

“BUILDING GOD’S TEMPLE”
1 Corinthians 3:12-23

INTRODUCTION

The apostle Paul is trying to help the church in Corinth prepare for their future! There are some obstacles in the way, however. Many of the believers are carnal, acting like babies, too concerned about themselves! They have been living like bystanders, not whole heartedly living the Christian life. Paul is going to let them know that there is a test coming! Jesus will be giving out grades for our lives. This can be wonderful and terrifying at the same time!

DIGGING DEEPER

The Temples

In Corinth, they were surrounded by temples! Temples to Apollo, Poseidon, Aphrodite, etc. There may have been as many as 150 different false gods represented by buildings in that city. The supreme verse in this passage is verse 16, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” This verse relates to the **local church** in Corinth.

Other temples are also mentioned in scripture:

- (1) Solomon’s- destroyed in 586 BC, (2) Herod’s- finished in 64 AD, then destroyed 6 years later, (3) Tribulation- 2 Thes. 2:4, (4) Millennium – Ez. 40-48, (5) Jesus Himself- John 2:19-21, (6) the individual believer- 1 Corinth. 6:19, (7) the whole church- Ephesians 2:19-22, (8) the local church – 1 Corinth. 3:16.

God Loves the Local Church!

The builder of the church is Jesus, **Matthew 16:18**. The local church is God’s dwelling place, His Holy Habitation. It is important to have a high view of the local church so we are invested and committed to a congregation. It is here that we can listen, learn, be challenged, comforted and corrected. It is at the local church where He can call us in to His service. (How are we helping to “build” the local church, our lives, and our family?)

Good Works, Bad Works

The works of the believer build on the foundation of our Lord. We work together with Him *after* we are saved. (**James 2:20**). This is His design! We will all be graded at the Bema Seat of Christ. That’s where our works are evaluated, **2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10, Luke 14:14**. This is “The Day” or “That Day”. This is not judgment of sin, but for rewards, such as is done at the Olympics. Some works are valuable (gold, silver, precious stones) such as Sacrifice, Truth, Integrity, Agape, Humility and Faithfulness, etc. These are things that abide or endure.

In the Lord’s evaluation of our works, our motives matter, too! There are times that we may do the right thing, but the motive is wrong. If we do something to be noticed or have a selfish purpose in our work, there is no reward from God, only the glory that may be received from men, **Matthew 6:1-5**.

The things that are not valuable (wood, hay, stubble) are things that would “burn up”. They are poor building materials for a life, such as the actions generated by the wisdom of this world. A person can still be saved, but some works that we thought were credited to our account may actually be burned up! “And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming,” **1 John 2:28** NKJV. When we meet the Lord for “That Day” it is possible to have joy, but yet sense some regret at the same time, when we find some things burning. Thankfully, our merciful Lord does not desire our public humiliation.

CONSIDER

With the way the Corinthian church was headed, they were going to get little reward. The Lord was *faithful* to have Paul warn them so they could take corrective action! Someday we will get praise from God in His amazing grace, **1 Corinthians 4:5**. We need to take heed, however. It is possible that *this day* may be “That Day”!

PRAY

- that we would honestly look at our lives, and allow God to work in changing our desires and motives.
- that the Lord would show us ways to serve and support our local congregation.
- that we would be faithful with even the “little” He has entrusted us with, **Luke 19:12-27**.
- for our VBS outreach in July.
- for a good response to our church outreach in Canandaigua in August.