

Your Place in God's Building Project

1 Corinthians 3:1-23

Pastor Guy Gray

The Most Important, Challenging and Rewarding Building Project of all Time

There are many incredible awe inspiring building projects that you may have seen in your lifetime. The greatest building project of all time is not a physical structure; it is, instead, the church of Jesus Christ which is not a building, but the community of faith in Christ. This is the whole point of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. He understands that the success of this struggling church is actually the most important thing in the world. He knows that this community of faith is more than a social club or a random group of people temporarily into a religious movement. This is the church of God. This is the Body of Jesus Christ in the midst of a fallen world. There is NOTHING more important than the building of this church into a strong community of faith in Christ—a community that will impact the world with the gospel.

Babies Can't Build Anything—

So Stop Being a Baby

Things weren't going well for the Church at Corinth. Instead of a mature group of believers who are becoming more like Jesus and having an impact for Jesus, this church is having a melt down. People are arguing, competing with each other, suing each other, engaging in sexual immorality and basically behaving like the fallen culture all around them. At the root of all this is spiritual immaturity. Paul calls them spiritual babies. The thing about babies is that they are completely absorbed in their own needs and wants. They take and don't contribute (sure, they are cute—but that only gets you so far). This is fine for a baby, for a season. The goal is maturity, the ability to give as well as take. It's pretty simple. Paul says it's time to grow up. One of the biggest signs of growth in maturity is having a vision that goes beyond yourself and the ability to work with other people to bring that vision to pass.

The Church Belongs to God—So Do You—So Drop the Attitude and Get to Work

"You are God's field, God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). Paul uses two metaphors in chapter 3 to speak about the church—a garden and a building. In each case he makes it clear that the owner is God himself. The Corinthians needed to be reminded that their church wasn't there to fulfill the personal whims or agendas of any particular person. There is something much bigger going on here. God himself is up to something—almighty God, the Lord of heaven and earth. This is bigger than you or me or anyone. Paul reminds us to lift up our eyes from our personal issues or preferences or points of view. We need to "drop the attitude" and get to work on God's building project!

The Architecture of Something Supernatural—Building with Good Materials

Paul shows us the way to build a church that is strong, effective and lasting. It is all about the foundation being Jesus Christ himself and then using the right building materials. The Corinthians were building with lousy building materials—pride, worldly wisdom, passing fads and "exciting spiritual experiences". Instead they should have been building with humility, sacrificial love and the truth of the Cross clearly taught and applied to daily life. Unfortunately the church in every age, including ours, is always tempted to forsake the solid building materials that God has chosen and substitute things that are more "exciting, modern or seemingly relevant."

Consequences—Good and Bad

All of this matters more than we can imagine! There are deep consequences to what we build and how we build it. The quality of each person's work will be tested (1 Corinthians 3:13)! That includes your work. If you are a Christian, you are a builder. You are part of the greatest and most important building project of all time. This chapter is God's call for each of us to grow up and get to work, not on our own vision and personal project but on God's building the community of faith in Christ. Are you contributing to God's project? Are you building with good materials? May the Lord help us to make our church a place that looks like Jesus and impacts our city and our world for Christ!

Ideas for Reflection and Discussion

This week, read 1 Corinthians 3:1-23 again.

How were you impacted by this passage or by the sermon?

Part of Something Bigger

As Christians in American society, it can be very easy to view the church only in terms of how it serves us or meets our personal needs. How have you seen this in your life? What is the problem

with this view of church? How has this passage broadened your understanding and maturity as it relates to your role in "God's building project"?

"You Are a Builder Too"

What is your personal role right now in the church that God is building? How are you contributing? How should you be contributing? If your contributions were to be tested today, how would they measure up?

FRIDAY 10/19

Friday Night Fellowship

7:00-8:30pm @ RWLG,
This event is for all 4th &
5th graders. For more
information contact Lindsie
at 699.2226 or
lindsie@riverwest.org

SATURDAY 10/20

Ministry Prayer Time

8:00-9:00am @ RWLG,
For more information contact
Pastor Adam at 699.2226 or
adam@riverwest.org

THURSDAYS

Mens Bible Study

6:30-7:30am @ RWLG
Starts this week! For more
information contact Mark
Drum @ 699.0778

FRI 10/26-SUN 10/28 High School Fall Retreat

All High Schoolers are
welcome to join us at
Molalla Retreat Center and
learn about the amazing
blessings God has in store
for you! For more informa
tion contact Pastor Josh at
699-2226 or
Josh@riverwest.org.

October Outreach

During the month of
October we have
shopping carts in the
foyer where you
can bring food and
goods that will benefit
the people at Dinner & a
Movie, Community House
and The HOTEL Ministry.