**Things to Remember When Planting and Watering**

*1 Corinthians 3:5-17*

**Introduction**

1. The first four chapters of 1 Corinthians deal with the first of many problems being addressed by Paul.
2. The context:
   1. Chapter 1 – dealt with division, especially as it takes the focus away from Christ, the true power to salvation in the message of the cross. Such prohibits any from glorying in any other than the Lord.
   2. Chapter 2 – the origin of the saving wisdom is considered. It is not wisdom that came from man – it never entered into man’s heart except through revelation of the Spirit. This wisdom is spiritually discerned.
   3. Chapter 3 – carnality of division is exposed. It is foolish to view any man as being responsible for the power in conversion and redemption. God does this, and man is only an instrument in the process that He uses. (Servant)
   4. Chapter 4 – a final exposure of their pride in carnality as it is in contrast to the apostles. God made them fools, but you are wise? Not even the man whose name their party wore had the self-inflation that they did.
3. The text – 1 Corinthians 3:5-17:
   1. This text makes the argument against the estimation the Corinthians had of men in the process of salvation.
   2. Men are nothing but servants. The effectual power is by God in the gospel.
4. This text is effective for humbling those who think they’re greater than they are, but also for encouraging us in our own evangelism as we realize Who is behind it all. The following are things we need to remember when we are planting and watering – evangelizing.
5. Remember 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.
            1. **Luke 17:10** – unprofitable, simply have done our duty.
         2. **(1:13)** – It was wrong to elevate the preachers above what they actually were as servants. Paul didn’t do anything worthy of praise, but Christ and God did.
         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. **The glory should have been directed toward God – HE GIVES THE INCREASE (CAUSES THE GROWTH).**
      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.
         1. **(v. 8)** – they are one – not enemies but working together – not one greater than the other, but same level.
7. Remember Where the Power Resides
   1. **1:17-18** – 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. **2:3-5** – Paul appeared in weakness, but the power was from God.
   2. **1:26-31** – we desperately need a humble estimation of ourselves like Paul, especially when we seek to evangelize.
   3. As John the Baptist said – **John 3:30**
   4. Mere earthen vessels – **2 Corinthians 4:7**
8. Remember 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. **(v. 11)** – wise because he preached Christ.
         2. **(vv. 18-20)** – wise because he became a fool.
         3. **It would be unwise to preach any other thing than CHRIST – THE ONLY FOUNDATION.**
         4. Spoke wisdom – **(2:6-7, 12-13)** – wisdom of God revealed (once a mystery but now made known)
10. Build on the Correct Foundation
    1. **(vv. 10b-11, 16-17)** – To preach any other message than that of Christ’s would be destructive.
       1. THE ONLY THING WE NEED TO WORRY ABOUT IS PREACHING THE TRUTH!
    2. **Hebrews 5:12-14** – Make yourself a teacher – through study.
    3. **1 Peter 3:15** – Be “ready” to teach. (**cf. 1 Peter 4:11** – speak as the oracles of God)
11. Remember the Result Won’t Condemn You (I.e. if points 1 and 2 are followed.)
12. 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. 15)** – he will still be saved – if he passes the same test of fire.
          3. DOCTRINE? – NO – foundation is Christ.
             1. **(v. 17)** – defiling with another gospel receives destruction.
          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, especially as it pertains to the end of a lifelong test of fire, and the final results of the test – endured or not?
          1. **1 Peter 1:6-9** – tested by fire, found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus (Day of Judgment).
          2. **Hebrews 10:37-39** – those who draw back do so to perdition.
          3. **1 Corinthians 4:5** – God will reveal the counsels of the hearts.
13. ***“But he himself will be saved”***
    1. **(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.
    2. **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) (**Philippians 4:1** – the Philippians were Paul’s crown) (**2 Corinthians 1:14** – Corinthians are Paul’s boast – takes pride in them.)
       2. When people rejected the gospel he preached he was sorrowful! (Suffer loss)
       3. Paul was deeply concerned about the Corinthians, and whether they would continue in faith – **2 Corinthians 7:5-7** – had they fallen away Paul would have been devastated.
    3. **1 Corinthians 4:1-5** – 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.