

Being the Church in an Unbelieving World

DAY OF ACCOUNTABILITY

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 3:8 - 15

INTRO: **Two weeks ago we read in 1 Cor. 3:9 that as believers and followers of Christ, we are**

- **God's fellow workers – we are joining God in His work in His world.** (Center of Hope, ETC, Teaching LCGs, go on Mission.)
- **God's field – God is growing us. From seed to maturity to one day we will be part of His harvest.**
- **God's building – we are living stones being built into a spiritual house.**

So what? Why should we care? Hopefully because we desire to honor God, want to exalt Christ, but also because there will be a day of accountability. That is what Paul talks about next.

1 Corinthians 3:8–15 NKJV 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 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. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Let's walk through the text together to see the essentials of what the Holy Spirit is teaching us through Paul's letter.

1 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise **master builder** I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

Paul shifts from the agricultural picture to one of construction.

Master builder comes from the Greek word architekton but it means more than just an architect. There is another Greek word **that means** the one who draws the plans. The architekton was **both the designer and the contractor**. Paul was never just the mission strategist. He was the hands-on master builder whose specialty was laying the

foundation. He took no credit for what he did. It was by the grace of God. You can be a part of sharing the gospel and planting a church. West Africa in the fall with Jeremy. Brazil in the summer or fall to Altamira, Buriti, or Ayertm Senna. You can share the gospel, lead to the Lord, and see them come to the Salvation Party. Many times we return and find them in a new church.

But while not everyone does the foundation work of church planting, he deems every Christian as a builder and tells them to take heed how they build. **We are all building upon the same foundation!**

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

There is no other foundation upon which anything lasting can be built.

- **For a person** – “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand!” If your life is not being built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, no wonder you’re sinking!
- **For a family** – Likewise the only stable foundation for a marriage and for a family is the Lord Jesus Christ!

Society tells us that Christians are just as likely to divorce as the secular population, but those statistics come from failing to discriminate between those who are merely nominally Christian and those who actually practice their faith. “W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, finds from his own analysis that “active conservative Protestants” who regularly attend church are 35 percent *less likely to divorce* compared to those who have no affiliation.”

- **For a church** – Jesus was pointing to Himself when He told Peter and the other disciples, “On this rock I will build My church.” And elsewhere Scripture calls our Lord the Cornerstone.
- **For a nation** – **Ps. 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.**

A nation cannot be saved, but a nation can act in accord with God’s Word. A nation can grant religious liberty, rule of law, protect life, give justice and compassion.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

There is no other foundation for building something that will last than Jesus Christ.

The church is not meant to be consumers, but providers.

13 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.

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

What is The Day? Compare Scripture with Scripture.

Romans 14:10, 12 NKJV ... For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ...12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Revelation 22:12 NKJV "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

This is the day Christ evaluates our work for Him as His followers.

This is not judgment on sin. – That was on the cross.

- Jeremiah 31:34 ...For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.
- 1 John 1:7 ...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

This is a judgment for Christians on work we have done in the body since we were saved.

And what is the basis for the judgment? Whether or not it lasts when tested by fire. Whether or not it lasts for eternity. Now let's put verses 8 and 14 together.

1 Corinthians 3:8 ...each one will receive his own reward according to **his own labor**.

1 Corinthians 3:14 If anyone's work which he has built on it **endures**, he will receive a reward.

Folks, **what matters when the Lord evaluates our work is how hard we have labored for those things that last for eternity.** Not our success, but our labor.

- How hard, how long, how faithfully have we labored (arduous, difficult, not just when it's easy or convenient) in the spreading of the gospel?
- How hard, how long, how faithfully have we labored in the making of disciples?

- How hard, how long, how faithfully have we labored using the things He entrusted to us, like our talents, spiritual gifts, financial resources, health, energy, time, opportunities, in the building of Christ's church and the eternal Kingdom of God?

Will Jesus care what wealth we accumulated?

Will He be impressed with where we lived or the kind of vehicle we drove?

Will the Lord marvel at how proficient we became at our sports, hobbies, and entertainments?

All this is wood, hay, and stubble and will be burned up. It will not last!

And what will be the reward for those who faithfully labored for eternal things?

Well, Paul does not say, but I believe Jesus does in Mt. 25 in the parable of the talents.

Remember the two servants who labored to multiply what the Master entrusted to them when he went away for a season?

Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, 'Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Those who labor faithfully for those things that last for eternity shall be given greater responsibility and opportunity as they rule and reign with Christ in His Kingdom after His return. How are you building?