

Fellow workers with God

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Date: 05 May 2024

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. With Habit, I would say special welcome to the church this morning, but this is no longer the church that I attend, so I have to say greetings from Peace River, Alberta.

And so we drove out this morning and had a beautiful drive. We drove by Wayne and Sadie as they were heading that direction, so we just simply traded. He asked me a little while ago to see if I'd be interested in just swapping, and my flesh initially wasn't too excited about it, because it was something new, it was something different, and I would be speaking to a different audience, and as soon as that happens then, the flesh says, I don't know about that.

But the spirit was excited, because I was going to get to meet a lot of old and familiar faces, and maybe less old, but more familiar, eh? So that part was good.

But Jake, I was excited that he was doing the opening as well. He was a little bit nervous as he was doing it, and I can relate, because I'm a little bit nervous doing it as well.

And I know a number of years ago, or some time ago, I asked him to do it, and he declined, because he was simply, he just wasn't ready yet. And that's okay. And there are times where we have to grow, and that's kind of what I have based this message around, or I've named the message Fellow Workers With God.

[1 : 3 6] And as we work with the Lord, we have to start somewhere. And we all start off as babes in Christ, and so I thought we're kind of going to start off from there and work our way up.

So I thought I would just continue to go through 1 Corinthians. I'm teaching through 1 Corinthians in Peace River, and it just so happens that this is where the next message in Peace River would take place, so I just kind of continued to go.

And so I figured I would do just a quick bit of a recap of 1 Corinthians this far. That way it's going to give you guys a little bit of chance to just come up to speed to where Paul is, and then we will work through the message.

So when he starts off the letter to the Corinthians, he starts, verses 1 to 9 is an encouragement. He encourages the church. He tells them who they are. And so then right after verse 9, he then exposes the problem.

And if we read verses 12 and 13, it says, Now I say this, that each one says, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ.

[2 : 5 1] We'll just stop there. So there was divisions within the church. And so he is, so continuing on all the way through to chapter 4, he is dealing with this division.

So there's different people following different, there's people groups following different people within the church, and that's what he's dealing with. And he spends four chapters in 1 Corinthians just dealing with that division.

And so today we're going to be continuing to look at that division as well. So he continues on then in, he finishes challenging them, exposing them that there is division within the church.

The beginning of chapter 2, the first five verses, he takes and he turns the spotlight onto himself a little bit. He turns it away from the Corinthian church and actually looks at himself.

And he says, or he turns the spotlight onto himself and says, And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come to you with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God.

[3 : 54] I determined to know nothing. I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. So he spends the next five verses kind of looking at, and he challenges them to look at him.

And then the rest of chapter 2, he explains or teaches them that wisdom, true wisdom, comes from God.

Top of chapter 3 to verse 8, he outright tells them where they are at as Christians. So if we read verses 1 and 2 in chapter 3, it says, And so he outright tells the church that you are babes in Christ or carnal Christians.

And so I challenged the Peace River Church to see where they are. Are they babes in Christ? And I would like to challenge you the same, put that same challenge forward to you guys.

Is, are you a born-again believer? Have you accepted Jesus as Lord? If you have, where are you at? Are you a babe in Christ? A babe in Christ is one who is lacking in wisdom, lacking in understanding, and lacking in faith.

[5 : 29] So they're just getting started. So that is a babe in Christ. So they're just getting started in this. They're starting to grow their faith. They're starting to grow in knowledge and in understanding.

So then you have another type of Christian that might have understanding and might have knowledge, but lacks the faith. Then you have another one that is the other way around, but lacks knowledge and understanding.

Those things are possible. And then you have a Christian that is somewhat knowledgeable and somewhat that he has faith, and then he's growing in all three areas.

Those are Christians that are growing. And when Waldie Neufeld was here, he talked about that a little bit, and he mentioned that he was still growing in these areas.

And then he pointed to Mr. Teichro and asked, are you still growing as well, or are you fully finished? And Mr. Teichro was like, yeah, no, I'm still a work in progress. So we are all growing. And so if they are, that means I am still growing as well.

[6 : 34] But it leaves me with this question that I need to ask myself is, where am I at? There is a fifth type of Christian that we probably don't like to talk about very much as well.

And this is a carnal Christian. This is an individual who is a babe in Christ and who has never grown. They have stayed a babe in Christ.

So they started out as a Christian. They accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior and never grew. And eventually they become just a carnal Christian. It is a Christian who is very much influenced by the world and by the flesh.

And so we need to see where we are at. And Paul here very clearly tells them that you are either carnal Christians or you are babes in Christ. And so we need to ask ourselves that same question.

And so he continues on through to the end of chapter 3 there. And then we'll pick up in verse 9. And it's kind of picking up in the middle of a topic because he's talking about planting and then he switches over to a building.

[7 : 43] But he also switches from talking to the Corinthian church to actually talking about not just himself but him and Apollos and Cephas and the rest. So it changes right at verse 9.

So I thought we would break it there and continue on. So but before I go into the message, why don't we just bow our heads since we've gotten a little bit of review. And we'll pray and then we will dig into the message.

Father, we come before you this morning. We just want to thank you for this beautiful day that you've blessed us with. Thank you for each one that has come out and to worship. And just pray that you would just be with each one.

Ask that you would just open their hearts and that they would be able to receive words from you. And Father, through this message, even though it is a challenging one, that each one would be blessed.

Just ask now that you would just lead and guide. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Right. So starting in verse 9, I'll actually back up to verse 7 just to, or verse 6, just to get us a little bit of an idea.

[8 : 50] And it says, And I planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. And so then continuing on, starting in verse 9, I'll read verse 9 and 10.

He says, For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field. You are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.

But let each one take heed how he builds on it. And so that is the first portion that I thought we would look at here this morning. And he starts off with, he says, For we are God's fellow workers.

So who is he talking about when he says we? Is he saying Paul and the Corinthian church? And he's very clearly not saying that. He is saying Paul and Cephas and Apollos.

[10 : 01] So he is making a difference between himself and his partners and the Corinthian church. So he's saying, And for we are God's fellow workers, and you are God's field.

You are God's building. So he started to turn the light back onto himself. And so the Corinthian church is the field or has been the field.

And I thought we would look at four different areas for these workers. And if you have decided where you are at, or if you know where you are at as a Christian, if you are a babe in Christ, or if you are maturing, this means that you would fall under the category of working, of doing the work of the Lord.

You would be part of we. Are you the field or are you the builder? And so we need to decide this, where we are. So pastors and deacons, teachers and elders are primarily the workers in the field.

They are the primary workers. But a spiritual labor is the natural outcome of a spiritual life. So if you have a spiritual life, spiritual labor is going to be the natural outcome of that.

[11 : 25] If we go to James chapter 2, it's probably a very familiar verse. I'll just look at verse 14, or sorry, verse 18.

We could start in verse 14. I'll just look at verse 18. It says, But some will say, You have faith and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

So spiritual life, the natural outcome of it is spiritual work. And so in essence, we are all, as once we start to grow, we become spiritual laborers.

Or you could say that the workers, we are husbandry. We are either the builders or the farmers for God. And so we are workers for him.

We are also, so that is point one. Secondly, we are all workers with one another. So it isn't just that we are working for Jesus, but we are also working with each other as well.

[12 : 31] If we look at Ephesians chapter 4, Ephesians chapter 4, 11 to 16, it says, And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men and the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.

But speaking the truth in love may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joint and knit together, by what every joint supplies, according to the effect of working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

So we are all a part of this work. Some have been, like Jake mentioned earlier, some have the gift of singing or of music, and some have the gift of speaking, some have the gift of teaching.

Everybody has a different gift, but they've all been given to do the work of the Lord. So to do husbandry or to either plant seeds or to build buildings or to build this building.

So one, when we live a spiritual life, we become naturally, we become spiritual workers. Two, we are working together. We're not just working by ourselves.

[14 : 26] Three, we are fellow workers with God as our master. So we are fellow workers with God as our master.

He is our master. If we look at Luke chapter 19, Luke chapter 19, we could start in verse 11.

For the sake of time, I think I'm just going to paraphrase this a little bit. So Luke chapter 19, I will just read starting in verse 16.

And it says, Then came first saying, Master, your manas has earned ten minus. And he said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant.

Because you were faithful in a very little, in a very little, have authority over ten cities.

[15 : 28] And the second came saying, Master, your manas has earned five minus. And likewise, they all came. So it was Jesus.

He is telling a parable of how a master had given his employees or his people that he trusted, I would look at it as money, to go and to earn more money as he left.

And so Jesus isn't here with us today. And we are, he is our master, and we are to earn. We are to carry these things out. And so we are all working together with one another, but God as our master, he is working with us.

We could read from verse 11 to 27. If you feel like reading that whole portion, feel free at home. But for the sake of time, we won't go there today. So God is our master.

So then thirdly, we are also, we are workers with God as fellow workers. So we are working with God as fellow workers. Not only is God our master, but he is working with us as well.

[16 : 42] If we, just at the top of verse 9, explains that quite clearly. For we are God's fellow workers. We are working with him. He also sent the Holy Spirit as our helper.

So to help us. So it's not that we are just here, absolutely by ourselves, carrying out these duties. He is our master, and he is here with us. And if I remember how, you know, what works well within a business, what works best is when the boss is actually working with the employees as well.

If the boss is up in an office somewhere just telling the employees what he is supposed to be doing, generally, production goes down a little bit. But if the boss is in there with them, and sometimes doing the dirty work and allowing the employees to do a little bit nicer of the jobs, sometimes they get more done that way.

And the same thing is in the work of the Lord, is God is right there with us, working with us. So continuing on, in verse 10, it says, according to the grace, according to the grace of God, which was given to me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation.

So if you were to read this verse and leave out that first portion, the first sentence, if you leave that out, Paul would sound quite prideful, wouldn't he? So if you were to, and he could have, probably just started it right there, and where he says, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation.

[18 : 17] And just leave that first part out. And all of a sudden, it would sound like Paul was boasting about himself. But he says, he starts off, he says, according to the grace of God, which was given to me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.

So he first gives credit to God before he starts saying about what he did. It's very important. And so Paul laid the foundation.

What foundation did he lay at the Corinthian church? And he explains that quite clearly in verse 1 and 2 in chapter 2. We already read that. It says, And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come to you with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the wisdom of God, for I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

That is the foundation. Jesus Christ and him crucified. Jesus Christ crucified is the foundation. There is no other foundation that is laid.

Everything gets built up on top of that. So somebody has to till the ground or first ask individuals who are not Christians to see if they know Jesus Christ.

[19 : 47] That is generally just tilling the ground. Sometimes another individual has to come along and actually plant the seed. That seed eventually matures and starts to grow. Once that seed starts to grow, then building blocks need to start happening.

You need to start building on these things. And Paul is saying, I planted the seed and I laid the foundation. The beginning of this building was laid. And he's saying now, and then he continues on and he says, and another builds on it.

But let each one take heed how he builds on it. So I did a little bit of research on this as far as how this would have made sense that he would say that another built on the foundation that he laid.

And I found that either within the Corinthian church, there were certain teachings that had come out that were not truth. They were maybe 40, maybe 50% truth.

If you look at the type of activity that the Corinthian church was involved in, maybe hardly any of it was even truth. There was also some outside teachers that had come through that church as well and taught.

[20 : 57] And so he is saying, he had laid the foundation and another builds on it. So these were different teachings that had started to come into that church. And he's saying, you must take heed how he builds on it.

So for us today, we need to take heed or we need to be careful how we build on this foundation of Jesus Christ. Should we, out of fear, not build on the foundation in case we might get it wrong, in case we teach wrong, should we then say, you know what, I don't want to build on this foundation because if I get it wrong, then it's incorrect and I don't want to do that.

And I don't believe that we should. If we look at Matthew chapter 25, we won't go there, verses 14 to 29. There's also the parable of the money that the landowner gives to his servants and then he goes back and he wants to reap that as well.

Each one is given a gift. And like Jake was saying, we have all been given gifts as well and those gifts have been given to us to use. And those, as we use our gifts, more people are going to come to know the Lord.

We are not to just hide it away. Like the last individual did that only got two, he just got it and just hid it. And then when the master came back, he wasn't too impressed with him.

[22 : 37] He said, I gave you something, you need to go do something with it. We have all been given gifts according to 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 10. It says, everybody has been given a gift. So you can't say that, oh, I have no gift.

Very clearly, according to that verse, we have been given a gift. And Romans 12, 4 to 8 tells us that we need to use those gifts to build each other up.

And so, we need to use these gifts to build and to teach. And the reality is we're going to get some stuff wrong. That's reality. Some things we're not going to get 100%, but that should not stop us from not actually building on this foundation.

So continuing on, verses 11 to 15. I'll just read that portion again.

He says, for no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw, each one's work will become clear, for the day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is.

[23 : 54] If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

So in verse 11, he says, for no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is Jesus Christ. So there can be no other foundation.

It can only be Jesus. And if we go back to chapter 1 and verse 12, what had happened here with the Corinthian church was that they had taken these individuals, because he says, and now I say this, that each one of you says, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ.

See, there were certain people within that church or certain groups within that church that had made Paul their foundation. And they had made Cephas their foundation.

And he says here in verse 11 of chapter 3, he says, there is no other foundation except Jesus Christ. There is only that one. Then in verse 12, he says, now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, so what is the gold and the silver and the precious stones?

[25 : 29] What is that that we're building on? So we have the foundation figured out and that there is only one. what is this that we're building on top of?

Have you ever thought about that? All of the things that he mentions there are non-perishable. If you had gold, a piece, or a bar of gold 2,000 years ago, today it would still be gold.

If you had a silver or precious stones, they would still be that today, even though they're 2,000 years old. But if you had wood, silver, or sorry, wood, hay, or straw 2,000 years ago and you have that today, it would probably not be in very good shape today.

Wood, maybe if it was a specific kind, if it was very well protected, it might still be, but it would be very, very brittle. All of those things are perishable. So non-perishable versus perishable.

So what are the stones and the gold and precious stones that we're building on top of this foundation? And it is the absolute truths that are within the Word of God.

[26 : 39] That is the building blocks that we're using to build this building, is absolute truths. So absolute truths such as God is holy, God is righteous, and God judges rightly.

All those truths that come out within the Word of God are absolute truths and those are the building blocks that get built. So what is straw or wood or hay?

It is anything that is not an absolute truth. Anything that may be a 98% truth, that is stuff that gets burned up. If we look at a lot of the stuff that's going around in the churches today, there seems to be a desire to follow when it comes to creation, that we need to connect evolution with creation as well.

So instead of having six days that God created the world, because God is not controlled by time, one day is the same as a thousand years.

So some are teaching that, well, it could have been six billion years. You know, it says six days, but it could have been six billion years and it just took that long. That is straw. That is not an absolute truth.

[28 : 00] We are changing the Word of God to go along with the worldview of evolution. Those are things that are going to get burned up. It's not a solid.

So those are, that is the straw. We build on these things. There are churches that are building on these things and they are going to suffer loss.

That is reality. Verse 15 says, but yet he shall be saved but as through fire. So they're not necessarily going to be lost, but they're going to suffer loss.

So continuing on in verse 13, it says, each one's work will become clear for the day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire and the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is.

Some of the types of teachings that are out there don't even stand the test of time, let alone the test of fire by God. You know, so we need to evaluate some of these things.

[29 : 13] as these different types of teachings come through churches, you know, see if they even last the test of time. If they manage to do that, maybe they might not even stand the test of fire by God.

So everything is going to be tested with fire and some of it is going to be burned up. verse 14 and 15, and if anyone's work which he has built on endures, he will receive a reward.

And if anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved yet as through fire. So I was hoping Mr. Tychro was going to be here so that he could tell us what this reward was going to be.

I still haven't quite figured that out. If anyone's work, in verse 13, if anyone's work which he has built on endures, he will receive a reward. So what is this reward that we're going to receive?

Because we cannot earn our salvation. We're not, our reward for going to heaven isn't our work. So does anybody have ideas as to what it might be?

[30 : 33] for us to end of his life because I run the grace, I kept the faith, that is now laid up to be a crown of righteousness. Mm-hmm. So Paul gets a crown.

A crown of righteousness. So I wonder how big Paul's crown is going to be. Is it going to be bigger than the average person because he did so much for the work?

Maybe. But it leaves us to imagine, you know, what this reward is going to be. There's going to be a reward. And at the same time, there's going to be loss for areas that we have failed in.

And it's alright that we will have loss in some areas. That is reality. We are, we are Christian, we are humans doing the work of the Lord.

We are going to make mistakes. some of, there is going to be some loss. That is reality. But we need to limit that. We need to try to have it as absolute accurately as we can as we teach this or as we teach.

[31 : 50] So continuing on then in my last point in verse 16 and 17, he says, do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you?

If anyone defiles the temple, the temple of God, God will destroy him for the temple of God is holy which temple you are.

So it's important to remember here who he is talking to. This isn't, he isn't talking to a person. He is talking to the Corinthian church.

And so sometimes we might want to take these two verses and personalize them and take them to where he says, do you not know that you are the temple of God?

And so that is to ask me, do I know that I am not the temple of God? And the reality is I am. 2 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 16. Let's just go there real quick.

[32 : 52] 2 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 16. It says, and what guarantee has the temple of God, what agreement has the temple of God with idols?

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be my people.

So in this portion he is talking about us as being an individual temple of God. But when we look at 1 Corinthians here, he is talking to the church and he is saying the church is the temple of God.

So if we read it in that context that he is talking to the church, he is saying, do you not know that you are the temple of God, the church, and that the spirit of God dwells in you?

And if anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. So to destroy him is to destroy the individuals that come into church and teach false teachings.

[34 : 02] He is saying God will destroy them. So we need to be very careful about what we teach. And as a church, we need to be careful who we allow to have pulpit time as well because they can do a much damage to the church.

church. And so it is an area that as a church we all need to work on. And this portion of scripture very much deals with leadership within the church.

Or actually you could say it is telling leadership within a church what they ought to do. And you could just about leave the congregation out of it. But the reality is we are all spiritual workers together.

Even though as pastors we might be the leaders. But we are all in this together. And each one of us just needs to decide where we are at.

Whether we are a planter or whether we are an individual that is building. If we are planting, you want to be careful. If you are building, you want to be careful as well.

[35 : 12] We need to take the work that we do for the Lord seriously. So in closing, I want to encourage you guys to keep working together.

Clearly, the ministry here did not need Tina and myself. You guys have been doing really well on your own. There's new faces that are here that I haven't seen before.

And so your work is continuing to move forward. Each one of you just simply needs to do his part. And when everybody does their part, the whole church starts to work together.

And there's going to be problems. That is reality. This is church. There is going to be problems. If you ask me how things are going over there, I generally say, okay, but we're doing church.

church, which means there's problems within that church as well. We're not at that perfect church where there's no problems. We're working through things, just like you guys are working through things.

[36 : 21] And so continue on. Each one of us just needs to simply do his part. So I want to encourage you with that. to continue to press forward.

Let's close in prayer. Father, we just want to come before you again this morning. We just want to thank you again for this time that you got to spend and look into your word. Just ask that you would just be with each one as we go from here, especially as we go downstairs and have a time of fellowship there.

Just ask that you would just bless our conversation there and that we would be an encouragement to one another and that we would also challenge one another. Father, that is the only way that we can grow in this Christian life is if we are challenged.

Just want to thank you again in Jesus' name. Amen.