

How to Build

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Date: 23 January 2011

[0:00] 1 Corinthians 3, reading from verse 9 to 14.

! 1 Corinthians 3, reading from verse 10.

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there's building materials, there's builders. And we, every one of us, called to be builders. Builders of the kingdom, building God's kingdom on the earth.

[1:57] And this kingdom, it supersedes the claims of Australia. This kingdom supersedes the claims of our nation. This king calls for a higher allegiance from us.

And our work is going to be tested. There's lots of things we could explore. Just touch on some tonight. Firstly, the foundation. God's foundation. The foundation has to be right with a building.

As we know, we that have, every one of us has a building that we go to bed in tonight. And the strength of that building depends upon the foundation of that building.

And the foundation has to be right. And as we build a life, we have to ask, what is the foundation for my life? We have to ask, who decides what is best for me?

And who decides what is right? And what's wrong? Who knows what is best for us? And why should we listen? Ask yourself today, for your life, in some ways it follows on from this morning's message, who sets the rules?

[3:03] Who do I follow? Who sets the pace? Where am I going? And what is the foundation? That's the ultimate. And really, Christ is that foundation. Christ himself.

We read here that he is the foundation. Jesus Christ is the foundation. No other man can lay than that which is laid. Jesus Christ. And his truth we find in the Bible.

It's changeless. We're not allowed to change it. The question is, will we be receptive to it? Will we receive the word? Of the early disciples, they received the word with joy, with receptivity.

The fact is, some folk are not receptive. Some folk have been seeking to penetrate that grey cell matter or that heart. God willing, the heart is hardened.

For some, I know there's some that I've sought to reach them for Christ, and their heart is hardened and turning aside.

[4:06] Their ears are blocked and deaf, rather. Their ears are blocked, as it were, to the message of the gospel.

And for some, it says that we're not to speak to them. In the word, it says, speak not in the ears of a fool, because he'll just despise the wisdom of your words.

And for some, we know they're not receptive. But I trust tonight that we're receptive. We've come with a receptivity to God's message. And I trust that I'll deliver it. We want to receive what the Bible says.

To receive it. To receive it, not to revise it, not to reinterpret it, or to suit ourselves. We might want to take bits and pieces of it, but to receive it from cover to cover, as it would relate to us.

Not to suit our own whims and fancies, but to take it as rare. And in the word, we're told many things. And these things are still relevant today.

[5:05] There's a lot of talk about relevance, about things being relevant. Well, this is relevant today. If you're a young man and you want to have a clean life, the Bible says, That's still relevant today.

For every young man, there is no new, improved method to find a clean heart, to live a clean life, to know a clean conscience, than by taking heed, listening to the word.

That's what we still need today. So think of that, the foundation. Think also, as we're building the kingdom, as it were, as we build us, as we labour us together with God, the foundation has to be

right.

Another thing that we need to get right, we have to get the building approval. The building approval. The building standards have to be met. And we all want to aspire to, I trust, God's building standards.

I know we had all kinds of delays just building this place that we're sitting in tonight, because the council had some very strict building standards, and very strict processes, and all the I's had to be dotted and the T's crossed, and we still have cracks in the place.

[6:19] But the building standards had to be met, for the building to be even commenced. And then finally finished.

But think of the building of your life, of God's building standards. There's many standards in the word of God. Now some things you could say, that's more of a preference than a standard. You've got to judge between one and the other. There's some things that are people's traditions, or their learnings, or what they've become accustomed to, their customs. But some things are standards that God sets clearly and plainly for us.

And in the word it says, 2 Timothy 2.15, Study, study, to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

We labor us together of God, we read. We build us together with him. We want to be workmen that are approved unto him. Approved workmen.

[7:21] The builder himself needs to be approved. You can't just get some handyman to build yourself a home. You've got to have someone who's approved. They've got the credentials.

They've got the qualifications. They've got the standard has been met. And what of your life? Are you meeting God's approval in terms of the building standards, in terms of his stamp of approval that you're a fit builder, as it were?

Some of the things we could consider, for example, in our lives, does what I do with my life glorify Christ? Does it glorify him?

At the end of the day, is he the one who's getting the glory in my life? It's what I am building of my life, measuring up to his standards, not the world's standards, alike to what I was talking about earlier today.

The world's got its standards, and we know what they are, but God's standards are far, far greater and far more vital and essential. What are our standards?

[8:28] Who sets them? The question is, do we set the standards according to God's standards or to the world's standards? Are they kingdom standards? Are they the standards of our king?

Think of that. Our king, our ultimate ruler, is not Julia Gillard, God bless her, but our ultimate ruler and the one to whom we have to submit in his entirety.

Absolutely, Paul. It's Christ, the king of kings and the Lord of lords. It's to him we have to bow our knee. And where worldly standards and worldly expectations fall short, we don't go by those.

We go by his standard. And friends, think of it today as we look at the world around us, as we think of the way the world is headed, we think of where it's headed. Does the world set our standards or does the Almighty?

Think of it. The fact is, friends, today, we're living in an increasingly immodest world. It's an immodest world. Look at 1 Timothy 2.

[9:36] Does the world set our standards or does God set our standards? Now, this is addressing women folk, but men folk need to be also alert to this too.

1 Timothy 2, 9 and 10. This is the word of God. This is not what I am putting to you, but it's what God is stating.

And 1 Timothy 2, verse 9 and 10. Paul writes, In like manner also, the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, modest clothing, with same facelessness and sobriety.

So there's a genuine spirit there. There's a sense of what is shameful and what is appropriate. Not with broided hair or gold or pearls or costly array, but which becometh women professing godliness with good works.

It's telling the women folk here, dress yourself with good works. Clothe yourself with this, with that which is becoming of a woman who professes godliness.

[10:42] As much we could take from this passage. Is it pleasing God that dictates our choices of clothing? You might think, well, that's a personal thing. That's up to me to decide.

But no, God says what we should do. God dictates the rules. God sets the standards. Is what I'm wearing pleasing to Him? That's not saying that men folk have to walk around in suits and ties or women folk have to wear a certain kind of clothing.

But it's whether you, before God, honestly and truly can consider, is my clothing appropriate by His standards and better to aspire to the higher standard than to settle for the lesser standard?

Is what I'm wearing expressing virtue and godliness? Does it show that I belong to the king of kings? Is it something that is noble? Think of it, the word talks about, we talked, I think, in some study lately, the word noble came up.

And is it noble? Yeah, in Acts, the people were more noble in terms of studying the scriptures. And think of the word noble. What does it relate to? It relates to nobility.

[11:48] Nobility. It relates to, as we could think of it, for we that are citizens of the kingdom, not only that, we're sons and daughters of the king, of kings.

We are nobility today. Now, the word says there's not many noble, as it were, that are saved in the end of the world because we know that the stuck-up types tend to think that they're above repenting and realising their sin and getting right with God.

But we that are truly noble, we belong to the king of kings and the lord of lords. So, our standards should live up to his, not come down to the world. So, think of it, friends, today.

Is what I'm, how I'm living, is it honourable? And it's not just clothing, it's about the attitude of the heart. It's not just going with popular thinking.

Popular thinking would say to the women folk, show more skin. That's what the world would say to the women folk here today, show more skin. But the Bible says, no, think of his honour.

[12:51] Think of what would honour the Lord. Think of what would honour him. Modesty, it's an important Bible quality, a character trait that men and women of God should aspire to.

Not to bring undue attention to ourselves, as some who would have clothing and would bring attention to themselves in an undue way. But considering, for example, again, women folk, is it too low?

Is it too tight? Is it too short? These are questions that women folk need to consider. Not for pleasing man or for coming under some rules of a church, but because it's what is honouring to the Lord.

That's what matters. That's what counts. Is it right? Is it pure? Is it wholesome? Is it fitting? And women folk need to consider such things. Is it too low? Too tight?

Or too short? These are important truths. Because, tell us why. The external reflects the inward. The inward shows in the outward. It's not about us setting rules or coming under condemnation.

[13:57] It's about the wealthy of the kingdom, of the king of kings and what would be pleasing unto him. What would be honourable unto him. Not the worldly culture which would say anything goes. We don't submit to that.

We're not shaped by that. But we're shaped by his word. By his truth. So think of it. And this is for everyone. We're not just picking on the, as it were, picking on the women folk.

It's for men too. Men need to aspire to a higher standard. In our beliefs. In our values. In our convictions. In what we're training and teaching our children. Actions are based on beliefs.

And how we act. Our manner should be in good taste. And especially in these things. In moderation. In modesty. In decency. In dignity.

In dignity. You know, think of it. As you read, as it were, the fashion magazines, the tabloid press. They'll dig up dirt anywhere they can on the royal family.

[14:57] Why? Because the royal family, they expect to have a very high standard, don't they? Aren't you the royal family today? Aren't you the royal family tonight? The world will scrutinise you and pick on you and watch every move you make to find some fault.

And so, let's aspire to that which is reflecting of him in our conduct, in our standards. To be spirit led, to have royal standards. Because he is our king.

And it reads elsewhere in 1 Peter 3, for example, again, of the outward adorning. Let it not be of all that putting on of different things. But let it be the hidden man of the heart.

That which is a meek and quiet spirit. This is something we can all learn soon. Have. A spirit that is right with God. Something very precious.

It's of great price. We read that there. 1 Peter 3, 3 to 4. You might like to read that later. The hidden man of the heart. That's what God looks at. And his approval, his esteem, is what we seek.

[16:02] That pattern that should be the pattern for our lives. So friends, tonight, again, consider, consider what you settle for. Consider what you aspire to.

I know I was just watching earlier tonight a little video clip and it was how they train SAS soldiers, the Special Air Service, Australia's commandos, Australia's fighting elite.

And they went through rigorous training. And before they undertook the training, it was just interesting how they portrayed it in the little video clip. They gave each of these soldiers aspiring to be commandos a piece of paper.

It was their ticket out of there. They could just sign that at any time if the pressure got too tough, if it got too hard on them, if for whatever reason they wanted to quit, they could quit.

What about the Christian life? What about the Christian life? God doesn't put us through some obstacle course or, you know, as it were, to see if we're going to slip.

[17:06] But He doesn't enforce us to meet a certain fitness standard or to reach a certain level of works or good works of our own to meet the criteria to be saved.

It's all of grace. It's all of grace. grace. The weakest one can still find heaven because it's not of anything of yourself. The minute we start to think that it is, then we're on the wrong track altogether. And friends, if you're here tonight and you've sought to be a Christian by any good works of your own, by even being baptised, by doing good works, maybe you've given lots of money away, you've done lots of good things to help other people.

I know there was a friend of the church lately, he was thinking maybe if he printed lots of tracts that would help him gain more credit with God, as it were. But really, none of those things of our works can gain credit with him in terms of entering heaven.

There'll be a reward for our working for him, but it won't be for our salvation. And yet, friends, think of that, the world standards that they set, the world standards that they set for these elite soldiers.

[18:17] They've got to go through incredible suffering. They mimic what the enemy would do in terms of psychological warfare and just destroying their spirit by the arduous tests that they undertake as a soldier in training, and only a few make it.

But for we that are saved, it's not any working of our own that saves us, it's all by virtue of his grace. And we can thank him for that, thank him for his grace, and trust in that grace, but don't just rest in that and let it be.

Let that grace motivate you. Let that grace inspire you. Let that grace impel you and compel you and constrain you. Think of what is my receptivity level to the word of God.

They received the word gladly. Do we do that? Or do we just pick and choose? Friends, think of that tonight, of your priorities. So we think of the foundation, it's got to be solid and strong, it's got to be Christ to train his life, the we build upon God's foundation.

Think of God's standards. They're far, far above any standards that the world would set in terms of what the world would think is good enough. Not that we can ever be good enough, but our standards should be aspiring to please our saviour, aspiring to please our king.

[19:36] And think of God's plan. The pattern has to be right. Now when the builder comes, they can't sway the bricks haphazard anywhere they please or build the walls any which way.

They've got to set it straight. They've got to set it by the dimensions that the plan dictates. How are you building your life? How are you building the things of your life? Are you following the blueprint? Think of it as Moses in Hebrews 8 verse 5, it says that he built according to the pattern. According to the pattern. That's talking about the tabernacle. Think of Noah.

He had to build the ark according to the pattern. God sets specific dimensions and specific sizes and dimensions to the ark. It had to be built according to the pattern.

Solomon had to build the temple according to the pattern. And why? Because all of those things, even the vessels of the temple, the vessels, the altar, the garments of the ministry, it all meant something.

[20:36] It meant something because the pattern was Christ. Christ. The pattern was Christ as we know as you study and dig deep in typology and what they represented, that everything had a significance.

Everything at the altar had a significance. At the tabernacle, at the temple, the clothing, the vessels, it all meant something. It was all built according to the pattern.

And the pattern was Christ. The pattern was Christ. And it should still be today. The blueprint for your life, the blueprint for mine, it's Christ. Think of it, Titus 2.

Read there, Titus 2 from verse 1. Paul writes to Titus, he says, but speak thou the things that become sound doctrine. And it covers all the age groups here. You're in this verse here.

You're in these verses here. Have a read of it. Take this and read it at home. Read it and reread it. Titus 2 from verse 1 to 8. This is the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord to you today, because you're in this verse, Titus 2, 1 to 8.

[21:37] But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine. Firstly, the age men. Now, I'm probably in that category, or getting close to it. That the age men, now that's the some age men here tonight, that the age men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

Then it goes on to the age women. women. Now, it might not be two women want to say that they're aged tonight, but I think there are some aged women here tonight. That the age women likewise, that they be in behaviour as become as holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, it's hink of good things.

And then it goes on to that they may teach the young women. Here's the young women. They may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keep us at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God not be blasphemed.

And then lastly, the young men. The young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. There's something there for everyone, something there for all of us tonight. In all things, show yourself a pattern, show yourself a pattern, he says, of good works.

In doctrine, showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned. But he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

[23:06] He says to Titus, show yourself a pattern, be that blueprint of good works, of those good qualities that he speaks of there. Likewise, in 1 Timothy 4.12, he writes to Timothy, be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, or your conduct, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

The Bible sets the pattern. This is the pattern. You know, there's some women folk who use dressmaking patterns. They put that template there, that template made of paper that's cut out into a shape, they pin it to the cloth and they cut it out according to that shape.

The pattern guides them how they should shape that cloth to make that garment. This is the pattern that we need to have as the template of our lives and make ourselves fit the word of God.

That Christ will be glorified. In 1 Thessalonians 1, Paul writes that he prays that God would count worthy that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and you in him.

That's 2 Thessalonians 1, 11 and 12. That Christ may be glorified in you and that you will be glorified in him. What is the pattern? Friends, tonight, the pattern is Christ.

[24:24] The pattern is Christ. He is the blueprint for your life. He is the model of grace for you, for me. It's not law, it's not works, it's not man's rules and regulations.

We could set rules and regulations about dress standards, about behaviour, and you could be shown the door if you don't measure up, but the standard is not any of that.

The standard is grace. The standard is Christ. It's Christ who is the one. And it's what would Jesus do? What would Jesus do in the situation?

What would our Lord Jesus do in terms of how we conduct ourselves? What would Christ do in the circumstance? What would Christ do in relation to this matter or that matter, in relation to this issue or that one?

And as we grow more Christ-like, then things will change. We've been hearing about change Saturday night, about that growing closer and closer to his image, to his likeness, and being conformed to it.

[25:26] It's about talking with grace, walking with grace, living with grace, giving with grace. Not anything of law, not anything of condemnation, not anything of compulsion, but everything of grace.

Everything of grace. Because it's to grace that we owe everything. It's to his grace, that marvellous grace of our loving Lord, greater than all our sin. It's to that grace that we must come.

And friends, think of it, also, addressing womenfolk again, in Proverbs 31, a wonderful chapter of the godly woman, many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

The writer exhorts that woman to aspire for that which is excellent. You can aspire to that women tonight, womenfolk, you can aspire to excel them all, to be virtuous.

And Genesis 49, it speaks on the other side of the coin of someone who was described as a man, described in Genesis 49 as unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.

[26:34] The opposite side of the coin. We can excel or we can be unstable and not excel. What will mark your life? Will it be virtue or will it be instability? What is your pattern?

If we get the pattern right, we will be right. We will be right. We will please God in personal holiness. Or set the sails according to his spirit's leading.

We'll be led and chart that course according to his directions. As he leads us, as he dictates, as he directs.

And we can be as those that says in 2 Corinthians 8 verse 7. Here's another good one to write down and consider. Mull this one over. Meditate upon this one. 2 Corinthians 8 verse 7.

2 Corinthians 8 verse 7. It tells us what we should excel in. What we should abound in. What we should aspire to. Excel in everything. It says there, 2 Corinthians 8 verse 7.

[27:32] Think of it. This applies to you, to me, to all of us tonight. What we should abound in. It says abound in everything. in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love.

To us, see that you abound in this grace also. There's many things we can abound in. Consider those things just to repeat. Abounding in everything. In faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in diligence, in love, in grace.

We all can do more, can't we? We can all know more of that. Those building blocks that will matter. Those building blocks that will stand the test. The context of our verse was of building materials being tested.

The building materials will be tested for your life. We haven't really gone into that as such here, but the building materials of your life, one day they'll be scrutinised.

They'll be examined. And friends, the word says excel to the edifying. In 1 Corinthians 14, it's about gifts, the context, excel to the edifying. So the building up of the body.

[28:37] Excel in that. Excel in edifying, in building up. There's people here you can build up. The kingdom of God is not a selfish thing. We're not lone rangers who are just content to build our own spiritual life, to get it all together for ourselves, that it's all about me, me, me, me, myself and I.

It's about others. It's about those to whom you can minister, those to whom you can witness, those to whom you can have an impact and build into their lives, build into the lives of others.

Not just building your own life, build up one another. The Bible says edify one another. There's many scriptures we could talk about, edify one another, build one another up. We talked earlier today of burdens to be borne, of heavy weights we can carry and help others to learn to carry.

It takes a measure of effort to carry a burden, but we are to bear one another's burdens. And grace means that you'll want to do that. When you have grace, you'll care about others.

You'll care about others who are struggling. You'll care about others who need your support. And you'll work alongside them and alongside your Saviour. Friends, just to recap, to revisit our text, you

are labourers together with God.

[29:51] You are builders together with God. Don't do it alone. You'll build us together with God. Work alongside Him as His Holy Spirit comes alongside to help. As He comes along and gives you strength to lift the load, to bear the yoke, to work alongside you.

Labour us together with God. And whatever you do for God, let it be labouring together with Him. You know, we can all do things in our own strength, myself included. We can all try to do things to please God, whether it's witnessing, whether it's Sunday school, whether it's Bible study, whether it's cleaning the church, whether it's being a steward, whether it's being a song leader, a musician. We can all do it in our own strength. But labour together with God. Labour together with Him. Draw your strength from Him. And I'm encouraged how the some folk here are playing music in a public place that they've never had that challenge before.

And God strengthened them and enabled them. They found His strength to draw upon. Because of their own selves, they did not feel adequate. And that's the place that we all need to come to be. that you will feel your inadequacy.

That's the best place that you can be. To realise you're inadequate of yourself. All of us are. All of us are inadequate. But you can be a labourer together with God. Because He is your model.

[31:13] He is the model of everything that is excellent, everything of integrity, everything that is wholesome, that is right, that is appropriate. And all praise is due to Him.

All praise is due to Him. Why? Friends, just to close, He is the foundation. He is the foundation. He is the approver. He is the one who approves you and says you're a workman approved unto God. He is the one who approves that which you build. He is the pattern, the pattern, the model, the blueprint for your life, the one who you aspire to be like.

God. And He is the one who builds with you. He doesn't leave you to struggle on your own. Find your strength from Him. Labour together with God. Labour together with God.

That's the key. To Him belongs all the glory. To Him belongs all the credit and all the praise.

Friends, you are a builder. You are a builder.

[32:15] You're going to be doing some building this week. You're going to be a bricklayer this week. You're going to be one who's out there shifting some concrete and water and bricks and walls and materials.

There's materials you're going to put into your life this week. There's things you're going to do, good works you're going to do for God. Do it according to the foundation. Do it in sight of the approver. Do it in accord with the pattern and do it as He builds with you. Together with God. Because one day, every man's work will be made manifest.

Everything you've ever done, everything you've ever said, everything you've ever not done, it will be examined in that day. And the fire shall try it.

The fire shall try it. Every man's work shall be made manifest. Now thank God that fire is not a fire of damnation. It's a fire of examination.

[33:15] It's a fire of testing that will test your works. Thank God nothing of your salvation is dependent upon you. Not a skerrick of it. Otherwise we'd all fail.

Not any bit of your salvation is due in any part to you. It's all credit. All glory is due unto Him. Unto the blood that was shed for you. Unto His awesome sacrifices.

His amazing grace for you. That's the only credit you can claim to tonight. But thank God as a saved man, as a saved woman, you've got some building to do.

So build right. Build true. Build as would stand the test of God's fire. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you today for every soul. Lord, that we would build wisely.

That we would build according to your pattern. Help us, Lord, to follow the model who you are, Christ Jesus, our Saviour, our Master, and the one who builds with us. Help us, Lord, to hear your voice, to heed your instruction, and to apply your truth to our lives.

[34:17] Help us, Lord, as we build in our families, as we build in our lives, as we build in our workplaces, as we build in our everyday lives, that you would be glorified in every part.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.