

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 6/15/11 Wednesday Evening
1 Corinthians 3:10-22

Review from last week: 1 Corinthians 3

In chapter 3, Paul confronts the problem of divisions head-on. Why did the problem exist? He expresses four reasons. There were four inadequacies in the Corinthian church. We examined the first two last time...

- I. Inadequacy #1: Inadequate maturity (1-4)
- II. Inadequacy #2: An inadequate view of Ministers (5-9)
- III. Inadequacy #3: An inadequate view of the Ministry (10-15)
- IV. Inadequacy #4: An inadequate view of Themselves (16-22)

I. Inadequacy #1: Inadequate maturity (1-4)

Here's how this immaturity evidenced itself in the Corinthian church...

- A. You are worldly, not spiritual (1a).**
- B. You are infants, not mature (1b).**
- C. You are not ready for solid food, only milk (2).**

And to compound the problem, as Paul tells the Corinthians...

- 1. *You weren't ready before.*
- 2. *You still aren't ready.*

- D. You have jealousy and quarreling among you (3a).**
- E. You are acting like the rest of the world (3b-4).**

II. Inadequacy #2: An inadequate view of Ministers (5-9)

Paul uses three word-pictures to clarify what ministers of the gospel are...

A. Ministers are servants (5).

Notice the divine/human cooperative...

- 1. *The Lord has purposed to reach people.*
- 2. *He uses people to reach people.*

B. Ministers are farmers (6-8).

- 1. *One person plants the seed.*
- 2. *Another person waters the seed.*
- 3. *Only God can make seed grow.*

C. Ministers are construction workers (9).

- 1. *We work with God.*
- 2. *We work with God's possessions.*

In This Study...

We'll look at two more inadequacies that contribute to church divisions, as Paul explains in verses 10-22...

III. Inadequacy #3: An inadequate view of the Ministry (10-15)

People have lots of ideas about what the ministry is. Sadly, too many view the church in very self-seeking terms. According to Paul...

****Ministry is like a building project.**

How so? Using the building analogy, he teaches us about ministry. As in building, so in the church, ministry involves four ingredients.

A. Ministry involves builders (10).

Q: Who are the builders?

1. *Paul and the apostles laid a foundation.*

Q: Why did Paul say he was in the ministry? “By the grace God has given me...” We must never forget that. People who live with an eye on grace won’t contribute to divisiveness in the church. Why not?

Note: Paul said he laid a foundation. See Eph 2:19-21

2. *Others are building on it.*

Notice our job is to build on the work established by the apostles. We are to teach the same message they taught, as revealed in the Scriptures.

Q: What does Paul mean by the end of v 10, “each one should be careful how he builds”?

B. Ministry involves a foundation (11).

Q: What’s true of this foundation?

1. *There is only one foundation.*

It’s the “one already laid.”

2. *It is Jesus Christ.*

Q: What’s the purpose of a foundation?

Peter called Jesus the “cornerstone” in 1 Pet 2:6. Here Paul calls him the “foundation.” What does that mean?

C. Ministry involves building materials (12).

1. *A builder can use gold, silver, and costly stones.*

2. *A builder can also use wood, hay, and straw.*

In the 1st century, the first materials would have been used to build a temple, the latter an ordinary house. The first materials are valuable and do not easily burn. The latter are quickly consumed and common.

When it comes to building on the foundation of Christ, we too use materials. We use methods and approaches to “build the church.” Some “materials” are like gold, silver, and costly stones. They will endure. They are worthwhile. Others are like wood, hay, and straw. They will not endure. They are worthless.

Q: What are some examples of “building materials” in ministry?

Clue: Reflect on what Paul himself did in Corinth. Luke tells us in Acts 18:1ff. Look at the following verses to discover some of the things he did (i.e. what his “building materials” included):

--v 3, he was a tentmaker; why? he didn’t want to burden...

--v 4, he reasoned in the synagogue

--v 5, he preached and testified to Jews that Jesus is the Christ

--v 7, he taught in the house of Titius Justus

--v 11a, he obeyed the Lord's orders

--v 11b, he taught *the word of God* for a year and a half

--v 12, he endured attack and misrepresentation

Warning: We have no right to do ministry any, old way. We must do ministry God's way.

Q: How can we tell if a person's ministry is the right kind? It's not always easy to tell in the present. It will be made known later...

D. Ministry involves a building inspection (13-15).

1. *The builder's workmanship will be tested (13).*

Q: When?

⇒The inspection will occur on *The Day*.

Q: How?

⇒The testing will involve fire.

When Christ appears, all believers will stand before Him and give an account (2 Cor 5:10). Jesus spoke of this time of evaluation in Matt 25:14ff.

2. *The builder's workmanship will be rewarded (14-15).*

⇒If his work survives the fire, the builder will receive his reward.

⇒If his work is burned up, he will suffer loss.

Note Paul isn't talking about losing one's salvation, but reward ("he himself will be saved, but...")

Discuss: How should it affect us to know this "building inspection" is coming?

IV. Inadequacy #4: An inadequate view of Themselves (16-22)

Internal divisions can develop when church members forget who they are, when we develop inflated and twisted ideas of our identity. So Paul asks a rhetorical question in v 16...

A. Here's what is true of us (16-17).

Two key words...

1. *We are God's temple.*

Q: What's the purpose of a temple?

2. *We are sacred.*

Q: What does this word indicate?

B. Here's the difference our identity should make (18-22).

1. *We must not deceive ourselves (18-20).*

The Corinthians were trying to "do church" according to the standard and ways of the world. They gauged success the same way. What's wrong with this? Two things...

⇒The world evaluation of wisdom differs from God's.

⇒God's evaluation is what matters.

2. *We must not boast about men (21-22).*

Q: What kind of boasting was going on in Corinth acc to v 21?

Q: Why does Paul say such boasting is not only wrong, but unnecessary? See the end of v 21, v 22

Implications: Some questions to ask ourselves...

Let's make it personal...

1. *Am I involved in God's building project?*
2. *Am I a team player in the building project?*
3. *Am I building in a way that will stand the coming test?*