

Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

1 Corinthians

Victory Christian Center Elder Tim Herman April 26th, 2009

Causes of division (1:18-4:5)

- 3:1-4...division is evidence of spiritual immaturity
 - Paul wanted to teach “deep” truths (2:6, 14), but they weren’t nature enough so he had to continue with basic teaching. See also Heb. 5:11-6:2 (likely written by Paul or Apollos)
 - Being carnal means to be governed/controlled by human thoughts and emotions; the evidence in this passage is ‘envy’, ‘strife’, and ‘division’. Note the progression of this sin. ‘Envy’ is Zelos in Greek (*dzay’-los*) and where we get the word ‘zeal’. Zeal, strife, and even division can be good things in the context of separating ourselves from the world, but not in separating ourselves from other believers.
 - Note Paul won’t even defend his own supporters
- 3:5-9...leaders are only servants working for God
 - V.5...they are simply following “assigned tasks”
 - V.6...note the roles of leaders differ; this was seen in Acts 18:24-19:1)
 - V.7...since it is God who supplies the seed and rain and causes the plant to grow, men cannot take credit
 - V.8...the “planter” and “waterer” work together
 - V.9...”God’s fellow-workers” does NOT mean that they are “co-workers” *with* God, but rather Paul and Apollos are the ‘co-workers’ *to* God.
 - Believers are the “field” and “building” of God, and the leaders have been assigned to work with God’s people.
- 3:10-15...working for God to build the Church
 - Note the important assignment God has given to leaders to build His building
 - V.10...Paul laid the foundation (see 2:1-5 and Acts 18:1-18), according to the “grace”...Greek is *khar’-ece* meaning ‘gift’ (root word for “charis-matic”, or “grace gifts). Paul was gifted by God to be the ‘masterbuilder’, Greek is *ar-khee-tek’-tone*, which is our word for ‘architect’. It’s important that we only allow “architects” (pastors, apostles, teachers, etc) to be the primary builder of our Christian faith, and that others “carpenters” understand their role in the building process.
- 3:10-15...working for God to build the Church
 - V.11...there is only one foundation/cornerstone, Jesus Christ
 - Challenges Catholicism (Papal authority)
 - See Isaiah 28:16
 - Matt 16:13-19...is the church built on Peter as a person (as the first Pope) OR is built on Peter’s declaration that Jesus in the Messiah, the Son of God?
 - Read Peter’s own words regarding the “foundation”...1 Peter 2:4-9
 - Challenges Mormonism (Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith)
 - Greek for ‘than’ is *par-ah’* meaning beside or alongside. Literally, “alongside (*parah*) the one laid (*ki’-mahee*),”
 - God does not allow the Book of Mormon to be “laid alongside” His Word, as if the Book of Mormon is a companion Bible
- 3:10-15...working for God to build the Church
 - V.12-15...excellent materials and craftsmanship are needed to build a quality house
 - “Gold, silver, and precious stones (survives fire) = sound doctrine, effective life-changing preaching, discipleship

- “Wood, hay, stubble (destroyed by fire) = trendy new age teaching, passive preaching, incidental doctrine
 - See Matthew 7:24-27. Note the rains came against both houses, just like the problems of life happen to both believers and unbelievers
- 3:10-15...working for God to build the Church
- V.14 speaks of crowns and rewards...5 crowns (theoretically)
 - The Crown of Righteousness, given to those who have lived a good & righteous for God (2 Tim. 4:7-8)
 - The Incorruptible Crown, a Victor’s crown (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
 - The Crown of Life, a "martyr's crown", given to those who undergo severe hardship, tribulation and/or physical death on His behalf. (Rev. 2:10)
 - The Crown of Rejoicing, a "soul winner's crown." (1 Thess. 2:19-20)
 - The Crown of Glory, a "shepherds" crown (pastors and teachers (1 Peter 5:1-4)
- V.15...note that salvation is NOT the issue. Think of a person that escapes a burning house where everything is lost, but his life is spared
- 3:16-17...we are not only God’s “building” (3:9), but we are actually God’s holy temple.
 - Unclear what Paul meant by “God will destroy”, but it is a clear warning against “defiling/corrupting” the church (people) of God
- 3:18-20...repeats his argument regarding the wisdom of the world versus the wisdom of God
- 3:21-22...warns against lifting men (even apostles and Popes) to a high status
 - “all things are yours” meaning ministers & teachings, past, present, and future to be equally shared as a community
 - Stop boasting about men leaders, rather boast on Christ