

SUBJECT :

Serving Together

BIBLE BASIS:

Lesson Scripture: 1Corinthians 3:1-15

BIBLE TRUTH:

We all have a ministry. 2Corn. 5:17, John 15:16

MEMORY VERSE:

I Corinth 3:9

Lesson Aim

That as the body of Christ, we learn how to work with
God and with each other

We are talking about the whole church, presenting the
whole gospel, to the whole world.

Introduction

- How do we know whether people are growing in the Lord? Is it because they attend all the church services, give a lot of money, or volunteer to participate in various projects? 1Peter 2:2-3
- To be sure most church leaders would be happy to have more people like those just described. While such activities are important in the life of a local church, they do not necessarily assure spiritual health.
- Although those in the Corinthian church were very gifted, they still experienced many problems. 1Cor. 1:4-8
- We have learned from last weeks lesson that the congregation was divided over various human leaders, and their loyalty to Christ had been compromised. The Corinthians also were also engaged in immorality and litigation among themselves. 5:1,6:1-3.
- With these kinds of activities going on in the church, the church is powerless to be about the Fathers business. Luke 19:10, Luke 15:4-7
- It is also imperative that the churches in our cities endeavor to come together. We cannot continue to divide ourselves by denominations, and ethnicity, and non-essential differences. Why? The Devil knows one church or denomination will ever transform a city operating alone. We must come together as the Body of Christ in every city and recognize that we represent many congregations but are one church. The sum of the whole is greater than Its parts. 1Cor. 12:12-14,

Apprentice or Professional

- 1 Cor. 3:1-2 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. [2] I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.
- Three things are said about the carnal man. The carnal man is not spiritually mature; he is as a babe in Christ. Note that the carnal man is a **true believer**, however he is deformed just like a deformed baby. For the time he has been saved, he has not grown in Christ. He has been a believer for years, but he knows little about Christ or his word.
- The carnal man has to be fed with milk and not the meat of the Word. This does not mean there are two sets of teachings. The same gospel is preached to all, and the same Word is studied by all; but some have paid attention, studied, prayed, and served Christ more than others. Therefore, they naturally know more about God's Word, and know more about what it means to walk in Christ. John 7:17, 2Tim 2:15
- The same is true with any endeavor of life. The more a person experiences and studies a field, the more he knows. Everyone either feeds on the milk or the meat of his profession. Jam. 1:21-24
- There should come a time when believers should mature and grow to the level of being capable of teaching others. Heb. 5:12
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Divided Loyalty

- [3] For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? [4] For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?
- The carnal man is characterized by division. Division is striking proof that a man or a group of people are carnal, whether the division be in a church or in a family. Matt 12:25
- Carnality is clearly seen in envying and strife. Envy leads to jealousy, and jealousy leads to division. When people become jealous of one another, they become divided and begin to strive or argue. The envy may be caused by...most anything, some position, some recognition, some promotion, some possession, some gift
- Envy leads to differences and strife, and strife leads to division. Such behavior is carnal and of the flesh, and it does not belong in the church. Carnality is seen when believers begin to try to solve spiritual problems by natural means; it just doesn't work. James 3:14-16
- Carnality is seen when believers begin to follow men and form cliques in the church. For churches to continue to function separately from each other because of denominational differences, is also an indication of carnality on the part of church leaders. 1 Cor. 1:10-13

The Gift Is Gods

- [5] Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?
- The word “ministers” means a servant, or a waiter on tables. The stress is upon service. Ministers are not lords over God’s flock and church; they are servants. They are the servants of God and the servants of God’s people. Matt. 20:25-28, 1Peter 5:3
- Two points of servant hood are stressed. Ministers are only instruments of God. 1Tim. 1:12
- They are only the servants “by whom [or through whom] ye believe.” They are not the ones whom believers are to praise nor upon whom believers are to be focused. Heb 12:2
- No minister created the message of the gospel; God did. Rom 1:16-17
- No minister saves the believer; God does. Heb. 7:24-25
- No minister leads a person to believe; God does. Rom. 2:4, 2Cor. 7:10
- Ministers can help people only as God gifts them. The gifts of the ministry are not natural abilities. The gifts to proclaim the gospel and to minister to people are of God. 1 Cor. 4:7
- Therefore, the man, the minister himself as a person, has nothing in which the people can glory. The gifts are of God and of God alone. James 1:17, 1Cor. 12:4-7, Matt. 25:15

God Gives The Increase

- [6] I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. [7] So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.
- Ministers of God are nothing in comparison to God. What does such a strong statement mean? Simply this: no minister has any cause for glory or praise or honor or recognition; no reason for a person or a group of people to idolize a minister. 1Cor. 6:20
- Respect the minister, yes. Love him, yes. Esteem him, yes; for the minister has an impossible task, the most difficult task upon earth.
- A picture from farming shows exactly what our attitude toward ministers is to be. One minister of God planted the seed of God's Word in our lives. Another minister comes along and waters the seed. All the ministers that cross our paths contribute to our lives. They contribute either the seed of the gospel or the water of the Word. But note: it is God who gives the increase. No minister can make the seed grow. Spiritual growth is activated by God's power alone. John 12:24
- Therefore, glorify and talk about God. Praise God and lift His name up, not the name of a minister. Whatever gifts the minister has are of God; and whatever planting and watering the minister did was by God's call and strength; and whatever growth was experienced was due to God. Psalm 29:2, Psalm 34:3

We Are Worker Together

- [8] Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.
- Ministers are one; they are equal in God's eyes. And they are to be seen *as one* and *equal* in the eyes of the church and its believers. Note two significant points. Both the sower and he who plants and he who waters, are *emphatically said to be one*.
- There is a spiritual unity between ministers. The work of the one who plants cannot be done without the work of the one who waters. Both are absolutely essential. They are not rivals, working against each other. They are planters and waterers, planting and watering lives for God. Eph. 4:11-13
- Each minister of God is personally responsible to God. Each man is to be rewarded for what he does, not for what another minister does. A man uses his own gifts; he does not try to be like someone else. God gave him specific gifts for special purposes. In fact, the minister is to be rewarded for how well he uses his gifts. Therefore, trying to be like another minister is not his task. His task is to be who God called him to be and to do as God gifts him to do. Rom 12:5-7
- The minister shall be judged for his labor, not for what men may term *success*. (Matthew 25:22-23, 1 Peter 4:11).

The Field And The Building

- [9] For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.
- Ministers are co-workers with God. Three striking points are declared in this verse. God's name comes first in this verse three different times: God's fellow workers are we. God's husbandry are you. God's building are you."
- He is the Source of both its ministers and its people. Neither the ministers nor the people are to be exalted or praised above one another. God alone is worthy of our glory and honor, our worship and praise, our service and ministry.
- Their mission is to serve right along by the side of God Himself. Matt. 9:37-38. John 4:35-36, Mark 16:20, Acts 20:24,
- Note that a *laborer* who does not labor is a paradox. A farmer who does not labor does not receive the reward at harvest time. There is nothing to receive.
- The church is God's field and building. The church is to bear fruit. A field does not exist to lie unused. The same is true of a building that is supposed to have additions added to it. The building will not have additions if it becomes unsafe for the contractor (minister) to work within its walls. Mat. 7:24-25, Eph. 2:19-22

Paul The Architect

- [10] According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.
- The word master builder means the superintendent or architect of the building project. Paul says that he was the one who planned the church at Corinth. However, note three things.
- Paul was a master builder because of the *grace of God*. The word “grace” means far more than just being called to plant a church; it means to be enabled, empowered, and equipped to do the job.
- Paul was not talking about a building. He was talking about people. Where they met did not matter. What mattered was that they were one in their trust in the Lord. belief purpose and mission. Matt 16:15-18
- Paul said he was a “*wise* master builder.” The word “wise” means skillful. He did not approach the task and project un-thoughtfully. He thought long and hard; he kept his mind upon the task.
- When Paul left Corinth, God raised up others to labor and to continue building the church. 1 Peter 2:5
- There is the clear warning—let every believer *take heed* how he builds upon the foundation of the church. The foundation has been laid, and it is strong. It shall never be moved. Matt 5:18, Mark 13:31

Upon This Rock

- [11] For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- There is the only foundation, Jesus Christ Himself. Eph. 2:20-21
- All other foundations are as *sinking sand*. They cannot stand up against the storms of life. No man—no matter who he is—can lay any other foundation that can last. All other foundations will crumble and be destroyed forever Matt 7:24-27, John 6:63,,
- What does it mean to say that Christ is the only foundation?
- It means that Christ Himself, His person, is the only foundation upon which men can be saved. John 3:14-16 Acts 4:12
- It means that the teaching or doctrine of Christ is the only foundation upon which men can build their lives. John 7:16-17
- It means that Jesus Christ is the only foundation *upon which men can build a true church*. Matt. 16:15-18, Isaiah 28:16
- It means that Christ Himself, His person, is the only foundation upon which can come to the light of life. John 8:12
- It means that Jesus Christ is the only foundation *upon which men can enter the door of abundant life* . John 10:9-10,,

What Are You Using To Build Your House

- [12] Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;
- It can be built out of two possible materials: either permanent or perishable materials. And the believer must choose which material he will use to build his part of the church. John 12:48-50
- Permanent materials last forever; they are incorruptible and undefiled and do not fade away. These are works that were performed with the right attitude. If we do what we do out of gratitude for what Christ has already done for us, this work is a good work. Rom. 4:3-7, Titus 3:3, 1Peter 1:3-9
- They are the *things* which are to be added to our faith. They are the things that are so desperately needed by the church. 2Pet 1:5-11
- They are Gods most prized possession. They are the souls and lives of men, women who are saved through your ministry. Matt. 16:26
- There are the perishable and combustible materials wood hay stubble that some use to build their house. They are works performed with the wrong motives. There is only one reason God wants your obedience and that is because you love him. Any work performed out of any other motive than love will be burnt up. John 14:15, 2Cor. 5:14-15 M
- They are the false teachings that are always dangerously floating around believers and the church. Mat. 7:15-23, Mat. 15:9-14, Col. 2:8

We Must Have The Right Attitude

- [13] Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.
- There is the day the building inspector will give his final approval. Each of our houses will be inspected at the judgment seat of Christ not for salvation but for our works. 2 Cor. 5:10-11
- The day of inspection is sure to come. The building was started in order to be finished. When it is finished, the inspector, the Lord Jesus Christ, will come to either approve or disapprove our works.
- No believer will be exempted. Every single believer will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and have his works tried and tested by the Lord. Every single work will be tested, and the truth and quality of his work will be exposed. This, of course, is a reference to the judgment seat of Christ. Rom 14:10-13
- How will they be tested? Shockingly, not as a group but individually and by fire. In the Bible fire is constantly used as a symbol of judgment and terrible trial. The building is to be set afire, and only the works done in the Spirit of Christ will survive the fire. All the works done with the wrong attitude will be burned and consumed and gone forever. Matt. 16:27

Pay Day Is Coming After While

- [14] If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. [15] If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.
- The believer whose works survive the fire will be rewarded greatly.
 - Being given a crown of incorruption. 1Cor. 9:25
 - Being given a crown of righteousness. 2 Tim. 4:8
 - Being given a crown of life. James 1:12.
 - Being given a crown of glory. 1 Peter 5:4.
 - Being given the Kingdom of God. James 2:5; Matthew 25:34.
 - Being given a position of rule and authority Luke 12:42-44; Luke 22:28-29; 1 Cor. 6:2-3
 - Being given eternal responsibility and joy Matthew 25:21, 23
 - Being given rule and authority over cities. Luke 19:17-19.
 - Being made priests. Rev. 20:6
 - Being made kings. Rev. 1:5; Rev. 5:10.
 - Being given unsearchable riches Eph. 3:8.
 - Being given treasures in heaven. Matthew 19:21; Luke 12:33
- The believer whose works perished in the fire will suffer loss. Note: he will be saved, but he will suffer the loss of reward, appearing and looking like a burned out building. Matt 25:27-28