

# WHAT WILL SURVIVE THE FIRE?

## Three Tests God Ordains for His People

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### Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

<sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. <sup>14</sup> If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

### INTRODUCTION:

A forest fire burnt down a farmhouse in western Canada. As the embers cooled, the devastated farmer was walking over the ruins and noticed a burned lump on the ground. He prodded it with his stick and saw that it was a hen, burned to death. The farmer turned the hen over and, to his surprise, out ran three chirping baby chicks. The hen had died in the flames even as it saved the lives of her helpless brood.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ compared himself to a hen eager for the safety of her brood. In Matthew 22:37-39, He said,

- <sup>37</sup> "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. <sup>38</sup> Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! <sup>39</sup> For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

Jesus offered Himself for the sins of His people on the cross to save them from God's wrath, but there is another fiery judgment from which even God's people will not be spared. It is the day of testing of our works.

We have typically expounding those texts which reveal the **tests that God ordains**. We began in Deuteronomy 8 with what we called **diagnostic tests**—*these are tests that God ordains, which reveal our spiritual condition*. These tests reveal whether we have a heart to obey God or not. The second test is an **educational test**—and we discovered one such test given by Jesus with the disciples in Mark 6. These are tests God ordains, which *reveal what we need*. Sometimes we think we need more patience, but God's test reveals that we need more faith. Sometimes we think we need more knowledge, but what God's test reveals is that we need a softer heart and a corrected view of Christ. Such was the case with His disciples then, and it is true of us today. Now, in this final lesson, we will consider a **certification test**—this is *the final test God ordains, which will test the quality of our works*.

Sometimes tests are necessary to demonstrate that a candidate is certified in a particular field. We take driving tests, college entrance exams, professional licensing exams, and more. In all cases, standards are set, questions are asked, and the answers are evaluated by experts who determine whether candidates pass or fail.

Likewise, there remains one final test that God has ordained for His people, which will determine, not whether we are saved or lost, but whether we were truly faithful or faithless. I have entitled this study, *What Will Survive the Fire?* How to fireproof your life and ministry.

The truth contained in these verses is so staggering and solemn, it's like a great ocean that divides into many mighty rivers. In this message, I want to bring into sharp focus the main thrust of the text and briefly point out the primary rivers of truth that flow from it.

## OUTLINE:

- In verses 10-11, we find **two kinds of builders**.
- In verses 12-13, we find **two kinds of materials**.
- In verses 14-15, we find **two kinds of results**.

Each of us will fit into all these categories when we stand before God on the last day. May God help us now to listen carefully so as to be prepared today, and every day, for that day.

## CONTENT AND MAIN PURPOSE

Beginning at verse 10, the Apostle shifts from *the farmland to the construction site*, from *the planter to the builder*, or from *the agricultural analogy to the architectural analogy*. To get a better angle, we need to rise above them to see their connection. When a pilot takes one of those small two-seat Cessnas up for a flight, once they get to a certain elevation, they can see the entire city and how the streets connect, and the traffic flows to the main highways.

Now, imagine yourself being on the passenger side of the plane as we survey this text. There is *a main lesson* of these analogies and *a major distinction* between these two analogies that will help us chart our course.

**1. The main lesson** of these two analogies are exactly the same, but we will understand it better if we keep in mind the slow process that was involved in building the great structures before the days of power equipment. It is a record of fact that Cathedrals in Europe often took four or five centuries to complete and sometimes longer. In Paul's day, a temple sometimes took decades to build. One builder might lay a foundation. Others would complete various phases of the building project and then would move on, retire, or die, while others would take their places. Now hopefully, you can see how clear the lesson is: Paul laid a foundation, and others have built upon that work. *But it is the project as a whole that is important.* So, to focus all the praise on just one or two builders is foolish, when many different builders have contributed to the project. All the builders had a common vision and a common aim. The same is true in the harvest field. Some plant, others water, but the fruitfulness of the harvest, in the end, is what really matters. The main lesson of both analogies is this: *in the church, the emphasis and the glory must never be on the laborers, but on God alone.* Listen to how Paul put in beginning at verse 4.

- For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not *mere* men?  
<sup>5</sup> What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one. <sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, *but God was causing the growth.* <sup>7</sup> *So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.*

Servants are instruments in God's hands, but the praise and honor are to be toward God and God alone. Where is your focus today? Is it on the laborers, or is it on God?

**2. The major distinction** between the two analogies is also instructive. In both analogies, God plays a different role. In the *agricultural analogy*, God is represented as the owner of the field who also employs the workers—"even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one" (v.5). And therefore, God should be praised as the One who gives life and who makes the crops grow.

However, when we come to the *architectural analogy*, there is nothing *organic*, and there is nothing *growing*; everything is *built*. And so, God is not seen as the owner of the field, but as the owner of the building who stands behind “*the day*” and judges *the quality of the work of each builder*. If the first analogy taught us about *God’s expectation to see fruit in His field*, this analogy unveils to us God’s ultimate inspection and the accountability that every builder will face. Now, the difference between the analogy of *the building* and *the field* is related, but in the *architectural analogy*, a heavy emphasis is placed on one vital truth—*accountability*.

The parts of the architectural analogy are clear. **The foundation** is Jesus Christ. **The builders** are the *apostles, or all preachers, evangelists, elders, or teachers*. Indirectly, it applies to the Christian’s works. 2 Corinthians 5:10 points us to the Bema Seat judgment of believers.

- <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

There are only two kinds of **materials** that are used by the builders; *one that cannot withstand the fire, and the kind that survives the fire*. **The day** is the great Day of Judgment. Martin Luther said, “I only have two days on my calendar—today and that day!” **The fire** is the strictness of divine holiness and justice. The final prospect before every builder is either **reward or loss**—which brings before us the question, *how much of our works will survive the flames?*

## A. TWO KINDS OF BUILDERS (vv.10-11)

<sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

As Paul begins, he reminds the Corinthians that there had been *two primary builders in the church at Corinth*. The first builder is seen in the first part of verse 10—**“According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation...”** Paul was the founding pastor of Corinth, and he laid the foundation. The second builder is seen with the word **“another... is building on it...”** Note the present tense verb *“is building.”* That is a direct reference to Apollos, who took up the mantle of pastoral responsibility when Paul left after 18 months, according to Acts 18.

**Notice how Paul unfolds SIX details about Gospel building ministry.**

1. **Gospel ministry is grace empowered work (v.10a)**—“*According to the grace of God which was given to me...*”

It was **grace** that empowered Paul to preach the Gospel of Christ when he arrived at Corinth in Acts 18. It was the grace of God that gave the listeners who responded to the Gospel the ability to believe (Acts 18:8). It was the *grace* of God that enabled Paul to stay there for 18 months, strengthening the disciples (Acts 18:11). It was the *grace* of God that raised up Apollos and Priscilla and Aquila to continue the work (Acts 18:24-28). And what Paul wants us to know up front is this: *all Gospel ministry exists and is carried on by grace and grace alone (1 Cor.15:11)*. Paul wants us to know that he was only a tool or an instrument that God picked up and used in building this church. The grace came from God. The same grace will empower you today to fulfill what He has called you to do in service to His kingdom as well.

- 2. Gospel ministry is doctrinally guided work (v.10b)**—“...like a wise master builder...” Paul pictures himself with the metaphor of *a wise master builder*. He is not *any* kind of builder, but a wise, divinely governed, and biblically accurate master builder. By this, Paul shows that he was like a foreman overseeing the entire Gospel project. He executed the work of laying the foundation and ministry according to God’s design. He did not take a clip from the Athens’ culture and a piece from Jewish tradition and combined it with another piece from the Scriptures to form the ministry No! He did not invent a new way to do church. He oversaw the work with the eye and skill of an accountable foreman, regulating every ministry and function of the church in conformity with the rule of the foundation. In other words, in leadership, he only affirmed qualified men. In outreach, he only practiced biblical means. In equipping the church, from the adults to the youth, he only employed those means that God authorized for the building up of the church in Christlikeness. No office or ministry was a matter of his own creation. He followed the design of the Head of the church. He was using *the wisdom of God* to build the church as he oversaw the work. He had other strong and committed men to help him like Timothy and Silas (*Acts 18:5*), but Paul gave primary leadership as a wise master builder.
- 3. Gospel ministry is hard work (v.10c)**—“...I laid a foundation...” By *the grace of God*, Paul did this work, and it was hard, back-breaking, time-investing, in-the-trenches, messy work. Foundation work is hard work. It is *demanding* work. It involves *toil to the point of exhaustion* (*Col.1:28-29; 2:1; 4:12; 1 Cor.15:10*). Paul did not seek to build the church through *surveying the community* or *entertaining the goats*, but he rolled up his sleeves, put his hand to the plow, and preached the Gospel. When we engage in Gospel ministry, we need to understand and embrace the fact that *it will be hard work!* And when we do it *God’s way*, it will never be *the easy way*, that is why it requires *the grace of God*. There is no easy place to do God’s work, yet the hard work of Gospel ministry will not be forgotten on the last day (*Heb.6:10*).
- 4. Gospel ministry is shared work (v.10d)**—“...and another is building on it.” As we said earlier, the second builder who was presently building on the foundation that Paul laid was sitting right on site. His name was *Apollos*. Surely there were other teachers and leaders in the church, but Apollos was the primary shepherd. Notice, the verb tense “is” means that it was presently happening at that time. The word “**another**” means *another of the same kind*. Jesus used this word of the Holy Spirit when He said in John 14:16, “*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.*” Another exactly like Me is the meaning. Apollos had *the same doctrine* as Paul but a different personality. He had *the same faith, the same commitment, and the same love* for Christ, but a different *style, a different background, and a different giftedness*.

Paul was a power, a builder, a Gospel pioneer, a powerful preacher, an apostle, and a teacher (*2 Tim.1:11*). Apollos, on the other hand, was an Alexandrian by birth—where the highest advantages of learning were given. He possessed a rare power of speech called *eloquence*. He not only had this fluency, but he was “*mighty*” in the Scriptures. He was able to wield the sword of Scriptures with the powers of argument with great effect. Apollos is mentioned in verses 4, 5, and 6 because different groups were lining up into different party factions. Some liked to hear Paul preach. Others liked to hear Apollos preach. Whenever Christians speak in this way, it reveals their spiritual immaturity (*1 Cor.3:1-4*).

Here were men with *the same doctrine* and *the same Gospel message*, but the church was so carnal that they could not see that both Paul and Apollos were merely instruments, and *God was building the church* (*Cf.3:1-8*). Dear friends, let us remember, Jesus said, “*I will build My church...*” (*Matt.16:18*).

Only God can grow the church. As servants, all we can do is *sow the seed, plow up the ground, and work to the point of exhaustion*. We water, we plant, we nurture, but the results or growth is entirely up to God! We share the work, and the work is not meaningless; we share the privilege, and the privilege is not insignificant, but God gets the glory.

- 5. Gospel ministry is a solemn work (v.10e)**—“...but each man must be careful how he builds on it.” This is to serve as a warning, not only to Apollos, but to every teacher and worker and Christian down through church history. The warning is: don’t be careless about God’s work. Consider well what you are doing. There is only one foundation for the church. If it isn’t founded upon Jesus Christ—meaning that the preaching of Christ and Him crucified is the baseline of His Gospel—then it isn’t a church at all. So, one can’t build on any other foundation, but one can build unworthily on the one foundation. So, we must be careful. Why must we be careful about what we build on the foundation? Because it is so priceless and precious!
- 6. Gospel ministry is a valuable work (v.11)**—“For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

He put it in the negative to put a sharp edge on his words—“for no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid.” The choice that is given for the builder, preacher, elder, or teacher is not between *several foundations*, but between *the only foundation or no foundation at all*. Friends, there are not two ways to build your life, there is only one way and one foundation, and it is Jesus Christ. The implication here is that if your life is not founded upon Christ, then it has no foundation.

Here, Jesus is called the foundation. **But in what way is He the foundation?** He is the sure Rock upon which the church is built. The church is not built upon *a constitution like the U.S.* or an oath like the *Armed Services*; *it is built upon a character and being of a living Person*. And oh, what a comfort this is!

There are some people whose faith is *constructed upon assumption*. They have never really taken the time to sit down with the Great Architect Himself to see if He has laid a stake in their own hearts. So, they begin to build. They go to church and give time and money, but the storms come, the winds scream, and the waves beat up against their house, and it falls! Why? Because they were foolishly building their house on the sand of assumption. But for those who hear His Word and heed it (*Matt.7:24-27*), they too find that the wild winds of doubts come, and the jagged rocks of temptation are all around them, but the frail house of their soul still stands, because they have been equipped with the proper foundation—the Lord Jesus Himself!

This is the great truth that is insisted upon throughout the Word of God—nothing of lasting value can be built apart from Jesus Christ!

**Recap:**

- What we have said so far is, *the foundation of the church is Christ, and there is no other foundation that one can build a church or their lives upon that has lasting value. Each member has an assignment in this building project. This foundation is laid through the faithful, consistent, expositional preaching of the Gospel—Christ crucified and risen for the forgiveness of sin (1 Cor.15:1-4)!*

## B. TWO KINDS OF MATERIALS (vv. 12-13)

Let me move now from *the foundation* to *the builders*, and Paul uses an illustration of what it means to build on the foundation. And plainly stated, Paul tells us that God will test the building work of all workers so that each one's work will become clear.

<sup>12</sup> Now if any man builds on the foundation

The word "**if**" here is a third-class condition or an indefinite pronoun, which carries the idea of uncertainty in the future. In other words, "Maybe you will or maybe you won't." Every believer builds on the foundation, but the implied question is, what kind of materials will you use?

There are only two kinds of materials that might be used to build upon the foundation. There are six materials, but the list is split into two categories.

with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

The materials that Paul identifies are not to be distinguished based upon a sliding scale of value—gold being the most expensive, then silver, and so on and so forth. The only distinction Paul makes between them is, which one is able to survive the fire. And if you take it that way, you will only see two categories.

- Gold, silver, and precious stones are non-combustible.
- Wood, hay, and straw are combustible.
- Gold, silver, and precious stones are durable.
- Wood, hay, and straw are perishable.
- Gold, silver, and precious stones are permanent.
- Wood, hay, and straw are temporary.
- Gold, silver, and precious stones are valuable.
- Wood, hay, and straw are cheap and worthless.
- Gold, silver, and precious stones are hard to obtain.
- Wood, hay, and straw are easy to find.

We must not press the illustration too far. Paul is simply giving an illustration in which he is comparing materials to show that some are inadequate as building materials in the kingdom of God. He is not speaking *literally*, but *figuratively*. When we mix the wisdom of men with the wisdom of God in the work of building the church, it is like alternating layers of gold and wood, silver and hay, precious stones and straw. Wood, hay, and straw have their place (in a barn), but they are inadequate building materials. In the same way, human wisdom and fleshly attractions may have a place in life—at Disneyland, but not in the building of the church.

Here is what Paul wants us to know. *God will test our work, and it will be revealed as to what kind of work it was.*

<sup>13</sup> each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

There are three key terms that will help us unpack Paul's meaning: "**the day...the fire...the quality.**"

1. **First, the day. What do we know about this day?** This is no illusion to purgatory as the Roman Catholics teach. This fire "tests," it doesn't purify. The fire is not for purification; it is for evaluation. It is not for cleansing, but for revealing. It is not the day of fiery trials, for the trials of life are over and gone. It is not the day of *decision*; it is the day of *revelation*. Paul refers to it in Romans 13:12 as the day of judgment. "*The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand.*" He speaks in the language of imminence, though it is future because we ought not to think of it as far off. In 1 Thessalonians 5:4, this day is the day that God judges. "*But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief.*"

**What do we know about this day?** The doctrine of judgment is one of the greatest and mightiest matters that ever confront us in Scripture, according to Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones. It is a theme that is taught in the Bible from beginning to end. What does Paul have in mind as he thinks of the Day of Judgment?

It will be a day of universal disclosure. "*For the day will show it because it is to be revealed...*"

The word "**revealed**" in verse 13 is the same Greek word that is used for the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation (*apokalypto*) means *to become known to the public*. It speaks especially of information that was previously known only to a few people, but now made evident or brought out in the open.

Think of a statue that has never been publicly made known. Then the day comes, and the entire community shows up, and there is a canvas over the statue. Then the sculptor comes and removes the canvas so that the work is unveiled! That's what will happen on the final day. Right now, our work is somewhat concealed by human, fallible eyes, but there is coming day when it will be revealed for what it is.

Paul removes from our thinking any protective veil of silence here. This is a cosmic act in a public domain. Everything becomes visible and apparent. You see, prior to this final judgment, we are forced to reserve judgment because there are many unknown factors, like motives and effects (*Cf. 1 Cor.4:5*). But here, all factors are taken into account, and a final divine disclosure is made of which there will be no debate or jury. This is the judgment seat of Christ (*2 Cor.5:10*). This is the judgment that Peter spoke of that must begin with the church of God (*1 Pet.4:17*).

- The Day of Judgment will be a **formal event**, in that, individual names, not groups of people, will be summoned. Each individual soul will be called to give an account. Books are opened, and evaluations are pronounced.
- The Day of Judgment will be **legal**. God is seen as a Judge sitting on His throne (*Rev.20:11*). This is why books are opened and used. It will be a day of perfect accounting.
- The Day of Judgment will be a **visible and public event**. (*Rev.20:12; Eccl.12:14*)
- The Day of Judgment will be **final**. It is a day that we are all facing and toward which we are all approaching.

However, besides being *a day of universal disclosure*, it will also be **a day when every work is subject to divine scrutiny. Now, who will conduct this test?** Jesus will be the judge of His church.

In Revelation 1:1-4, we read that the Lord's eyes will be as "*a flame of fire.*" The prophet Malachi pictures the Lord Jesus coming to His temple to sit in judgment like "*a refiner's fire and sitting as a smelter and purifier of silver to refine the son of Levi and refine them like gold and silver so that they may present to the Lord offerings of righteousness.*" (Mal.3:1-3).

Notice it didn't say that it would test *the foundation*, but *the work*.

2. **Second, the fire.** Notice carefully that phrase "*fire itself...*" which is a symbol of divine judgment that both purifies and consumes. It will have a dual effect. It will test "*the quality of each man's work.*" Not the *amount* (though that does have some relevance), but Paul says, the quality or "what sort of work it is." It is not the *quantity*, but the *quality*—and God is into quality! Not *how much*, but *what kind*.
3. **Third, the quality.** What will determine the quality? The message you speak, the motives you possess, and the methods you use.

Practically speaking, there are two relevant applications at this point.

- As a church, we must not get caught up in numbers but in quality. We must keep our focus on the substance, not the size.
- We must build with the right materials because no laborer will be overlooked at the judgment seat of Christ.

### C. TWO KINDS OF RESULTS (vv.14-15)

<sup>14</sup>If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

The word for "**reward**" here is not *a payment*, for no man can ever put God in his debt. This word signifies "*approval.*" The reward is not *salvation*, for salvation is a *gift* that cannot be earned (Eph.2:8), so it must be some privilege. The two privileges that we are given in the New Testament are,

1. A warm approval—"Well done my good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master." (Matt.25:21)
2. An abundant welcome—"for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you." (2 Pet.1:11)

The reward of grace there shall correspond to the work of grace here in our hearts.

On the other hand, if Christ sees that we have been seeking to do His work the world's way, by looking for prestige, promotion, and money, our work shall be burned up, and we shall suffer loss—which means *we will forfeit what we could have gained*. We will lose the commendation that we could have received for a life's work in ministry because it is defective.

There are only **two outcomes** of this judgment. Our works will either remain *unharmful* and *undamaged*, or they will be *consumed*. Our works will either be *burned up* or *burned down*.



Yet, Paul wants us to know that even if our service is flawed by self-interest and compromise, our foundation is sure. The worthless works are gone, but *he himself* is saved. Salvation is not *by* fire; it is by the blood, but it will be *in spite of* the fire.

*"He shall suffer loss; but he himself shall saved, yet so as through fire."*

The picture here is of someone running out of a building engulfed in flames, he escapes, but the question left hanging is, **how much of what he has built survives?** *"So as through fire"* carries the idea of "escaping by the skin of one's teeth or just in the nick of time."

Jonathan Edward says, "He deserves for his unfaithfulness to forfeit his salvation and perish with the unbeliever. But he is saved as through the very flames. He is a smoking firebrand" (*Cf. Amos 4:11*).<sup>1</sup>

In 146 B.C., the Roman Consul burned Corinth to the ground. Can you imagine what it was like as the people look over the ruins? A slave looking for his little hut made of wood, hay, and straw goes over to the spot where it had been and kicks the ashes. Another slave walks by and says, "I didn't even have time to rescue a thing. I barely got out the door and escaped!" But on the other side of the city, a man stands in his doorway, smells the smoke in the air, and says to himself, "I'm glad I invested in the right materials and invested the right way." Each of us has time to evaluate our building, so that when the test of fire comes, our building will stand firm and bring honor to Jesus.

Has this word stricken a note in your heart, dear friends? Are you a part of this great temple, this building of God, or are you outside of it? There is no middle ground. Have you come to Christ, the precious Cornerstone? Are you building upon His truth, His righteousness, and His Person? The question is important for you to answer now, because a day is coming when the answer will be one of doom. If you will bow your head and say good-bye to all those inferior things that have no value eternally, and look to Christ, and to Him alone as your all in all, you shall indeed be placed as a living stone in His great temple, and someday be made complete and perfect by His grace.

Escape the wrath to come. Come to Jesus and be owned by God today! Amen!

## **CONCLUSION:**

How do you fireproof your ministry?

- Build upon the right foundation—*Jesus Christ*.
- Build using the right materials—*the pure unadulterated Gospel*.
- Build according to the right design and motives—*obedience and love*.

The London businessman, Lindsay Clegg, told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs badly. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and left trash all over the place. As he showed a prospective buyer the property, he made sure to communicate to the buyer that he would replace the broken windows, clean out the trash, and bring in a crew to correct any structural damage. Then the buyer said something that threw him for a loop. He said, "Forget about the repairs. When I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site."

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey B. Wilson, *New Testament Commentaries*, Vol.1, p.227

Now, this is God's message to us! When we compare our efforts to clean up our lives with the renovation that God has in mind, our improvement looks as trivial as sweeping the floor of a building that is about to be demolished.

When a man is given new life in Christ, the old life is over! God is not in the *renovation business*. He is no patchwork Savior who takes the broken pieces of our lives and glues them back together. God makes all things *new*, and He never uses refurbished materials! He gives the man who believes *His love, His light, and His life*. Paul said, "*If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold, new things have come*" (2 Cor.5:17). All that God wants is the site and cooperation in the building. There are some who are still trying to *reform* their lives, but God offers *redemption*. There are others who are trying to *manage* their lives, but God offers *new ownership*.

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