**Planting and Watering**

*1 Corinthians 3:5-17*

**Introduction**

1. There were many problems in the Corinthian church when Paul wrote them 1 Corinthians. **One significant problem was that of division.**
2. Sectarianism in Corinth:
   1. **(1:10-13)** – Corinth, in addition to Paul, had several come preach to them, and labor with them (Apollos). (It may be that they just knew Cephas, Peter, was an apostle, but were not visited by him.)
   2. **(1:17-18)** – This sectarianism manifested a misunderstanding of the gospel. It was not a philosophy, and preachers philosophers, but was THE POWER OF GOD. **(cf. 2:1-5, 7)**
   3. **(3:1-4)** – This sectarianism showed the Corinthians’ carnality. They were immature Christians.
3. In addition to explaining the nature of the gospel message, in order to show the Corinthians their folly in dividing among preachers and apostles, **Paul discussed the work of preaching** in **3:5-17**.
4. **The principles can help us understand our job as Christians to evangelize, and can encourage us in such evangelism. 🡪**
5. The Power is God’s
6. Ministers and Fellow Workers of God
   1. **1 Corinthians 3:5-9** – Paul describes himself and Apollos as mere ministers (servants) and fellow workers of God.
      1. **(v. 5)** – preachers are merely ministers.
         1. **Ministers** – *diakonos*; an attendant, i.e. (genitive case) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); specially, a Christian teacher and pastor (technically, a deacon or deaconess): — deacon, minister, servant.
         2. **(vv. 21-4:1)** – It was wrong to elevate the preachers above what they actually were as servants – praise is due to God.
         3. ***“through whom you believed”*** – i.e. merely the messenger who brought the message.
      2. **(vv. 6-7)** – God is the one to be praised. God is the one Who has the power to save, and does save.
         1. The Corinthians placed too much emphasis on the preachers.
         2. **Their emphasis should have been placed on the message preached – GOD’S POWER TO SALVATION.**
      3. **(vv. 8-9)** – The preaching of the gospel is a good work – with the goal to save souls. Preachers are working WITH God, but it is GOD’S POWER.
7. Remember Where the Power Resides
   1. **Romans 1:16** – Paul recognized where the power was to salvation. It was not in his words, but in God’s words.
      1. **He did not try to dress up the gospel, but preached it plainly for in it ALONE WAS THE POWER.**
      2. Following such, he did not blame himself for others’ decision to reject it.
   2. **Matthew 13:3-9, 13-15** – Parable of the sower, and Jesus’ subsequent explanation of parables.
      1. The problem is not the sower/preacher, nor the seed/message, but the soil/person’s heart.
      2. **We must not grow discouraged thinking it is our fault if someone does not obey.**
8. The Foundation is Christ
9. A Wise Master Builder
   1. **1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-17** – While the power is God’s – He gives the increase – Paul explains that the preacher still has the responsibility of preaching Christ – NO MORE, NO LESS.
      1. **(v. 10)** – Paul is a ***“wise master builder”*** because he ONLY preached Christ.
         1. Paul wanted those to whom he preached to become Christians.
         2. **It would be unwise to preach any other thing than CHRIST – THE ONLY FOUNDATION.**
      2. **(v. 11, 16-17)** – To preach any other message than that of Christ’s would be destructive.
      3. THE ONLY THING WE NEED TO WORRY ABOUT IS PREACHING THE TRUTH! ***(“But let each one take heed how he builds on it.”)***
10. Lay and Build On the Correct Foundation
    1. **Hebrews 5:12-14** – We must be dedicated enough to learning to grow into the position of a teacher.
    2. **1 Peter 3:15** – We must be constantly preparing to have an “answer” from Christ’s word.
11. **We should not we worrying ourselves, and discouraging ourselves with the possible reactions to the truth, but we should BE CONCERNED WITH THAT WHICH WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR – THE PREACHING OF THE UNADULTERATED TRUTH.**
12. The Result is not Incriminating
13. Materials Erected on the Foundation
    1. **1 Corinthians 3:12-15** – The quality of those whom you played the part in converting will cause us joy, or sorrow, but we will not be judged by their deeds.
       1. **(v. 12-13)** – What are the ***“gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw?”***
          1. Whatever they are, ***“the fire”*** will reveal which are which.
          2. Whatever they are will not affect the MESSENGER’S salvation **(v. 1**5 – he will still be saved – if he passes the same test of fire).
          3. DOCTRINE? – NO – foundation is Christ.
          4. **Materials of the building**. – ***“you are God’s building” (v. 9)*** – Converts of the preaching of the gospel.
       2. **The Day** – the day of the Lord when those who are faithful will be rewarded, and those who are not will be burned in eternal punishment.
          1. ***“in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:8).***
          2. Those who do know God, and have obeyed the gospel will be rewarded.
       3. (**vv. 14-15)** – The converts who continue faithfully are the reward, thus those who fall away are the loss. However, it will not affect the preacher’s salvation.
          1. There is joy in preaching when one obeys, and continues faithfully to the end.
          2. There is sorrow when one does not obey, or after obeying falls away.
          3. **Either way, we will be saved if we pass the test of fire.**
14. ***“But He Himself Will be Saved”***
    1. **Romans 9:1-3; 10:1** – Paul wished the Jews would accept Christ and be saved!
       1. When people were saved because of his preaching he was joyous! (Be Rewarded)
       2. When people rejected the gospel he preached he was sorrowful! (Suffer loss)
    2. **2 Timothy 4:6-8** – Despite the many who rejected Paul, and the gospel message he preached, Paul was obedient, and had the hope of salvation!

**Conclusion**

1. We have the responsibility as God’s children to spread His gospel. We should have a passion and desire to do such.
2. **We need to understand the nature of preaching so as to do it correctly, and not become discouraged.**
   1. God has the power to salvation. We are merely His messengers.
   2. We must be careful to know the truth well enough to teach others, and only teach the truth of Christ’s gospel.
   3. We must not become discouraged when some reject the gospel, or when some who we have converted fall away. Continue to be faithful yourself, and you will receive salvation.