

***I CORINTHIANS
Chapter 3:11-23***

INTRODUCTION:

Every saved person must give an account of himself to God for their life after they are saved. We are left here on this earth for a purpose. Salvation is free, it is a gift to everyone who will receive it or believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. But, saved people earn in this life by their works. We receive eternal life the moment we believe in Christ as our Saviour, but our rewards are to be given in the future at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Verse 11:

Men may attempt to lay other foundations than Jesus Christ and build upon them, but to no avail. Others can only carry on the work which Christ has already begun, but the foundation cannot be changed.

Verses 12-13:

Paul says you can build on the foundation, which has already been laid, with six different kinds of materials: *"gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble"*. Fire will not hurt the first three on the list. Actually, the fire purifies, *"gold, silver and precious stones"*, while fire gets rid of the last three on the list. *"Wood, hay, and stubble"*, will disappear into smoke. The believer is at liberty to build on the foundation with any of these six materials.

This teaches that the believer can work for rewards. *"If any man's works abide"*, he will receive a reward. God is going to judge everything by His standards, not ours. *"And the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."* There may be much that amounts to little in that day, but *"of what sort it is."* It is the character of our work that counts, the motives that lie behind our service. The secrets of the heart are to be made manifest. God will test everything in the light of His own truth.

Verse 14:

"If any man's work abide." – That is, he shall receive a reward if he is building with, *"gold, silver, or precious stones"*.

As you well know a little piece of gold isn't as visible as a haystack. Possibly, God is the only One who knows that it is gold. Now; a haystack is another thing, a haystack can be seen a great distance, everybody hears what is being done. The haystack will be tested one day and there won't be one haystack left because the testing is going to be by fire. The same will be true for works of wood and stubble.

Verse 15:

"If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss." At the Judgment Seat of Christ, God Himself will go over our life from the day we were saved by His grace. Everything that was the outworking of His Holy Spirit for everything that was in accordance with His Word, He will give a reward. He will gather that which was for His glory together, and will say, "I am going to reward you for that." He will bring everything to light, which was of self, contrary to the Spirit of Christ and say, "all that is wasted." If that time had been devoted to the glory of God there would be a reward but God will not reward, for those things motivated and begun by the flesh. Still, all of the waste will be burnt up, never to be heard of again.

Look at Lot. He spent years in Sodom building a great reputation, and became a city official, but he had no business being there. In *II Peter 2:8*, we are told his soul was vexed daily. Finally, God destroyed Sodom with fire and saved Lot, *"saved so as by fire."* Everything he had lived for was burned up. What a solemn thing if that should be true of us.

Verses 16-17:

The church at Corinth was the temple of God, as is true with every one of the Lord's churches. The church is very important in the eyes of the Lord. To show disrespect to the church of our Lord is to be in danger of judgment. Every saved person should feel that the church is the greatest institution in the entire world. It is, *"the pillar and ground of the truth"*, *I Timothy 3:15*. The temple (the church) is holy and must be kept clean to be used for His glory. Those who will, *"defile the temple of God"*, him God will destroy.

The word translated *"defile"* in the first clause of this verse is the same as that given or rendered *"destroy"* in the second clause. It has the general meaning to bring into a worse state. The passage may therefore be rendered, "If any man injure the temple of God, him will God injure." Under the old dispensation, the penalty for defiling the sanctuary was either death, *Leviticus 15:31*, or removal from the people, *Numbers 19:20*. God is no less jealous of His church *"temple"* than he was of the typical temple, built of wood and stone by the hands of men.

Some have misunderstood this passage and think of the temple as the human body; they have thought it might mean if somebody fell into some kind of habit that defiled the body that God would destroy him. Certainly, any person that indulges in any habit that injures the body will have to answer for it. In this passage He is talking about the temple that is being built upon the One Foundation, the Church.

Verses 18-21:

Take note that Paul said, *"the wisdom of this world,"* not the knowledge of this world. Knowledge is perfectly right and proper; gain all you can; but the wisdom that is the philosophy, the reasoning of this world, *"is foolishness with God"*.

If any man is to be wise in his Christian service for God he must learn to know himself; deny his worldly wisdom and lean upon Christ for his wisdom. The carnal wisdom must be laid aside for the preacher is not to be worshiped. The pastor should be respected and given honor for the work he is doing for Christ, but never should people feel that he is

the most important need of the Church. Christ is the head and the most important need of the church, the pastor is only a gift to the church by the Lord. He is the earthly leader, but for the up-building of the church, and the members should feel that all things are theirs from the Lord for His glory.

Verses 22-23:

We might ask, "Is the world mine?". Yes, because *I Corinthians 10:26* - "*For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*". *Psalms 24:1* - "*The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein*". This is my Father's world. I can say, "Thank God, it all belongs to me, and I am going to reign over it some day."

"*Or life*" - yes, life is mine in which to glorify God. "*Or death*" - death is a servant to usher me into the presence of the Lord. "*Or things present*" - they are all mine, the trials, the difficulties, the perplexities as well as the happy things. "*Or things to come.*" Oh, what riches are soon to be rewarded!

Yes, "*All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*" - All things are subject to God and belong to Him to be used in His church to glorify Him on this earth.

WORKSHEET

1. Every saved person must give an _____ of himself to God.
2. Salvation is a _____ but _____ are to be earned.
3. Rewards are to be given in the future at the _____ Of _____.
4. Others can only carry on the work already begun, but the _____ cannot be changed.
5. Paul says you can build on the foundation that has already been laid, with six different kinds of materials: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.
6. God will test everything in the light of His own _____.
7. *"If any man's _____ shall be burned he shall suffer _____."*
8. Look at Lot. When God destroyed Sodom with fire and Lot was, *"saved so as by _____."*
9. The Lord's true church is, *"the _____ and _____ of the _____"* - *I Timothy 3:15.*
10. Take note that Paul said, *"the _____ of this world,"* not the _____ of this world.
11. We might ask, "Is the world mine?" Yes, because, *I Corinthians 10:26* - *"For the _____ is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof". Psalms 24:1* - *"The _____ is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the _____, and they that _____ I therein".*
12. *"Or life"* - yes, life is mine in which to _____ God.
13. *"Or death"* - death is a servant to usher me into the _____ of the Lord.
14. *"Or things present"* - they are all _____, the trials, the difficulties, the perplexities as well as the happy things.
15. *"Or things to come."* Oh, what _____ are soon to be rewarded!
16. Yes, *"All are _____; and _____ are Christ's; and _____ is God's.*
17. All things are subject to _____ and belong to Him to be used in His church to _____ Him on this _____.