

I Corinthians 3 – 7 November 2021

“The Way We Build Matters”

Introduction

*This is a very practical book, teaching us about:

- Divisions & unity (*Chapters 1-4*)
- Solving Christian disputes in-house (*Chap 5-6*)
- Christian marriage when ideal is lost (*Chap 7*)
- Conscience issues ie eating of meats (*Chap 8-11*)
- Proper public worship (*Chap 12-14*)
- Doctrine of the Resurrection (*Chap 15-16*)

*In Chap 1-2, discussion of unity & division began w/ being taught to keep Christ the focus, not man & allow the Spirit of the Lord to work in people's lives

*Now chap 3, speaks of *how* we build each other up as the church – together in unity

There is an effective way, an ineffective way and also a counterproductive way to build up the Church

***So today, here are 3 stages in the building up of the Church & of individual Christians lives**

1st stage of building the church is the foundation of faith: unity in Jesus, not division of man (Vs 1-9)

Read Vs 1-3

1. Chap 2 describes natural man (can't understand God) and the spiritual man (knows God). Chap 3 now further divides the spiritual into carnal or not
2. Paul has to repeat these fundamentals about how Christ, not man, needs to be preeminent b/c they haven't grown spiritually...they're carnal
 - a. We're born as the Natural Man
 - b. Spiritual can be called the Supernatural Man
 - c. But carnal can be called the Unnatural Man
3. Read Heb 5:11-6:3
 - a. How do we grow? – “by reason of use”
 - b. In the Spirit we will grow, in the flesh we're still fighting divisions & quarrels
4. End of vs 3 they're “walking as [natural] men”
 - a. Carnival (means *farewell flesh*) before Lent
 - b. Mardi Gras (*Fat Tuesday*) before Lent

Read Vs 4-6

1. The people are just the servants or conduits that God sent to them
2. The physical work comes thru the servants, but the real spiritual work came from & thru the Lord
3. The focus of vss 5-9 is the **God** does the work!
4. We can do all the planting, watering, or effort we can but w/o the Spirit of God stirring over the souls of men, nothing happens & they're still lost

Read Vs 7-9

1. The physical servants are 'one in purpose', blessed to be in service for God
2. The servants are orchestrated together by the husbandman God to the Corinthians benefit
 - a. Read Eph 2:10 – His 'workmanship' *poema*
 - b. God chooses to work in us thru His Word and His Spirit AND His servants the Church
3. Don't make an idol out of a man (God's tool)
 - a. Place your foundational trust in Christ!

2nd stage of building the church is the layers of life: Will they be spiritual, carnal or natural? (Vs 10-17)

Read Vs 10

1. The way we teach & help others is important
2. The way God has ‘gifted’ & ‘graced’ us, we need to pass on that same blueprint

Read Vs 11

1. There’s only one offer of salvation, it’s Jesus
2. Peter’s confession – “Upon this rock, I will build my church” – confession of Jesus as Christ

Read Vs 12-13

1. The type of ministering that has been poured into someone will be revealed when testing comes
 - a. Read I Pet 1:6-7
 - b. Teachings, beliefs & attitudes of wood, hay & stubble are ‘burnable’, but the precious will endure the trials of life and be rewarded

2. Many people's service for God is very visible and public...but is it just hay?
 - a. We can easily see a haystack from distance
 - b. **This is carnal building**, fleshly leaven
3. But small amount of gold is lasting & precious
 - i. What's precious? Read II Pet 1:4 – God's promises to us are precious
 - ii. We can barely see God's promises now, but they're coming and true!
 - iii. **That's how spiritual ones build**, on God's Word

Read Vs 14-15

1. There's reward or loss of reward based on what you're teaching and building into others
 - a. It's the work not the worker that suffers fire
 - b. Salvation is only by God's grace, but there are rewards for our works
2. Paul's saying, 'I'm not worried what Apollos or others are teaching, they'll be judged for that'
 - a. Even this help keep unity b/c I don't have to be the 'fixer' of all other ministers

Read Vs 16-17

3. Temple = sanctuary not the whole temple
 - a. Be careful how you build and how you are built as Christians b/c God dwells in you
 - b. Where God is, needs honored...in all believers
4. There is a building up that results in loss of reward (worthless), but this is a building up that is **defilement** that leads to destruction of the person
 - a. ***This is now the natural, unsaved man builds***
 - b. Notice here it's the worker being destroyed by God, not the work...b/c this is an unbeliever, or natural man, doing the work

3rd stage of building the church is the completed creation: To trust & glory in God's wisdom (Vs 18-23)

Read Vs 18-20

1. When the Bible says, 'don't be deceived' it's b/c it's very easy to be deceived!

2. The methods, schemes & crafty styles that men could use to teach & build you up are worthless
 - a. Find God's wisdom and glory in that!
 - b. Read Col 2:10-11 – The 'building' of our Christian life is completed as we...
 - i. Put off the carnal flesh
 - ii. And live in Christ trusting & glorifying Him!

Read Vs 22-23

1. We have all things of God available to us, don't settle for just some things of a man or another man
 - a. Don't boast of a man to the point of worship
2. All things are now the servant of Christians
 - a. Even death now leads us into life
 - b. Yet there's responsibility for us here to grow in God's wisdom
 - c. Why? B/c 'we are Christ's'... we belong to Him for He bought us

Conclusion

Some Christians are still stuck in their pew waiting for someone to come say “hi” when they need to be the ones going to say “hi” to someone else! It’s love to be building into other Christian’s lives, & here’s how:

1. **Start w/ the foundation of faith – which is unity in Jesus, not the division of man**
 - a. Don’t create a carnal, man-centered religion
 - b. Only thing of value is spiritual & given of God
2. **Build the right layers of life – Not natural, not carnal but spiritual principles & practices**
 - a. We can build up lots of worthless activity and haystacks around us, but it won’t last
 - b. Only the precious graces of God will last
3. **Become a completed creation – by trusting & glorying in God’s wisdom**
 - a. The more we trust God, the more we’ll understand that we can only be complete in Him
 - b. Read Jam 5:7 - That’s true peace and rest