

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

*Build Only on Jesus Christ*  
**1 Corinthians 3:10-17**

**Keywords:** missional, gospel, church, judgment, judgment seat, rewards, missional

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:** Pastor Henry shows how the gospel must be central in all that we do. From the foundation of the church to its building up, the gospel has to flow in and out of it. And to the degree the church stays faithful to that gospel, it will be healthy, holy, and missional. Paul gives us a clear pathway to follow in this manner; one that he walked, and one that he bids us to walk as well. May we all be faithful to ever and always be gospel-centered.

**I. Introduction.**

- A. Key point made repeatedly to the students/pastors in Tanzania. The greatest need is to know our God. Jesus said in John 17, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”
  - 1. Everything else does not matter if this is not first.
  - 2. The greatest task of every Christian is to grow in their knowledge of their Lord and Maker.
  - 3. And to know God requires you to know Jesus Christ, who is the perfect revelation of Him.
- B. Today we consider the very foundation of any Christian and any Church.
  - 1. Jesus Christ.
  - 2. Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-17.
- C. Four basic realities that we can take from this passage:
  - 1. Take away Jesus and you have a nice person going to hell.
  - 2. Take away Jesus from the church and you have a nice building filled with people helping others go to hell with them.

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3. You keep Jesus but have a lot of bad things happen, you still have a Church that will be saved.
4. You keep Jesus and you have a lot of good things happen, and you have a church that draws others to Jesus.

## ***Propositional Statement***

Our passage today tells us that the basic foundation that all people and churches must have is Jesus. Another way of saying this is that the gospel of Jesus is the only thing that can be our foundation before God and man. Not only is the gospel our foundation, it becomes the straw that holds all the bricks together. Or in today's terms, it becomes the re-bar that holds the building together. Without it, weakness is throughout the structure.

With regard to MDF we will remind ourselves that the gospel must be kept central in all that we do, whether in our evangelism, or our discipleship. Without it weakness abounds, with it, strength is obvious.

We will see the wise evangelist, the wise discipler, and the foolish destroyer.

## **II. The Wise Evangelist (10).**

- A. We are all called by God to be bearers of the good news of Jesus Christ.
  1. That makes us evangelists.
  2. Or, in the terminology I have been trying to put before you, it makes you missionaries wherever you find yourself.
  3. The only question is this, are you and I being wise in our evangelism?
  4. Or, as C. J. Mahaney writes, "Are we keeping the main thing, the main thing?"
- B. Paul tells the Corinthians that he knows that he laid for them the true foundation of the gospel.
  1. That church is filled with problems, but they are not due to him.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
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2. He was faithful. He laid for them the true foundation.
  - a. What is that foundation?
  - b. 11a is our answer.
  - c. When he came to Corinth he came with one goal, to bring Jesus Christ to them.
    - (1) He was purposeful.
    - (2) He was relational.
    - (3) He came like they were—Gentiles, men unschooled in the bible.
      - (a) 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.
      - (b) Note how he was culturally sensitive, yet gospel centered.
      - (c) Nothing was done (23) just “because.” Very purposeful. All things for the gospel.
- C. Keeping the gospel as central or foundational changes us and makes us agents of change for others.
  1. At the core of our doctrine or practice, both as individuals and as a church, the gospel must define and drive us.
  2. The gospel is what changes us. It changes everything.
  3. The gospel transforms everything in its path.
  4. So without it as the foundation, there is no way any church can:
    - a. Be a church.
    - b. Be truly changed—it just becomes another religion in a sea of religions.
    - c. Change others.
  5. Let me show you what discipleship, true discipleship looks like:
    - a. Ephesians 4:11-13.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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- b. Notice how Jesus is the goal?
  - c. Not holiness. Not a certain dress code, speech code, hair style, or anything else.
  - d. A disciple of Jesus become Christ-like, not pharisee-like and not saducee-like.
    - (1) Saducees were the liberals of the day. Pharisees were the conservatives. And both going to hell.
    - (2) And above them both stood Jesus, holy, yet a genuine friend to sinners.
    - (3) (This point struck a deep chord with the Tanzania pastors. When we considered 1 Corinthians 5 they were shocked and shamed).
  - e. Colossians 1:28 And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.
6. When we learn the gospel we BEGIN to learn three things:
- a. First that God is holy.
  - b. Second that we are sinners.
  - c. Third that Jesus' life, death and resurrection is the only way that we can become right with God, accepted by God, saved from our sins, forgiven of our sins, made holy, made righteous, adopted into the family of God and every other blessing.
7. But notice that I said "begin" for that is what it is, it is only the beginning of these things.

### **III. The Wise Discipler (10b-15).**

- A. Remember what Jesus calls us to be in Matthew 28..... "make disciples."

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by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

1. A discipler is one who takes younger Christians and grows them in maturity. Many times that same person was an evangelist first.
2. What does that growth look like?
  - a. It looks like a mature gospel.
  - b. The gospel is not the beginning point for the Christian, and then we move on.
  - c. And here is the point I think is a problem for some here.
  - d. The gospel is always and forever for the Christian.
  - e. If we are not wise, we begin to talk about obeying but without the gospel as the basis.
    - (1) This moves us into fear and slavery.
    - (2) But if we keep the joy of the gospel message at the forefront, then it becomes joy and freedom.
    - (3) Tim Keller makes this point, “Religion is that we obey so that we can be accepted by God. The gospel is that we are accepted by God through Jesus, therefore we obey.”
    - (4) Therefore, Paul, at the end of his life tells Timothy, 1 Timothy 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I **am** foremost of all.
      - (a) A constant awareness of his sinfulness and a constant reminding of the grace of God through Jesus Christ that he had received.
      - (b) In all of his letters he had no problem making strong commands to holiness and a turning away from sinful practices. But always they came as a result of first a strong declaration

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

and description of the work of God in the  
gospel.

- B. A good example—Apollos (vs 6).
1. Was a great preacher and therefore developed a great following.
  2. Followed Paul in Corinth.
  3. Notice then, Paul planted (laid the foundation) and Apollos watered (built upon it).
  4. And by implication they were both faithful because God caused the growth. Paul brought the gospel to them. Apollos then began to grow them into a mature understanding of how believing the gospel looked like.
  5. Now this is only going to happen when we realize that we belong to God, not one another, not to the pastor, but to God (9).
- C. A warning to those who fail (10c-15).
1. Jesus must be kept as the foundation.
    - a. Vs 11 makes this plain. If we are going to teach God's people we cannot forget this.
    - b. Only a false teacher tries to lay a different foundation than Jesus.
    - c. Only a fool forgets the foundation.
    - d. This was what was driving Paul crazy in Galatians. He has two groups of people:
      - (1) The false teachers, who were trying to bring the focus off of Jesus and onto rules.
      - (2) And the foolish Galatians who were forgetting Jesus and allowing themselves to focus on rules and external things that did not really produce maturity in themselves.
  2. Jesus must define what we put into our building (12).

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- a. In other words, whatever we pour into the lives of other Christians must be consistent with Jesus.
- b. If it is, then it is called gold, silver. . . .
- c. If it is not then it is wood, hay, . . . .
3. Jesus is the one who will judge the building efforts (13).
  - a. There will be reward.
  - b. Or there will be loss.
  - c. 2 Timothy 2:15.
  - d. Act 20:26-27.
  - e. Here we are talking about believers.
- D. The fool seeks to destroy the church (16-17).
  1. Explain the corporate nature of this passage.
  2. Make the point that we are now outside the sphere of the true believer who is building badly. This is a false teacher.
    - a. These are the ones we are to contend against in Jude.
    - b. These are the ones who are despised in the strongest of terms by Paul, John or Peter.
      - (1) Clouds without water.
      - (2) They are unreasoning animals.
      - (3) Antichrists.
      - (4) They come from their father, Satan, who was the first false teacher, uttering those eternally deadly words, "Has God said. . . ." as he set the trap before our mother, Eve.
  3. What is the difference from these people and those in vss 10-15?
    - a. One keeps Jesus as the foundation, but builds on Him either well or poorly.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- b. This one builds well or poorly, but first abandons the foundation of Jesus.

## IV. Conclusion—how this works out at Missio.

- A. Keeping the gospel as the center of our lives and worship protects us from pragmatism.
  1. This is seen in many ways, such as your seeker sensitive churches and such.
  2. Minimizes doctrine.
  3. Focuses on numerical growth.
  4. The driving question becomes “How do we grow?”
  5. Some here seem to believe this is what I am saying, and I trust that that will not be the issue anymore.
- B. Keeping the gospel as the center of our lives and worship drives us toward God and toward the world.
  1. Toward God:
    - a. Through doctrinal, biblical growth.
    - b. It is fascinating that Paul, in Ephesians 1, lists all of these mind-blowing blessings that all Christians receive from God.
    - c. But when he goes to prayer the passion that is in his heart for them is that they may know God better.
    - d. Ephesians 1:18-21 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be **enlightened**, so that you may **know** what is the hope of His calling, [**know**] what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and [**know**] what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. [here he keeps the gospel as central or foundational] These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right



# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
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hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

2. Toward this world.
  - a. We begin to see that this gospel is not something that we hold back, but that we bring to the world.
  - b. We ask how we can begin to connect the good news of Jesus Christ to this culture that we live in.
  - c. If we are reluctant to do so, then we can know that we are not gospel centered anymore.
  - d. For the gospel centered person is growing and what happens when you grow as a Christian?
    - (1) Well you don't get more snotty, mean-spirited, or judgmental of those who are not Christians.
    - (2) You begin to love more and more those whom Christ loves.
    - (3) Why? Because you become more aware of God's holiness, you become more aware of your sinfulness and you become more aware of the glorious power of the gospel.
      - (a) (talk here if time permits the fallacy of needing to fully grasp your sinfulness)
    - (4) The greater your sinfulness becomes, the bigger the Cross of Jesus Christ becomes—if you are gospel-centered.
- C. We must ask ourselves here at Missio if we are gospel-centered.
  1. There is a book called "How People Change" where various false gospels are described:
  2. Formalism – The Gospel is reduced to church activities & service disconnected from the heart & how life is lived.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
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3. Legalism – The Gospel is reduced to performing good works.
  4. Mysticism– The Gospel is reduced to dynamic emotional and spiritual experiences.
  5. Activism – The Gospel is reduced to participation in Christian causes.
  6. Biblicism – The Gospel is reduced to a mastery of the biblical content and theology.
  7. “Psychology-ism” – The Gospel is reduced to the healing of emotional needs.
  8. “Social-ism” – The Gospel is reduced to a network of fulfilling Christian relationships
- D. We must be Christ and Him crucified from the beginning to the end.
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## Small Group Questions

- **How is the gospel to define all that you say and do among Christians? In other words, what does that look like?**
- **How is the gospel to define all that you say and do among non-Christians? How does it look?**