

Building Up The Temple

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

- 1- The Church is the temple of God. It must be built according to the pattern.
- 2- **Warning:** If you change the temple of God, He will destroy you.

Question: How can one defile the temple of God – the church?

1 Corinthians 3:9-11

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Question: How can one defile the temple of God – the church?

- 1- By building on the wrong foundation
- 2- By not building according to the pattern.

MAJOR POINT: There is Right Way and a Wrong Way to build the Church.

- 1- The foundation of the Church does not change.
- 2- The pattern for the church does not change.
 - a. Time, language, and culture do not change the pattern.
- 3- How the church is built does not change.
- 4- When there are problems with the structure of the church, the problem is with how **we** have built, not with how God designed the church to be built.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- 1- There are two classes of materials people use to build onto the temple of God:

| <u>Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones</u> | <u>Wood, Hay, and Straw.</u> |
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| 1. Rare – difficult to find. | 1. Common –easy to find. |
| 2. Value: Worth a lot because it costs a lot to produce. | 2. Value: Worth little because it costs little to produce. |
| 3. Durable | 3. Destructible |
| 4. Glorious | 4. Inglorious |

Two things are under consideration:

- 1- The diligence of the builder
- 2- The quality of his materials

Illustration: **Story of the Three Little Pigs.**

Lessons From 1 Corinthians 3:

1. Take heed how you build.
 - a. We're building the temple of God - Not a shanty down by the river
2. The Gospel is the only thing that can produce Gold, Silver, and Precious stones.
 - a. A person that is converted to the Gospel is a precious thing.
 - i. They are rare
 - ii. They are valuable
 - iii. They are durable
 - iv. They are glorious
 - b. Preaching the Social Gospel will only produce Wood, Hay, and Straw.
 - i. It is easy to preach the Social Gospel.
 - ii. Gathering people with the Social Gospel is like gathering hay in a field: You can gather lots with minimal effort in comparison to searching for gold.
 - iii. The Social Gospel will not produce Gold, Silver, or Precious stones. **Matthew 7:18.**
 - iv. Gathering lots of wood, hay, and straw does not bring glory to God: That is not what he asked for nor is it how he designed His temple to be built.
 - v. When difficult times come, those converted to the Social Gospel will not endure – they will be burnt up.
 - c. Difficult times will come upon the church
 - i. **Matthew 7:24-27**
 - ii. The design of the Church was that it could withstand the fiery trials of hell.
 - iii. Fires are necessary from time to time to purify the church. When difficult times come, and they will come, the true church will endure, and it will shine brighter than ever.
 - iv. The ones afraid of fire are those that are wood, hay, and straw for they cannot endure the heat of the fire.
 - v. If we are worried about whether our work will endure the fire it shows we have questions about what type of building we have erected.
 - vi. If a work does not endure the fire, it is a sign that it was not built right.

To the leaders of the church:

- 1- You cannot change Wood, Hay, and Straw into Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones. When a church or a work has been built in the wrong way, with the wrong materials, it will burn down no matter how much you try to prevent it. To put it another way: You cannot reform a straw shanty into the temple of the Lord.
- 2- The testing of fire is the design of God and is necessary for the good of the Church.
 - a. **1 Corinthians 3:15**
If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.
 - b. **2 Corinthians 13:5**
Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.
 - c. **Hebrews 12:5-11**
 - 3- And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:
 - 4- "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives."
 - 5- ⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.