

Christ Community Covenant Church
Spirit Filled Living in a Broken and Fallen World: The Church and Its Leaders
Pastor Dave Scherrer - September 11, 2016

Review for a moment from last week:

One more thought on the spirit filled life and being prompted by the Holy Spirit

- Not every prompting ends up as dramatic as Krista's testimony.
- Not every opportunity is meant for you – your job is to seek the will or permission of God as you consider acting or speaking into the opportunity.
(For instance I am paid to do certain work here at the church – I have to use my spiritual judgement if an opportunity distracts me from what I am already charged to do in Christ.)
- Some promptings are simple, very small, good deeds that no one will know about and perhaps no one will care about – that doesn't make them not a prompting. They can be tests of sort. Things like "Go back and say you are sorry," are from the Spirit. We know from the parable of the talents that if you are faithful in obeying small things God say he will ask you to do even greater things.
- What if you have never received a prompting? I doubt this is true though you may not be aware of it.
- It takes practice listening to God to discern His Spirit from your own voice or conscience.

1 Cor. 2:12

¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

We say here at 4Cs that we are a Spirit-led and Kingdom Driven Church but I have a question for you – **who is the church?** The correct answer is "WE Are!" [Let's try that – WE ARE!] Each one of you **together** is the church. Being a Spirit-led church doesn't mean that the Council is Spirit-led, or that the staff is Spirit-led (though we certainly hope that is true). It means that you and the people on your row and the people on this side and all the people teaching and leading worship and ushering and listening now – we are all striving to be Spirit-led and that is what makes us a Spirit-led church. It takes practice but we are getting there!

Now in chapter 3, Paul goes back to his original concern that motivated him to write in the first place; his concern for the church. This idea of name dropping and divisions forming is dividing the church. Paul is getting set to teach again what the church is – not just a local church but the BIG CHURCH – the Corinthians have gotten it all messed up and Paul is also concerned that they misunderstand servant leadership in the Kingdom of God. So he comes back to the point:

1 Corinthians 3:5-17

⁵ What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸ He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Paul wants the church in Corinth **to understand the nature of church leadership and the true nature of the church**. It is all a very new idea. The church in Corinth is maybe only three to five years old, and it is one of the early church plants of Paul. You remember that they are made of born again Jews and Greeks who come from very different backgrounds and cultures. They bring their histories and values of the world system they grew up in and know into the church and they are missing the Kingdom understanding. So Paul uses three word pictures to try and help them makes sense of this living Body called the church: He speaks of **fields and buildings and temples**:

Fields, Buildings and Temples

Paul wants us to understand three important truths about the church and her leaders. First by way of the **field illustration**:

1 Cor. 3:5-9

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, **but God gave the growth**. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, **but only God who gives the growth**. ⁸ He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers.

"But God gave the growth." Our first lesson is: None of it matters unless Jesus matters most!

None of us matter unless Jesus matters most.

Ok that one is pretty easy. Let's take a look at the lesson we learn from the **building illustration**. Paul shifts from an agricultural picture to an architectural picture. In the one the church is a field where some plant and water; in the other the church is a building where some lay a foundation and some build the structure.

1 Corinthians 3:10-11

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

"Our foundation is Jesus Christ." Our second lesson is: None of it matters unless Jesus matters most!

None of it matters unless Jesus matters most!

We must not get confused here. Who led each of us to Christ doesn't matter. Who baptized us doesn't matter. Who we know doesn't matter. Whether we hang around "Those Guys" doesn't matter. **The church exists to encourage one another while God conforms us into the image of His Son**. And by the way - Who is the church – (we are!)

The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose. ~ CS Lewis, Mere Christianity

Let's keep at our passage because Paul seems to be now looking at each one of us as we build the church together. Paul steps back here and turns the illustration into a personal application:

1 Cor. 3:12-15

¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

ILL: Elevator Illustration

“Saved but only as through fire”

If we are the church, then ***we build the church by our faith and our obedience***. These are gifts to God – our faith and obedience – like gold and silver and precious stones. We build the church by our good deeds offered in the Name of God that are a light on a hill and others will see them and glorify our Father who is in Heaven. This is what the church does.

This is why I am so excited by our 4Cs Cares Day. Good deeds done in the name of the Father, regardless of how small, have eternal consequence that lasts – like God and precious stones. Deeds done so that we can brag about the size of our church or how socially minded we are is mere wood hay and straw. It will be burned in that elevator, it will not last and it will not contribute to our reward. Paul has words for our Elders and Ministers and teachers - that those currently leading the church should take heed that their present work will stand the fiery test to come, presenting the imperishable ‘stuff’ of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

But all of us must listen well though, for as we have been saying - ***we are all builders***. Paul's words offer great encouragement to us to be good builders. The quality of our work will be revealed at the coming of our Lord. The rewards are great, but so are the consequences for living in such a way as to destroy the dwelling place of God.

That brings us to the final illustration-the ***temple illustration***:

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Paul want us to understand that God is building a Holy Church – all of us together – by our love of God and our love for one another – we are filled with the Spirit and together we become the single greatest force in the history of humanity. Our purpose is to live out the love and truth of God because we are the last and only hope to a dying world. ***We are - together - because who is the church? We ARE!*** We are building the church together.

Building the church together!

“For the church is not a human society of people united by their natural affinities but the Body of Christ, in which all members, however different, (and He rejoices in their differences and by no means wishes to iron them out) must share the common life, complementing and helping one another precisely by their differences.” ~ CS Lewis, *God on the Dock*

Again this is personal. How does fire work to purify stubble and straw from precious gold? It burns it out. In the same way God's trials sent our way and the sufferings of life burn off the dross of our lives *as if by fire*.

“As if by fire”

1 Peter 4:12-13

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

2 Peter 3:17-18

¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

[Gold Illustration]

The Gold is heated time and again and the dross skimmed from the surface. Each time the fire touches the gold, it gets a bit more pure. The refiner looks for his own reflection on the surface of the melted silver or gold in the crucible. The more dross that's removed, the less distorted his image. Only when the refiner sees a clear reflection of himself in the crucible is the process complete.

Psalm 12:6

"And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times."

As we trust God to use our pain to purify our hearts, our character will come forth as gold.

Job 23:10

"He knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold."