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Preacher: Henry Dyck

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the House of the Lord this morning. I trust we're all here to praise and worship our Lord and our Lord.

Some individuals interested and yet we must have maybe forgotten that we were starting last week and so no one came. So no problem with that. You haven't missed anything yet. We will try again this coming Thursday.

So for anyone desiring to come and participate in those classes, we'll be beginning that this coming Thursday at 7 here at the church. Are we enjoying the Lord's blessing this morning?

The opportunity to gather and to worship Him and to spend time in His Word is a blessing already this morning in Sunday school.

And even over the last few days, the change in the weather, the warm sunshine and so on. God is so good and He desires to bless us and we enjoy His blessings.

[1 : 34] God is so good and He desires to bless us and we'll be here to see you next week.

The mission report that we had.

And so Paul, in the portion we're looking at this morning, he's still continuing and setting the record straight regarding these issues. Lack of spiritual growth and as well as elevating leadership.

He's still dealing with these issues. And so he gives in our portion of Scripture this morning, he gives two examples or two pictures of who is important in a Christian's life.

And so that is what I want to look at this morning. The points being looking at the picture of a field and then of a building.

[3 : 20] And lastly, the test that will come in the end. And so I've titled the message this morning, Building to Last.

So starting in verse 5. Actually, I'll back up to verse 4. Paul, in addressing the issue of elevating leadership, he asks the question and says, And he continues in verse 5.

Now, he who plants and he who waters are one.

And each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. So as I already mentioned, Paul is still addressing the problem that he identified in chapter 1.

Elevating leadership, elevating fellow man, regardless of his position. And, you know, he's addressing, you know, the elevating of men, the leadership within the church.

[5 : 05] This could be an issue among ladies as well, right? It's not specific to men. But in this regard, where they were lifting up church leaders, they were lifting up men.

And so it's obvious by the amount of time that Paul is spending on this topic. We're into chapter 3, and he's still dealing with this issue.

It is a serious issue. And as we progress through the text this morning, we will see how he reveals why this is so important.

And so, Paul isn't saying that we're not to give proper respect to leaders.

And, you know, for me in the position as a pastor here, it's maybe a bit awkward to speak on this. But it is truth. It applies to me as well.

[6 : 07] There are other leaders for me to give respect to as well, right? We have to give respect to leaders. They have been placed in that position by God for a purpose.

And as they do the work they're called to do, we are to give respect. Yet, we must be careful that respect remains respect and not worship.

Never are we to worship fellow man or anything other than God. And so, that is what Paul is bringing out here.

And so, looking at the first scenario that he brings up in verse 5, the concept of planting, whether it be a crop or a garden, we see in verse 9 that he talks about a field.

And so, as we consider that, what are the steps for planting?

[7 : 24] Whether it is a crop or a garden, what steps do we take in doing this? Well, first off, we would set a foundation.

Even in planting a crop or a garden, we set a foundation. There is planning that goes into it. And the crop choice will be dependent on the soil we are dealing with.

Different types of soil, we would consider planting different crops. And we would also go out and work the soil.

We would work the field. We would till up the garden. We would work the soil to prepare the seed bed. So, setting the foundation, preparing the ground for the seed.

Next, then, would come the seeding time. And so, when the conditions are right, when it has warmed up enough, the frost is out of the ground.

[8 : 32] And, you know, we're not seeing frost overnight anymore. And the warmer weather is here. The conditions are right. Then, we put the seed into the ground.

When the seed is in the ground, with crops, we are more so dependent in this region, at least, on the rainfall.

Further south, there's irrigation and so on, where they take some watering into their own hands. But the watering stage comes next. For us here, maybe we would look more so to our gardens.

And we need to keep up the moisture conditions to ensure optimum growing conditions. And so, we bring out the garden hose and the sprinklers and we water our garden.

And then, in the end, we have the harvest. And something that we have anticipated throughout the whole time period, from setting the foundation to the seeding to the watering, everything is geared toward the harvest.

[9 : 44] We desire a bountiful yield and we have taken steps to ensure that that would happen. And so, for these things to happen, there need to be people committed to doing this work.

Someone needs to plant the seed and someone needs to water it. And so, in this picture, this is where Paul places himself and Apollos into the picture.

And that is here in Corinth. Corinth was a field ready to be planted in the spiritual sense.

The people had been ready to hear the gospel, to accept it, and to grow in their faith. And so, the question then, who then is Paul and who is Apollos?

Were they good men doing a good work and deserving of respect? I would say, yes, they were. Were they to be lifted up, to be put on pedestals by the people for the work that they had done there?

[11 : 09] Absolutely not. Paul says they were ministers. Or we could say servants of the Lord.

They had been used of God to bring the gospel to Corinth and to help the church there to grow. And so, their job description, whether it was seeding or watering, it didn't elevate one above the other.

Each one had to do his part. And where the Corinthians had divided into smaller groups, or divided into groups, elevating and praising one leader or the other, Paul here, he puts the praise where it rightly belongs, to the Lord.

God had gifted them to do this work. God had sent them to Corinth to do the work. And God was the one who gave the increase.

As we plant our crops in our gardens, everything is focused on the harvest to come. We're desiring that increase. That is of God.

[12 : 39] And so, the praise and the glory all belong to God. And we can bring that home here.

The same goes for Mountview or for any other church. Each one of these churches has had the seeders and the waterers.

The ones coming, planting seed. Those doing the watering. Here too, the job description doesn't matter. It's all the same.

It's one. We're equal. No one is greater than the other. Furthermore, each one's gift comes from the same spirit.

And each gift has the same purpose, the same end goal. It's as Paul says here, He who plants and he who waters are one.

[13 : 45] Both are working toward the same goal. And that goal is the increase, which is of God.

And he will reward each one according to the effort that they've put in what they were called to do. So, just a little bit on the picture of a field, of planting.

Planting the seed and watering it. From there, Paul transitions to the example of a building. And we see that switch in verse 9.

For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field. You are God's building. And so, Paul, Paul even says, We are God's fellow workers.

And so, referring to Apollos and himself as ministers, as servants, that would apply to all those that God has called to do such a work.

[14 : 55] And so, of them, of himself, of Apollos, of other ministers, servants of the Lord, Paul says of them, We are God's fellow workers.

And so, what he means by that is that we work for God. We work under Him, and yet, also together with Him.

And again, even in that phrase, it brings out the fact that God is the one giving the increase. And then, in the second part of verse 9, of the church, of the flock, Paul says, You are God's field.

You are God's building. Not Paul's. Not Apollos'. Apollos'. But God's. And so, in that second half of verse 9, we'll come back to that a bit later on.

For now, I want to focus a little bit on this building. What do we do when we have ideas of building something?

[16 : 11] And let's take the example of a house. Just like a field, the starting point is the foundation.

We make sure that the ground is suitable for a house to be built on. We want this house to stand firm. Just as the wise men in the parable that we looked at in the adult Sunday school class here a few weeks ago, we want the house to stand firm.

And so, what do we do? We remove the top soil, the ground that is not firm. We get down to good solid clay and we put up a strong concrete footing.

And so, once the concrete is in place and it has given a little bit of time to cure, then we proceed with framing up this house.

We construct sturdy walls that are going to be able to hold up the roof and the rafters that we put on top of these walls, they are designed as well to be able to hold up under heavy snow loads.

[17 : 30] Good insulation is important to keep out the cold. And then we wrap up the exterior of that home with siding and with shingles that keep the structure underneath it well protected so that it will last for many years.

And then lastly, we dress up the insides of the house to make it a home. What is the most important part of this house?

I mentioned the parable of the wise men and the foolish men and it fits in with what Paul is talking about here.

Example of that parable and what Paul is describing, the two go hand in hand. Let's read verses 10 and 11 as well.

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.

[18 : 52] For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. So just going back to that parable of the wise men and the foolish men, two men building a house.

Both houses experienced the same storm. And yet, only one house made it through that storm.

The reason that the one house made it through the storm? Its foundation. It was built upon a rock and not shifting unstable sand.

And so rightly, that home builder would be called a wise man. We can build as nice a home as we want, as strong and as sturdy as we want, and yet, if the foundation isn't sure, it won't survive the storm.

And that illustration, that parable, and even what Paul is talking about here, it has a deeper meaning.

[20 : 19] The house is me, it's you, it's our life. Depending whom we build on, whether Christ or anything or anyone else will determine if our house will survive the storm.

And so Paul explains that in the rest of our text here that we will be looking at this morning. The Corinthian Christians were struggling with carnality.

Some were putting Paul on a pedestal. Others were doing it with Apollos. Still others with Cephas. They were building on fellow man.

And the difference of opinion within the church was causing envy, strife, and division. It showed the lack of maturity within the congregation there in Corinth.

And Paul is attempting here to correct that with these examples, the field and the house. And Paul acknowledges his part in building this house.

[21 : 50] He refers to himself as a wise master builder. Yet, he does not boast in his part. He explains that the fact that he was the master builder in Corinth and a wise one at that was according to the grace that God had given to him.

The grace of God that was given to him. Now, if we think back to who Paul was, it was God's grace that stopped a young Paul who was then known as Saul on the road to Damascus.

That grace was what turned his life around from intending to try and destroy God's work to turning around to embracing it and becoming the wise master builder of a number of churches.

It was God's grace that granted Paul the wisdom that he received by revelation from Jesus Christ. And we find that in Galatians chapter 1 and we can turn there for a moment and just read verses 11 and 12.

Galatians chapter 1. But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

[23 : 28] For I neither received it from man nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. Without God's grace, no Apostle Paul would have ever gone to Corinth and established a church there.

And yet we know from history this did happen. Paul was the founder of the church in Corinth.

He was the master builder. He laid the foundation and then as the evangelist that he was, he moved on and he continued planting and building in other communities.

Others followed in after Paul and they watered or built on the foundation that he had laid. And we find also a warning regarding building in the last part of verse 10 and as well verse 11.

But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

[24 : 57] It is a warning to heed or to take care of how one builds on this foundation, the foundation of Jesus Christ.

So, in the Christian's life, Christ is the foundation. He is the chief cornerstone. Everything built up in the Christian's life is built up on this foundation.

It is built up in Christ. So, consider that for a moment. we take heed how we build on it.

Everything that we build on this foundation, is built on this foundation. That's a sobering thought, isn't it?

We know that the foundation is sure. It will stand. But what about the house that is being built up on this foundation, the foundation of Christ?

[26 : 16] Will the walls hold up in a strong wind? Will the rafters on that house hold up under a heavy layer of snow? What are we building?

things? It will be revealed in a test. And so, let's look at that as well this morning.

And so, we begin with a list of materials that are used to build, to build this house. We find them in verse 12.

Now, if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, so the list of materials.

And let's take in verse 13 as well. Each one's work will become clear, for the day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire.

[27 : 21] And the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is. just looking back to that list of materials, let's separate them into two groups.

The first group is gold, silver, precious stones. The second group, wood, hay, and straw. The first group, what do we know about gold, silver, and precious stones?

They're valuable, right? But what has to happen to these materials in order for them to become valuable, especially in the case of gold and silver?

silver. They have to be refined. They're refined by fire. And we find that Paul talks about that in verse 13.

It tells us that our work will be tested with fire. And so there's an interesting connection there with these first materials and the testing of our work.

[28 : 40] refining these precious metals with fire is a purifying process. And so therefore, these first three materials, the gold, silver, and the precious stones, they are symbolic of purity, of pure doctrine.

The Christian life is to be lived striving for purity, purity of deeds, of thoughts, of motives, purity of heart.

Matthew chapter 5 verse 8, one of the Beatitudes, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Is that not our desire?

Is that not the desire of the Christian to see God? And so we ought to strive to be pure in heart. And so the gold, the silver, the precious stones, symbolizing purity, they sound like the type of materials to build our lives with, to build our lives, to build our house with purity, with pure doctrine.

wood, let's look at the other three materials, wood, hay, and straw. How do these materials hold up with fire?

[30 : 22] They don't. They are consumed. Fire destroys them. So right away, we get the sense these are not good materials to build with in our lives.

And so what do they represent? What are they symbolic of? They represent any of our works that are less than pure.

to remember everything we build is built on the foundation of Christ. And so these last three, they would represent anything built that is even just a little bit shady.

A 99% truth would fit into here. We know from Genesis that a 99% truth is a favorite tactic of the devil.

Any thought or action with anything less than pure motive. Slander, unnecessary words, putting fellow man on a pedestal.

[31 : 40] The list could go on and on. Just some examples. Do these things describe Christians? Christians.

They shouldn't. But reality is all of us struggle with the carnal side.

The flesh, the old nature is there. We have these two natures struggling. And so in that sense, it is no different with us than it is, than it was with the Corinthians.

We have that carnal side that we struggle with. Sanctification is a process that continues our whole lifetime.

Perfection is only achieved when we get to the other side, when we get to heaven. And that doesn't mean, though, that we can live loosely here and we can indulge in the flesh.

[32 : 47] We are called to model Christ who was and who is perfect. After all, everything that we build will be tried.

And so this list that Paul gives, all six of these materials can be used to build on the foundation of Christ. In the end, everything that we have done in this life will be tested.

Each one's work will become clear, Paul writes. He continues, for the day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire.

The day. You'll see that the word day is capitalized in your Bibles. What does that refer to?

It refers to the day of the Lord. God. And to, for a little bit more on that, 1 Thessalonians.

[34 : 06] Let's turn there, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, and the first nine verses in 1 Thessalonians 5.

5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 12. Who Therefore, let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. So the day, it is the day of the Lord, the day of salvation, the second coming of Christ.

And for believers, it is not an unexpected day. We know it's coming. We are looking forward to it. We must be prepared for it.

[35 : 46] It is a day where we will give account of all that we have done. And so this giving account in our text, Paul is referring to in verse 13, is the fire.

It will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is. It is the fire of God's judgment.

It will test our works, either purifying our works or else consuming them. And so that is the reason we have this list of materials.

Some are purified. Some destroyed. What are we building with? And so the outcome, then, is either receiving a reward or suffering loss.

Looking first at to the rewards, Scripture talks about storing up treasures in heaven. There is mention of various crowns.

[37 : 11] And Paul, even in our text, and it's written elsewhere as well, talks about rewards for our good deeds, rewards for what we have done. But what about the Christian who suffers loss?

He is mentioned here as well. And I'll back up. Verse 14. We just talked about it. 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 what about the Christian who suffers loss, whose works are consumed in this fire, in this test?

We know the reason that they will suffer loss is because they have built with wood, hay, and straw.

They have built with impure materials, anything less than pure. And so some, or maybe many, of their works were less than pure.

[38 : 31] Are these people really Christians? If many of their works are impure and will be consumed or destroyed, are we really talking about someone who gave their life to the Lord?

One thing we have to remember, this testing by fire, we're not talking about the sheep and goat judgment here. This is all those who have committed their life to the Lord, coming before him and giving account of all that they have done.

And so Paul says, of those whose work is burned, that he will suffer loss. What is that loss? It is a loss of reward.

He goes on, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. He will lose rewards, yet in the process, the bad, the impure is burned away and leaves behind what is pure.

He himself will be saved. I wonder, how many will have, will not have, one single work consumed by fire?

[40 : 16] As I mentioned before, we all have our carnal side. We struggle with the old nature. Will all of our works stand that test?

Will there be anyone whose every work is pure? It's a question to ponder on, a thought to ponder on.

I'll close with verses 16 and 17. There's a warning there. Paul lays a question before the Corinthians.

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 of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy.

which temple you are. So a question posed to the Corinthians. As they struggled with a lack of spiritual growth in the first years of the church's existence, and it was amplified by the carnality that they were showing, by elevating different leaders in the church, Paul exhorts them with this question.

[41 : 44] He's pleading with them. Can't you see what you are doing? You belong to God. You are believers.

You have come to the faith. What are you building? You are God's ambassadors to the rest of Corinth, to the world around you.

You are God's ambassadors to a lost world. And so what he's saying is for them to take care of the works that you do.

And back to verse 9. You are God's field. You are God's building. Not Paul or Apollos' We too must consider this question.

As God's children, we are his possession. His spirit indwells us, lives inside of us.

[43 : 09] The day of the Lord is nearer today than it was even yesterday. What are we building on the foundation of Christ?

Christ, are we ready to have that building tested by fire? Let's take some encouragement out of that though too.

We can build with pure materials that which will endure the fire. And we have that sure foundation laid.

Christ is our foundation. Let's build to last. Let's pray. Lord God, we bow before you again this morning.

Lord, we are thankful for your plan of salvation, for your son Jesus who came and laid down his life that we might live.

[44 : 16] He came to be that example of who we ought to be. And even in the short time he spent here on earth, he was that example.

He built the type of building that we are to build. He was that example for us. And even so, he is our foundation.

Our foundation is sure it will last, it will stand the test of time. And we must consider what we build on this foundation, on Christ.

Lord, help us to use gold and silver and precious stones. Help us to build with pure materials, to build a structure that will stand the storm, the strong winds, a building that will stand when the storm has passed, when the test has come.

Lord, to present to you a purified building, a purified life that is ready and able to enter into glory and to see God, to see you, to be face to face with our Creator.

[45 : 47] Lord, I just pray for each one here this morning that we consider this, that we seek out pure materials and that we build to last.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.