

Let Each See How He Builds

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of building on the foundation of Jesus Christ and the nature of God, and warns against building with the nature of man, which requires no cost.

Duration: 59:28

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:10

Topics: "Church"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on 1 Corinthians chapter 3 and 4. He emphasizes the importance of building upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. The speaker explains that the work of each person will be tested by fire, and those whose work remains will receive a reward. He also highlights the contrast between building with gold, silver, and precious stones versus building with one's own flesh. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the responsibility that comes with being called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Will you please turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 3, we'll read from verse 10 through verse 17. 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 10 through verse 17. According to the grace of God, which has been given to me as a wise architect, that should be a wise foreman.

I have laid a foundation, but another builds upon it. But let each see how he builds upon it. For other foundations can no man lay besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if anyone builds upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, the work of each shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire. And the fire shall try the work of each what it is.

If the work of anyone which he has built upon the foundation shall abide, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone shall be consumed, he shall suffer loss, but he shall be saved. But so as through the fire.

Do ye not know that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone corrupt the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, and such are ye. Let's have a word of prayer.

Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for calling us into the fellowship of Thy own. We praise and thank Thee. It is all grace and mercy that Thou hast brought us into such a glorious, divine fellowship.

And now, Lord, we just look to Thee to open our understanding and to bring us into such life of fellowship that we may truly accomplish all that Thou hast ordained, even before the ages. O Lord, we do look to Thy Holy Spirit to open Thy Word to us in such livingness and freshness and bring Thy Word deeply into our hearts that it may transform us and conform us to Thy own image. Lord, this is a work only Thou can do, and we just trust Thee for it.

We ask in Thy precious name. Amen. We are still in 1 Corinthians from chapter 1 through chapter 4. The problem with the church in Corinth, or the number one problem with the church in Corinth, is their division.

But Paul approaches this problem in a positive way, and that is to say, why is division so serious? It is because there is a calling that we who believe in the Lord Jesus have been called into. Now, if we only can see our calling, it will deliver us not only from division, as it were, but from all the other things that you find being dealt with in this letter. Brothers and sisters, we need to remember a fact, a glorious fact, and that is you and I, all of us who believe in the Lord Jesus, have been called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

That is to say, we are to share in common with our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to share with one another our Lord Jesus Christ. We are in such a fellowship.

And because this fellowship is so holy, so heavenly, so spiritual, and so in life, therefore anything that is not so holy, so heavenly, so spiritual, so of life, will be a contradiction to that fellowship. Our Lord Jesus, as the Son of God, His fellowship is with His Father. And His Father fellowships with Him.

And in that fellowship there is no darkness, no unrighteousness, no unloveliness. It is a perfect, harmonious fellowship. A fellowship that is selfless.

A fellowship that shares everything, withholding nothing. Whatever the Father has, He gives to His Son. Whatever the Son has, He gives back to the Father.

Their fellowship is in the Spirit. In the Holy Spirit. And now this fellowship has been extended to us who believe in Him.

Our Lord Jesus shares His Father with us. He does not withhold anything that He knows of His Father from us. In like manner that the Father shares His Son with us, He does not withhold anything that He gives to His Son and not give to us.

And this is how we are called into fellowship with one another. We mentioned last time, we enter into the fellowship by believing in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And at the same time, the way we fellowship with one another is also based upon Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

To put it simply, when we fellowship, when we share with one another, now what do we share with one another? Do we share one another with ourselves? No. We share with one another with Christ. The Christ that we know.

And in order to share with one another, with Christ, we have to allow His cross to work in our lives so that we may know Christ as our life. Not only our Savior, but as our life. And we learn to live by that life.

Now this morning, we would like to go chapters 3 and 4. It is still on fellowship, but it tells us that in that fellowship, there is something going on. Calling involves responsibility. We are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

And because we have been called into such a privilege, there is a responsibility that comes upon each and every one of us. The Bible says, many are called, but few are chosen. In other words, we are all being called into the fellowship.

But whether we bear that responsibility, fulfill that responsibility or not, that is something to be determined. Fellowship is not an empty word. It is not just a theological thought.

Fellowship is living. It's very real. It touches our life.

Not only our personal life, our family life, our social life, our church life. In other words, fellowship touches our whole being. And because of that, there is something that comes out of fellowship.

That is to say, fellowship is building. And that's the reason why in Chapter 3, you find the Apostle Paul mention about this matter of building. How is the church built? How is the temple of God built? It is built by the fellowshiping of God's children.

As we fellowship, we build. We either build or we destroy. There is a responsibility in us.

You know, our Lord Jesus said, on this rock, I will build my church. And Hades' gate shall not prevail against it. He is the foundation.

He shares with us of what He is. He shares with us of all that He has done for us. He is the foundation.

And now upon that foundation, He said, I will build my church. Now what is His church? His church is nothing but God's building. The temple of God.

That which God dwells by His Spirit. He is the foundation. And we who are called into the fellowship, we are all building upon that foundation.

Now the Apostle Paul says, He is a wise foreman, not an architect. Because the architect is Christ Himself. He is a foreman.

But a wise foreman. Why? Because he laid the only foundation that could be laid. Not only Paul did that, all the apostles did that.

Because we find that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles. Now what does that mean? It means that the apostles report to us that which they have seen and heard, contemplated, understood, experienced, touched. That life.

That word of life. That eternal life. Christ Jesus.

And they faithfully share with us all that they have learned of Christ. And that is laying the foundation. But it is not only Paul.

Or the apostles. Or the other apostles. They are doing such work.

But we all are called to have a part in that building. And that is the reason why Paul said, I am as a wise foreman. I have laid the foundation among you Corinthians.

And that foundation can nothing else but Jesus Christ. And now see. Let each see how he builds.

He wants every one of us to see. That is to understand. To know.

To take it to heart. How each of us build on it. So brothers and sisters, fellowshiping is building.

As you fellowship with the Father and with the Son, you are building something into yourself. Into your life. And as you fellowship with your brothers and sisters, you are building something into your brothers and sisters.

We are all involved in that building of the house of God. Of that holy temple of God. Of that place where God is to dwell in his spirit.

That is what we are all doing. After you are saved, you are immediately put into that building work. Whether you are conscious of it or not, it doesn't matter.

If you are not conscious that you are building something, you are building something. Whether you are alone, whether you are with your brothers and sisters, whether you are in the family, even when you are at work, you have been called into that fellowship. Therefore, consciously or unconsciously, continuously, day and night, you are doing some building work.

And that building work is not an ordinary building. It is building the house of God. It is building the temple of God.

It is building the dwelling place of God. It is building. I hope this will deeply impress upon every one of us.

Oftentimes we forget that we are building something. We think that it doesn't matter. When I'm alone, nothing happens.

But brothers and sisters, even when you are by yourself, something is going on. Some building is going on. Whether you are with brothers and sisters, consciously or unconsciously, you are building something into that house.

The foundation is Christ. In other words, what is built upon that foundation has to be of the same quality, the same nature, the same character as the foundation. To put it another way, what is the church? The church is the extension of Christ.

That's the reason why you find in 1 Corinthians 12, the body is one, but has many members. There are many members, but one body, so also is the Christ. That which is built upon that foundation, if it is going to be God's dwelling place, it has to be of the same nature, quality, character of the foundation, which is Jesus Christ.

So what are you building into it? You build Jesus Christ into that foundation. That's the extension of the foundation. So the Bible says, our Lord Jesus is not only the foundation, he is also the cornerstone.

Not only the cornerstone, he is also the topstone. In other words, the whole building is a corporate expression of the foundation, of what he is. Do you get it now? And if that is the case, then how important

it is, how careful we must be as to how we build.

We are all building. You may not feel it, but it's going on. And do not forget, you are building something of eternal.

Isn't it strange that our God, who is able to create heavens and earth, and all the things in heaven and on earth, and even underneath the earth, he builds all these by himself, alone. He does not ask for help. But strangely, when he is building his own house to dwell, he calls you and me and all of us to join him in that work.

It's marvelous in our eyes what faith he has put upon us. He knows what we are. He knows what we will be doing.

And yet, he has faith in us. He calls us to come to fellowship. And by fellowshipping, building his house.

Do not think that you are engaged in this building only when you come to the meetings. Even if you are in your home by yourself, you are contributing something to it. Good or bad.

Twenty-four hours a day. There is no vacation, because the work is urgent. So the apostle Paul says, see how each builds.

Unless you are not the Lord. Unless you are not saved. Unless you do not believe in the Lord Jesus.

Then you are not in that building. But once you believe in the Lord Jesus, you have been called, whether you like it or not, and the responsibility is upon you. Whether you are conscious or not.

So let us be careful as to how we build on it. Now you find the emphasis seems to be on the material. Because Paul says, some may build with gold, silver, precious stones.

And others may build with wood, grass, straw. So basically there are two kinds of building. How do you build? You build either with gold, silver, and precious stones.

Or you build with wood, grass, and straw. We know that gold in the scripture always represents the nature of God. Because gold is the most precious metal.

Incorruptible. Weighty. Of value.

Shining. Lasting. So in the Bible you find gold always represents something of God.

But the holiest of all is overlaid with gold. Pure gold. The ark was overlaid inside and outside with gold.

The mercy seat is pure gold. Even the lamb stand is pure gold. Gold in the scripture represents the nature.

Silver. In the scripture represents the redemption of our Lord Jesus. Because you'll find in Exodus chapter 30, every Israelite who was numbered above 20 years of age, every one of us had to pay a ransom money.

And that ransom money is half a shackle. So in other words, silver represents the redemption of our Lord Jesus. He gave his own life as a ransom.

Precious stones. Speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit. Because these matters have to go through pressure, heat, darkness, time, until they become precious stones.

The work of the Holy Spirit, how he patiently, in the dark as it were, secretly working in our lives, so precious stones may be produced. So when you think of gold, silver, and precious stones, they all represent what is of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit. And you can build into that house with such material.

Now of course, if you want to build with such material, it costs you something. Gold is costly. Silver is costly.

Precious stone is costly. You do not get these things free. You may have to pay a cost for it.

And the cost that you have to pay is yourself. Self is the cost. You have to deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow the Lord.

That is the cost. The ultimate cost. And that is the way that the nature of God is incorporated into our lives.

The finished work of Christ becomes a reality in us. The Holy Spirit is able to constitute Christ into our lives. And out of that which you have received, you share with your brothers and sisters.

That's building with gold, silver, and precious. Furthermore, if you build with gold, silver, and precious stone, because they are so costly, you cannot build a huge building with it. It may be small, little, hardly seen, but it's there.

It's real. It's permanent. On the other hand, you may build with wood, grass, and straw.

Wood in the scripture always speaks of man. Man are like trees. You remember in Judges chapter 9, Jordan used a parable about the trees, that the trees want to find a king, and they say to the fig tree, they say to the vine, Be our king.

And they say, No. We have our responsibility. We produce wine.

We produce fatness. For God, I do not want to be king. So they asked the thorn bush.

And the thorn bush says, Okay, if you want me to be king, come under me. Otherwise, fire will come and burn you up. So tree always represents the nature of man.

Grass. In 1 Peter chapter 1, we are told, All flesh are as grass, and its beauty are as flowers. So you find grass represents the glory of man.

It's faded, withering. And then, straw. I think we all remember how Pharaoh commanded the children of Israel to make bricks with straw.

So straw is the work of man. In other words, everything comes out of man. Of yourself.

Of your natural self. There is no working of the cross in that life. So what you put in is yourself.

And because wood, grass, straw are cheap, you don't need to pay a great cost. And you can build a huge building with it. Everybody can see it.

Now, is it theory? No. Paul illustrates it. So you find in chapter 3, at the beginning of chapter 3, he tells us how the Corinthians, in their fellowship, built into that building.

He said, I, brethren, have not been able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly. As to babes in Christ. Now the word fleshly, *sarkinos*, the best thing, the best way to distinguish it, I would like to change it to fleshy.

Not freshly, but fleshy. Now a babe is very fleshy. A babe attracts people.

Everybody considers a babe as attractive. Because he's very fleshy. He doesn't hide anything.

That's what he is. If he wants to cry, he cries. It doesn't matter who is around him.

If he's hungry, he wants to eat. Very fleshy. Now, when we are babes in Christ, that's what we are.

Lovely, but fleshy. And those who are babes in Christ can only drink milk. What is milk? Milk is pre-digested food.

Your mother has pre-digested this food. And then it becomes milk to the babe. In other words, you have not exercised your spiritual faculties to distinguish good or evil.

So you need something that has already been ready-made for you. And that's babes. So in other words, babes in Christ have to be fed with milk.

People have to digest it, God's Word, and become a message and deliver it to you as milk. So that you don't need to, it's easy to digest. You don't need to exercise yourself.

That's babes. And what are the situation babes? He said they are still among you, emulation and strife. Are you not carnal, psychical? Now carnal means not only the composition of the matter.

Now we are composed of flesh. And this is the material, this is the matter. So it's fleshy.

But it is neutral. In other words, there is no evil moral sense within it. But when it says fleshly or carnal, there is a moral element injected in it.

So in other words, we all begin with babes. But we have to outgrow babyhood. Now if you do not outgrow your babyhood, then you become carnal.

In other words, you become fleshly. Not fleshy, but fleshy. Because there is a moral sense behind it.

And when you are fleshly, what are the symptoms? Emulation, jealousy, envy, strife, quarrelling. These are the symptoms. And you will act according to man.

Even if you are a Christian, you will act according to the man of the world. No difference in outward. Now these are babes in Christ.

They do not grow up. And these Corinthian believers, because they do not grow up. Now why did they not grow up? Because they refused to pay the cost.

They refused to accept the cross of Christ into their life. They want to maintain as they were. To be themselves.

What's wrong with that? My opinion, my thought, my way. This is how I see it. This is what I want.

What's wrong with that? Babes. That's wood, grass, and straw. That's the way you build into it.

On the other hand, the Apostle Paul used himself and Apollos as the opposite example. So when you read chapter 4, you find the Apostle Paul said, Let a man show account of us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. We are servants.

We are nobody. Don't uplift us. Uplift Christ.

We are but servants. It doesn't matter how people think about us. The one who examines us is the Lord.

And look, as you read chapter 4, how is he building through fellowship into this house? He said, To the present hour, with both hunger and thirst, and are in dark, nakedness, and buffeted, and wander without a home, and labor, working with our own hands, railed at, we bless, persecuted, we suffer it, insulted, we entreat. We are become, as the offering of scoring of the world, the refuse of all, until. This is building with gold, silver, and precious stone.

The Corinthians, in building with their own flesh, they think they are filled, they are enriched, they have reigned, they become strong, they are in glory, but Paul and the Apostles, in building with gold, silver, and precious stone, they are appointed to death, become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and men, fools for Christ's sake. Isn't it true that people who build with wood, grass, straw, they can build such a huge building. Everybody can see it and praise it.

And yet, if you build with gold, silver, and precious stone, it can hardly be seen. And people will think that you are doing nothing. You are accomplishing nothing.

Isn't it true? But the problem is, if these will remain as they are forever, then why be foolish? Be wise in the eyes of men. But unfortunately, it said, the work of each shall be made, for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire, and the fire shall try the work of each what it did. One day, we shall all appear at the judgment seat.

Now, brothers and sisters, some people may not know this. Some people say, well, if I believe in the Lord Jesus, isn't it true that I will not be judged anymore? Because Christ has judged for me on Calvary's cross. That is true.

If you believe in the Lord Jesus, Christ has already judged for you. Therefore, the judgment has passed over you, and you are saved. That's true.

But remember, that's the judgment of the great white throne. It doesn't mean that a believer will not be judged. The believer will have another kind of judgment.

It is called the judgment seat. You'll find in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 10, that we shall all manifest, be manifested before the judgment seat, and what we have done in the body shall be reckoned with. In Romans chapter 14, verse 10, we shall all appear, stand before the judgment seat of God.

So in other words, there is a judgment that we as believers will go through. We will not go through the judgment of the great white throne, because throne speaks of government. Their eternal death or eternal life are to be decided.

Thank God that judgment has passed over us, because Christ has judged for us. And God is righteous. He cannot judge us again, because he has already judged our substitute, Christ.

Thank God for that. But that doesn't mean because you are a child of God, there will be no judgment at all. There will be a family judgment.

As the family of God, we shall all one day appear before the judgment seat of Christ. When will that be? Where will it be? The Bible tells us at the last hour, when the trumpet shall sound, those who are dead in Christ will be raised from the dead. Those who are living and remain, they will all be caught up to the air, where the Lord is, and those overcome us with him.

We shall all be gathered before the judgment seat of Christ, and everyone will be judged. We are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ. And being called, we are all engaged in that building.

One day, what we have put in will be judged. It will be judged by fire. Now, isn't that strange? If it is being judged by something else, the wood, the grass, the straw may stand.

But if it's by fire, then all that is of wood, of grass, of straw will be burnt. But all that is of gold, silver, and precious stone will shine. The fire will try each one.

And what is the fire? In Hebrews chapter 12, we are told, our God is a consuming fire. He is the fire. In other words, he is to examine us according to what he is.

To put it another way, at the judgment seat of Christ, what Christ is looking for is himself. What have you put in, in your fellowship? Do you put in Christ, or you're putting in something else? Something else will be burnt, but Christ will be glorified. Now, that is the difference.

And yet the Bible makes it very clear to us. Even if you build with gold, silver, and precious stones, and they stand, go through the fire, he shall receive a reward. This is not gift.

This is reward. And we know that reward is the kingdom. You shall reign with Christ for a thousand years.

That's the reward. But if the work of anyone shall be consumed by the fire, now what will happen? He will suffer loss, because his whole life, after he was saved, nothing counted. But he shall be saved, only as through fire, barely saved.

So, brothers and sisters, that has nothing to do with eternal salvation. It's a matter of losing the kingdom. Now, because of this, brothers and sisters, it's a serious thing.

You know, sometimes we take our Christian life carelessly, thinking that it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what I'm doing. It doesn't matter what I'm not doing.

It doesn't matter how I live, or what I do not live. It doesn't matter not only when I'm alone. It doesn't matter when I'm meeting with brothers and sisters.

It doesn't matter. Often times we come to the meeting without contributing. But without contributing is contributing something to that building process.

Something is still going on. Are you building, or are you tearing, destroying? So here you'll find, do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? Brothers and sisters, we are

the temple collectively, and the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Now, if you corrupt the temple of God, Him shall God destroy.

Now, the word corrupt and destroy are the same word in Greek. We can corrupt the temple by putting in wood, grass, straw. Or we can build a temple by putting in gold, silver, and pedestal.

Now, what are we? You may think I'm not putting in anything. When you are not putting in anything, you are putting in wood, grass, and pedestal. Think of that.

Because that process is going on, day and night, unceasingly. Even when you are alone, it matters. For the temple of God is holy.

So dear brothers and sisters, let us be warned, and let us be encouraged. This is the reason why we who are called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ, must be true to our calling. Be responsible.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, we do thank Thee for this on high call. We do look to Thy grace to enable us to respond in the right way.

Teach us how to look at eternity instead of living. We ask in Thy precious name.

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