

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 29TH - 30TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

IMMATURE (1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-4)

I LOVE YOU...

Paul begins this part of his letter with an address to his "brothers and sisters." This shows that he loves and respects the recipients.

- When Paul first arrived in Corinth, he had to treat them as spiritual children by giving them theological "milk" before teaching them deeper things of the faith. **Too much food too quickly causes infants to choke.**

...BUT YOU'RE ACTING LIKE BABIES!

The problem is that they hadn't progressed to the "meat" of the teachings of the Word. This was evident in the divisions and arguments amongst the Christians in Corinth.

- **Salvation is both an event and a lifestyle. As time passes, we should not only be more knowledgeable of the things of God, but living them it out more and more.**

"STILL WORLDLY"

The criticism of the Christians that knew better was that they were still acting "worldly," specifically they were acting envious and causing strife.

- **The problem is, not only did they have knowledge of God and His ways, they possessed the Holy Spirit that empowers righteous living.**

ARE WE LIVING LIKE "MERE HUMANS?"

Because the Corinthians were enamored with shallow celebrity culture and committing the same selfish acts as non-believers, Paul says they're acting like "mere" humans."

- **We're called to be the light and salt of the world (Mt. 5). This is impossible if we act like people that haven't been exposed to the truth and power of God.**

SERVITUDE (1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-15)

FOCUSING ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERS

Paul asks the divided church, "What is Apollos? What is Paul?" to set up an explanation of what servants and leaders are supposed to be in God's plan.

- Unlike worldly leaders, **Christian leaders are to be servants that work for the goal of advancing the truth of Christ, not themselves.**

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE

The work of ministry is not reserved just for pastors. Paul says, "each has the role the Lord has given." This means all Christians are to be contributing to the mission.

- Again, **the goal is people being saved. One may plant the seed, another may water that seed, but it is God that makes things happen in the lives of others.**

WE AREN'T "ANYTHING"

It is not that we are not valuable to God and each other, but when it comes to changing the hearts of people, it is all the work of God "Who gives the growth." It is also a **team effort**.

- V8 says **those who "plant" and "water" are one and are "coworkers." The church is also "God's field" and "building" to manage as He sees fit.**

LAYING A PROPER FOUNDATION

Paul goes from an agricultural analogy to an architectural one. He calls himself a "skilled master builder" by "God's grace" that laid a foundation others are to build upon.

- Because the ones that started the work before us sacrificed and because souls are on the line, **we're to "be careful how [we] build" up people into disciples of Jesus.**

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION?

The foundation is Jesus and what is built upon that foundation is more Jesus. This means we teach the gospel and help others progress into a deeper understanding of God.

- This goes back to us removing ourselves from the equation as much as possible. **We're to present the One that changes lives, not try to be the one changing lives.**

TRUE INTENTIONS WILL BE REVEALED OVER TIME

Paul warns of us building on the foundation of Jesus with things made by human hands. In our day this can be trendy pastors, bait-and-switch tactics, culturally relevant compromises, or the allure of materialism and prosperity.

- **Trying to build God's Church by any other means than God's ways will not work long-term. Aren't we seeing this?**

THIS MAY NOT BE A HEAVEN OR HELL THING

Just because some Christian leaders use foolish attempts to do Godly things doesn't mean they aren't saved. God is gracious, even to foolish Christian leaders.

- God's judgement at the end of time will show the fruit of our efforts. The "loss" we may experience may not be damnation, but a loss of rewards in heaven (v15).

THE TEMPLE (1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-23)

FROM THE GROUND, TO A BUILDING, TO A TEMPLE

Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand their identity in God. Where once the knowledge of God was just a seed, it developed over time to become the temple of God.

- Paul was referring to the church community being the temple of God. In chapter 6 Paul will also call Christian individuals the temple of the Holy Spirit.

THIS IS A HIGH CALLING!

Because God has chosen to dwell in the church body/individuals as opposed to a building, we should have an understanding that we're called to a high standard and have an important mission to carry out!

- V17 states that if we have a hand in hurting the integrity of "God's temple" we will be "destroy[ed]."

HOW CAN WE DESTROY GOD'S TEMPLE

V18-23 tell us how we begin to compromise the integrity of the church, therefore destroying the holy place God wants to dwell. This goes back to Christians becoming more focused on "worldly wisdom" than God's wisdom.

- **When we start to make church about ourselves and buckle to the pressures of culture, we start the countdown to chaos.**

"THE REASONINGS OF THE WISE ARE FUTILE"

We are reminded again that the outcome of mankind's selfish ambitions are always the same, futile. History clearly teaches this.

- **We tend to brag on ourselves as enlightened and superior, but the truth is, we consistently sink when left to our own devices.** Look at the culture we live in!

EVERYTHING IS OURS?

Greek Stoic philosophy claimed wisdom was one who could master all they encountered. Paul was using this language to point out this is only true by living as a temple of God's Spirit.

- **We're to not boast in human ideas or accomplishments because anything good is given by God through His grace and mercy.**

SO, WHAT ARE WE TO DO? (V23)

If we understand and live in the truth that we belong to Christ we will avoid rivalries, jealousy, division, and the allure to follow the culture of the world that leads to destruction.

- This goes into the chaos that ensues when we misplace our **identity. We're made in the image of God, and until we live in that identity we will live in chaos and confusion.**

LIKE MERE HUMANS?

- We're no better than anyone else around us, but because of the knowledge of Jesus and the power and guidance of the Spirit, **we are called to live at a higher standard.**
- We're called to this standard to not only honor God, but to be an instrument in the salvation process of others. **Are we living up to the call to be "salt" and "light?"**

SEEING OURSELVES AS A TEAM

- We must also know that we are not in this alone or for our personal glory.
- We may plant the seed, another may water, but it is God that changes the hearts of people. This works on an individual and church level.
- **Are we doing our part even if our part doesn't get the credit for it?**

AS A TEMPLE

- The church is the body of God that His Spirit dwells in. If we understand this truth, **we should be conducting our churches with high integrity and high impact.**
- We as individuals are also the temple of God (6:19-10). This means **we are to conduct ourselves in a way that obeys the Word and therefore honors the Spirit in us.**

WHO ARE WE?

- This whole chapter seems to hinge on the recognition, or lack thereof, of who we are in relation to our Creator.
- We must know and live confidently in the image by which we were made. **We are not made in the image of money, sexuality, gender, race, or nationality.** We are all one under Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:28).

WHO ARE WE?

- We live in a heightened state of confusion because **we've misplaced our identity.** This is why so many people feel worthless and have turned to unhealthy means for value.
- **The answer is to know who we are in Him. We're loved, valued, seen, known, and heard! God not only loves us but wants us to live in a way fit for a King's heir.**