picture that reflects a passion in his heart.

He used the apostle Paul, but the book of Corinthians demonstrates an active part of God's dealing in the church today. First of all, we want to understand that the book of Corinthians is not only applicable to the Corinthians. Though it was addressed to the Corinthians, it was not only applicable, just like the book of Ephesians is not only applicable to the church in Ephesus, but we today read it and God speaks to us.

So it wasn't only applicable to the Corinthians. Secondly, the book of Corinthians is a book that uniquely teaches in no unclear way the fact that the church is the temple of God. We find that teaching very clear in other places, but Paul really makes it clear in the book of Corinthians, particularly in 1 Corinthians 6. What? Know ye not? Ye are the temple of God.

So Paul automatically there completely annuls and cancels the thought, if there ever was still a thought in their minds, that God dwell in temples made with hands, like this building. He completely smashed that idea to smithereens, probably hurt a lot of perhaps Jewish believers who hadn't yet seen the transition from shadow to reality. God dwelling in temples made by hands? He never did.

Even though he had a temple built and a tabernacle built, God's thought was that they were pictures, they were lessons, they were allegories, typifying the ultimate fulfillment of that which was Christ and Christ who dwells in the church. So let's first of all clearly see that when we read the book of 1 Corinthians, we are transcending a letter written to believers. Though it was a letter written to believers, we're transcending it.

What we are seeing is a message from the heart of God to the temple of God relating to what belongs in the temple and what doesn't belong in the temple. Now, in the Old Testament, it was very clear that there were certain items that were permitted in the temple and there were certain items that were not permitted in the temple. And if you brought an item that was not permitted in the temple, in the temple, you risked being stoned, you risked being penalized, you risked being put to death.

God was very zealous over His temple in the Old Testament. The reason why is because it was a lesson, was an object lesson pointing toward the reality of that. Now, according to the New Testament revelation, God's temple is to be filled with only one thing, Christ, Christ alone.

The temple of God is the dwelling place of Christ. That's exactly what the Bible teaches. Now, that breaks down practically into the temple of God should only be filled with those attributes, those features, those characteristics which correlate to Christ and His person.

The temple of God, remember, we are the temple of God and if we're the temple of God, then God dwells in us. And if God dwells in us, then the temple should only be filled with those things that are like God, those things that come from God. Anything else in the temple of God is an abomination to Him, is a detestable thing.

You see, one of the reasons why Israel kept getting in trouble is because they kept touching the unclean thing. They were supposed to be the holy nation of God, the nation that revealed the beauties of God, the nations that revealed the splendor of God. The nations were supposed to learn what God was like by looking at Israel.

They were supposed to discover the holiness of God by seeing Israel. They were supposed to discover the justice of God by looking at Israel. They were supposed to discover the mercy of God by seeing Israel.

They were to discover the righteousness of God by looking at Israel. But instead, they saw what? The unrighteousness of the nations. The idolatry of the nations.

The abominations of the nations. The sons of Eli were corrupt. Eli was himself in bad shape.

So, over and over and over again, the people that God wanted to express His likeness, continually express everything but His likeness. And that necessitated God taking severe action in order to discipline Him and punish Him. And finally, God spoke to the fig tree and said, what? Cursed art thou.

Thou shalt no longer bring forth fruit. God was saying, Israel, it's over with. I've got a whole new thought now.

A new Israel. His name is Jesus Christ. I am the true vine, Jesus said.

Israel was called the vine in the Old Testament. Christ said, I am the true vine. So, God's thought now was that He would erect His own temple.

Not made with hands, praise God. Not put together by the sweat of men. God would erect His own temple.

And that temple would be His only Son. In whom you saw, what? All of what God was like. You saw in Christ what God was like.

Jesus finally revealed to the world what God was longing the world to see. What God was like. But now, remarkably, because Christ has ascended and we have become vitally partakers of Christ's life, God calls us the temple.

Only because Christ is in us. And we are the temple only on the basis of His life being in us. That's the only thing that makes us qualify to be part of the temple of God.

Because, remember, the true temple is Christ. So, Christ is one. He's one.

But He is corporately expressed. It's like communion. That's what communion is all about.

It's like if I had a bagel right now. Let's call that bagel. Now, don't misunderstand me.

Let's call it in order to come down to where we can think this out. Let's call that bagel Christ. Alright? Here's Christ.

He's one. Each one take a piece of that bagel. Alright? Everyone take a piece of that bagel.

Alright? Now, where's Christ? He's still one. He's not many. There's not many Christ.

It's one Christ. The head. He's one.

But now, mystically, remarkably, miraculously, this is the mystery of what the church is. This is the mystery. Christ is still one, but He is corporately expressed now.

It's one bagel. We all have a piece, but it's one bagel. That's what it means to be members of Christ.

See, it's not just a doctrine. It's really true. It's a living reality.

We are really members of Christ. That is, Christ, the one Christ, who is sitting at the right hand of the Father, has wonderfully, miraculously, remarkably, mystically dispersed Himself through the new birth into those that are now children of God. We've all become partakers of that one loaf, that one bagel.

Christ is the bread of life. He's the bagel. But now, though He is one in His person, He is many in expression.

He's many in expression. So that's what makes the church the church. The church is Christ, corporately expressed in the body.

That's what the church is. So the letter in 1 Corinthians is God looking down at a church, using that church as an illustration, using that church as a picture of His heart for His whole church. And He's using Paul, and chapter after chapter, what's Paul doing? This is all wrong.

This is all wrong. This is all wrong. This is all wrong.

This is all wrong. What he's doing is he's saying, you are the temple of God. And in the temple of God, there must be an ever-increasing expression of simply Christ, in Christ alone.

But in your midst, 1 Corinthians chapter 1, I see divisions. I see schisms. Is Christ divided? Is that the nature of Christ? Is Christ the author of these things? I say not.

Paul demonstrates something of the zeal in God's heart for His church to be lined up with expressing Christ in Christ alone. God has rejected what the church is in her natural state. God has rejected it.

That is not the part of the church. God doesn't want the old creation, the flesh, to be in demonstration in the church. So in 1 Corinthians 1, we see divisions.

1 Corinthians 2, we see worldly wisdom. God says, worldly wisdom? No part in the church. The church's wisdom is what? Christ.

Christ is our wisdom. We derive our wisdom from Him. We derive our wisdom from being taught of Him.

We ought not to have worldly wisdom. Paul went as far as to say that when your faith is in worldly wisdom, you empty the cross of its power in your life if you start filling your mind with worldly wisdom. The wisdom that is not from above, James says, but it's earthly.

The characteristics of that wisdom, it is sensual, it is devilish, it is solicile. It is full of envy and strife and every evil work. And God says, no, I cannot have this wisdom in my church.

I cannot have this kind of wisdom. It is an enemy of my Son. It is an enemy of myself.

It is an enemy of the Spirit of God. It is an enemy to everything I want to do in my church and everything I want to see in my church. So Paul puts his hand on it and says, no to division, no to schism, no to worldly wisdom.

Then you go to chapter 3, you got sex. I'm of this one, I'm of that. God says, no to denominational divisions that divide the body of Christ.

God says, no, ye are one, ye are not many. You're not all in little private camps. I am the sovereign Lord over the whole church.

It is one body, one Lord, one faith, one Christ, one hope, one Spirit. We can't be all little many. Now, it's true we break down into localities.

God spoke to the church in Ephesus. He spoke to the church in Laodicea. He spoke to the church in Smyrna.

But He was not in any way suggesting that those churches were divided. They had to be interrelated. They were all in the same faith after the same thing.

Amen? That's what the Lord's after. So 1 Corinthians chapter 4, Paul deals with something. Chapter 5, fornication.

Remember chapter 5, he deals with fornication. That ought not to be in the temple. Now, that word fornication entails every form and any form of uncleanness or impurity.

God says, I don't want it in my church. Oh, how we take so lightly the things of God, don't we? We just take so lightly Christianity. We just picture God in heaven with a gray beard, sitting on a throne, just smiling down, everything is fine.

Oh, God's heart. You want to know God's heart? See Jesus. And when you see Jesus, realize He's the measuring rod of the church.

That is, God sees Jesus and says, Church, you see my Son? That is your life. And I won't accept anything but an ever-increasing expression of my Son. So we go to chapter 6, chapter 7. We get into divorce.

We get into marital problems. God says that can't be in the church. Chapter 10, chapter 11, chapter 12.

All of the chapters are dealing with things that don't belong in the temple of God. And then what does Paul talk about in chapter 15? Death itself. Did you know that death itself doesn't belong in the church? Death itself has to be swallowed up.

Death itself is an enemy. Death itself is against the Lord's thought. Did you know that? Death is an enemy, not a friend.

It's a foe. Not something to cling to, but something to resist. Death itself.

That's right. Beloved, if you're a child of God, you've been called to be like Jesus. And the Bible says that Jesus is immortal.

So all of these things Paul deals with and points them out one at a time, showing in a systematic way, these things don't belong in the temple. The only thing that belongs in the temple is the things that are out from Christ himself. Now, in light of that, let's read 1 Corinthians chapter 3, and we'll see here.

And this is God's way of dividing light and darkness. This is God's way of helping us to see the need to walk in the light of His countenance, in the light of His word, and let Him continue that work of cleansing us, and that work of purifying us, and that work of conforming us into the image of the loveliness of His Son. All right.

Verse number 9, 1 Corinthians chapter 3. For we are laborers together with God. Ye are God's husbandry or farm. Ye are God's building.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. Now, God is saying here, listen, beloved, follow closely.

God is saying here, Christ is the foundation. But take heed what is being built upon Christ. That is, take heed how you're building your house.

Now, to build your house can represent the sum total of your life. The foundation is Christ, but be careful what you're building on Christ. Because we're going to see, and again, the natural mind can't get this.

But you know the only thing that you can build upon Christ? Christ. That's it. Christ is not only the foundation, He's the sum total.

He's everything. That's what He meant when He said, I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. See, the Laodiceans thought that they were rich and they were in need of nothing.

And Jesus said, you don't know, but you're blind, wretched, miserable, naked, and poor. Why did they get to that state? Because they forgot that Jesus was everything. Jesus was everything.

He's alpha and omega. He's the foundation, but He's also everything in the temple. That is, the temple can be filled with nothing but what Christ is.

He's the only thing that God accepts. No matter how much we want, we can't offer a thing to God. Not a thing, Mike.

It's all putrid to Him. He doesn't want anything to do with it. It's filthy rags.

He doesn't want anything to do with it. The only thing He wants to see is more of the expression of His Son in earthen vessels by the energizing power of the Spirit of God. Away with Christian entertainment, it's not going to work.

Away with human-oriented, human-generated music, it's not going to work. Away with human-oriented, man-run churches, it's not going to work. Away with it.

God's going to judge it. Yes, He is. He has to.

If He doesn't, He's a liar, and we know He's not a liar. Away with it all. The only thing that's going to work are believers under the headship of Jesus Christ, all in fellowship one with Him.

It's got to go. It's got to be let go. It's got to be let go.

Now, Paul says, no other foundation can anyone lay except that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Verse 11. Now, verse 12.

Now, if any man build upon this foundation... Now, Paul lists several items that can be used to build upon the foundation. It's very important. Listen.

The first set is gold, silver, precious stones. That's the first set. The second set is wood, hay, and stubble.

Now, the difference between those two sets is gold, silver, and precious stones go in the fire and come out. Wood, hay, and stubble goes in the fire and what? Turns to ashes. It turns to ashes.

Gold, silver, and precious stones come out. Wood, hay, and stubble turn to ashes. Now, keeping that in mind, read on.

Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it because it shall be revealed to be made known to what was previously hidden shall be made known. That's what that word means. It shall be revealed by fire.

And the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. Now, what sort it is, what that literally means is what it's really made of. What it's really made of.

Now, remember, the fire is going to do this. Hebrews 12, verse 29. Our God is a consuming fire.

Christ Himself is going to reveal in His own timing. Sometimes He does it while we're here on earth. Sometimes He waits and at that day, all works will be tried.

Now, guess what works are going to stand? The works that are made of gold, silver, and precious stones. The works that are going to be burned are the wood, hay, and stubble. That's what Paul said.

He said, build upon the foundation. Listen, gold, silver, and precious stones. Those three items throughout the Bible, guess what they're used to represent? Christ.

That's it, brother. Christ. Wood, hay, and stubble, those things that the fire devours.

So, what Paul is saying here, remember, he's addressing the temple of God and he's saying, temple, Christ is the foundation and Christ is the building stuff. So that ultimately, the only thing that will last in the temple of God is essentially what is Christ, by Christ, of Christ, through Christ, wrought by the Holy Spirit, and is in conformity to Christ. Everything else is going to be burned and destroyed.

Everything. So, what does that say to us today? Beloved, we must pray that God brings us back to Christ in ever-increasing measure. Verse 14, if any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire. And then Paul says, don't you know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? There it is, beloved. Beloved, God's thought, God's heart, God has placed Christ in the highest place.

He has made Him to be Lord over all things and head over the church. He has not only made Him to be head over the church, but He has made Him to be the foundation and cornerstone of the church. He has not only made Christ to be the head and Lord and foundation of the church, but He has also made Christ to be the building stuff of the church.

He has not only made Christ to be the building stuff of the church, that is, the essential features that must make up the church must be what Christ is in His character. He's not only done that, but He has made Christ to be the end product of the church. So that ultimately at the very end, the church will be a corporate expression of everything that Christ is in His glorious person and in His glorious character and nature, including the absence of death and corruption, including a body that is incorruptible like and unto His.

God has made Christ to be all that the church will be and is. And anything contrary to that, and that's what's in the flesh, that's what's in the natural mind, that's the devil's working ground, that's the foothold the devil's got. That's why if we don't get the message that the Word of God shared last night about being crucified with Christ, there's going to be that area in our life that's wide open and the devil's going to get in.

His only foothold is the old creation. His only foothold is the old creation. He's got nothing in Christ.

And as Christ is expressed in us, He's got nothing. So Christ becomes the totality of our life. Revelation chapter 1. Revelation chapter 1, we're going to be closing now.

Revelation chapter 1, verse 9. I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the island that is called Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet saying, I am Alpha and Omega. John had a revelation of the ascended Christ.

But immediately following that revelation in verse number 12, John had a revelation of the church. You see that? Verse 11, John has a revelation of Christ. Verse 12, he has a revelation of the church.

Let's read it. And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. Isn't that remarkable? He heard the voice of Christ saying, I am Alpha and Omega.

He turns around and he sees the church. That's remarkable, but it's significant. Because in verse number 13, it all comes together.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like it under the Son of Man. And then we have a description of His garments, which represent features of His character. There you have it, beloved.

As clear as anything, God reveals Christ. Then He reveals the church. And then He reveals Christ in the midst of the church with an unveiling of His character.

And He says, that church is the only thing I'll accept in your midst. What my Son is being expressed, His righteousness, His holiness, His purity, His love, His longsuffering, His gentleness, His pure wisdom, which is gentle. Everything He is.

So the very last book of the Bible, God makes it clear. After He does the whole plan of salvation, includes the 65 books of the Bible, the 66th book of the Bible, the ascended Christ is already in heaven. And He reveals Himself as in the midst of the church, as her life and as the judge.

He's the standard now through which God will judge the church. He's the standard. And that's God's heart for the church that we would see our vital union with Christ.

Beloved, let's pray. Bow our hearts. He saw the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to His foot.

All of this represents features of His character. Gird about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hair were white like wool, white as snow.

His eyes were flames of fire. His feet like brass that burned in the furnaces. His voice was the sound of many waters.

All of those have tremendous spiritual significance. And there God is saying, there you are, church, that's your life. That's your life, My Son.

Not what you are after the flesh. Not what you are in your sinfulness. You are to disown that.

You are to reckon it as dead and cursed. And you are to see My Son ever, ever, ever, because as you see Him, you are transformed into His image. Father, thank You for Your Word.

Thank You for Your faithfulness, Lord. We commit this into Your hands. We pray that the Word will find a place in all of us, Lord, and that by Your power, You can make it living and real to us.

Help us, Lord, to get it by Your Spirit. Deliver us, Lord, from any confusion that we have. Help us to simply clearly see You.

We pray, Lord, that You'll do this work and that all of us can grow and express more and more the beauties and the perfections of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We commit our fellowship now in Your hands. Pray You'll be honored and glorified by it.

In Jesus' name, amen and amen. Praise the Lord, amen.

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