

CHRIST, THE ONLY FOUNDATION

BIBLE TEXT : I Corinthians 3:1-23.

LESSON 390 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corin-thians 3:11).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Corinthians 3:1-23

¹ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.

² I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

³ For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

⁴ For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

⁵ Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

¹² Now if any man build upon this

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Necessity of a Good Foundation

All buildings which are made to stand are built upon a strong foundation. No matter how beautiful a house might be, if it was built flat upon the ground or upon sand, few would want it. Storms of wind and rain would cause it to shift and crack, and perhaps collapse. So the first consideration in building is to have a good foundation.

Sometimes a good foundation is laid; but as years pass, something happens that damages it. Perhaps heavy timbers have been used which seemed to be very strong at the time they were put in; but dry rot or termites have weakened them until they crumble at the touch. That building, too, may collapse. Careful people check their foundation occasionally to see that all is well.

Our Christian Foundation

When a person becomes a true Christian, is born again, Jesus becomes the Foundation of his faith. Nothing can ever damage that foundation. He has already been "tried," and has proved Himself to be a "precious corner stone." One time when Isaiah spoke of Jesus' coming, he said: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (Isaiah 28:16). That is the foundation of our faith if we are born-again Christians. So long as we stay on that foundation, we are secure. Nothing will cause our building to collapse.

Building on the Foundation

In addition to being on the sure foundation, we must build if we are going to have a building. To be saved is not enough. Perhaps we might compare our first experience in Christianity with the floor. No one wants to live in a house, which has no walls or roof. The floor is not enough. If nothing is built above the floor, and it is exposed to the weather, it will deteriorate, regardless of how well it was laid.

In our daily life, in all that we do, we are building.

**"Every word you have said,
Every deed you have done
Is building for eternity."**

The Christian wants to live to please God. He is not working for rewards, but God is keeping record and will reward the faithful. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23, 24).

Continuing to Build

People who believe that if they were once saved they are always saved have a very poor building. The Christian life is a continual building in order to improve the structure, and to keep in repair, that, which has already been built.

You have, no doubt, noticed house sometimes that were beautiful when they were built, but which for many years have had no attention. You no longer see any beauty in them. The paint has faded; the windows may be broken; pipes leak; the wallpaper is dirty and torn. No one wants to live in such a place. That is how

foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

¹⁶ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

¹⁷ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

¹⁸ Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

²⁰ And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

²¹ Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;

²² Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

²³ And ye are Christ's; and Christ *is* God's.

the person looks who thinks that because he was once saved, he will always be saved regardless of whether or not he does anything to keep his Christian life in a state of repair.

Babes in Christ

The Corinthians church had started to build on Christ, the true Foundation, but they had not done enough building on top of their foundation. Paul said that they were still babes in Christ and had to be given milk instead of meat to eat.

The Apostle tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22, 23). An overcoming, mature Christian has a greater measures of these graces than the babes in Christ. If this fruit is in the life of a Christian, he does not have the envy, strife, and divisions that Paul spoke of as being among the Corinthians.

The Bible tells us of the graces God expects us to put into our building. "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience goodliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (II Peter 1:5-7).

Brotherly kindness means doing good to others. John Wesley once said:

**"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can."**

We are expected to work at being a Christian. We must seek sanctification, so that the nature of sin might be removed from our heart. Jesus wants humble people to serve Him. He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:3, 5).

Humility

A good definition of humility is simply not to think of ourselves. Some people try so hard to become humble that they are proud of their humility. Someone has said, that, "humility is a perpetual quietness of heart. It is to expect nothing, wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing that is done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed and despised. It is to have a blessed home within myself where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret, and be at peace as in a deep sea of calmness when all around and above is trouble" (Apostolic Faith paper No. 17).

Jesus exemplified such humility. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:21-23).

Jesus said: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Later He warned, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48); so we will have no excuse when we come into the judgment. Jesus has given us His instructions on how to become an overcoming Christian, and He expects us so to build on the true Foundation that we shall be able to measure up to them. After we are sanctified, we grow in grace.

Honouring God, Not Man

Some of the Corinthians preferred one minister above another.

Some had been saved under the preaching of Paul, while others had been saved while Apollos was holding some special meetings. Of course, they loved the man who had taught them how to be saved. But Paul tried to show them that he and Apollos were merely the channels through whom God spoke. It was God alone who could make that work count.

Our Works Tried

And so we are all building together -- first, our individual structures, and then the building of God, His Kingdom on earth. Our buildings are going to be tried, to see of what they are made. How they look on the outside will not be enough recommendation. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (I Corinthians 3:13).

There are different kinds of materials in the natural with which to build. Wood, hay, and stubble are highly flammable. One can build quickly with these materials, but they do not last. And if a fire starts, they will burn readily.

Silver, gold, and precious stones are things that do not burn. They are more scarce, and are used to make small articles. But they last. We can build our spiritual structures of materials that will last, if we build according to the instructions God has given. We must live carefully and check frequently to see if we are still on the Foundation, Christ Jesus. If we do our service for God, for His glory alone, we will be rewarded. But no matter how much Christian work we do, if we do it to make ourselves look holy in the eyes of men, our works are but wood, hay, or stubble, and will be burned up.

The Temple of the Holy Ghost

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16). We are not our own. We, as Christians, have been bought with the precious Blood of Jesus at justification; purified in heart by the Blood of Jesus at sanctification; and have become the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit when we received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We then have a finished building; but we can daily add adornments to beautify it, and we must daily watch our walk before God and men so as to keep that building in a state of repair.

QUESTIONS

1. What did Paul call the Corinthians? Why?
2. Who is the Foundation of our faith?
3. How can we build on that Foundation?
4. What kind of building materials are there? Which burn and which do not?
5. Who will try our works? When?
6. What kind of works will Jesus reward?
7. What will happen to the works that have been done to please men?