

1Corinthians 18-02-11a

This is the 11th day of February 2018 and we continue our study in the book of 1st Corinthians resuming in chapter 3. Let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer, ask his blessing on our fellowship and on our study. Father how grateful we are for the fellowship that we enjoy with all of the members of our church, local and at a distance. We thank you for your grace and your faithfulness in providing for our needs and blessing us with those provisions and thoughtful additions to our lives that remind us that you do love us as our Heavenly Father, that we have a standing before you in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you for him and for his example, for his love for us expressed in his work for us on the cross and his ongoing ministry of intercession and of pleading on our behalf, the renewal and cleansing that we have through his blood. We thank you for the opportunities we have to trust you and to lay hold of his righteousness by faith and building up for ourselves an inheritance and a qualification and an opportunity for service now and in the ages to come. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word this morning that your Holy Spirit will teach us, guide us into the truth, convict us, show us where we're falling short, reveal to us the opportunities that we have to do better, to improve, to offer ourselves more fully as living sacrifices that are holy and acceptable in your sight.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's begin.

We've I think got a pretty good handle on the background and the introduction section of this letter and Paul's introducing of the theme that we live a counterintuitive life from a human perspective. The Christian life is counterintuitive because our intuition is based in the flesh. It's based in the material skills that we develop as children beginning as infants and we learn to manipulate and to succeed in accomplishing things that are visible and that are tangible and it is difficult indeed it is impossible to grasp and to operate within the spiritual realm without the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit.

It just does not compute. It is an area in which our physical frame and our carnal mind cannot successfully operate. Our perceptions are off, our intuitions are off, our reason and conclusion drawing is off when we try to apply human wisdom in the realm of divine spiritual things.

It is like setting a blind person loose in a completely new and unfamiliar environment. He is going to bark his shins, he's going to bump into things because he doesn't have that necessary sense to tell him the layout of this particular room, this particular situation. In order to navigate and to comprehend and to successfully work within the spiritual realm we need a new kind of sight.

We need a new set of facts, additional information, perspective, another sense that fills in the rest of the picture. And what's particularly confusing about this is that the spiritual realm is not completely separate and other. It is the complement with an E, it is the other part of the

physical and the material that we see around us.

It completes it, it makes sense of it, it unifies it and unveils its purpose. Why is there suffering in the world? Why does God allow sin? Why do the wicked prosper? Why are we only here for a short time and then we wither like the flower in the grass in the later part of the summer or in the later part of the day and we die? What is the meaning of life? What is the purpose of many of the things that raise questions in the materialist mind and in the partially informed human consciousness? What's it all for? What does it mean? And there is a part of us that constantly asks this question, why? We look for purpose, we look for meaning, we look for definition, we look for the goal and the objective for things. And without God's revelation of that higher truth and without the Holy Spirit to be the means by which it is imported into our souls and interpreted and conveyed to us in meaningful terms, it doesn't make sense.

So that was the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians. The wisdom of God seems foolish to the unregenerate mind or to the unspiritual mind. It just doesn't make sense in the same way that much of what we as adults do doesn't make sense to small children.

Well, we've got a room full of toys in one end of the house and you're over in the other end staring into a computer monitor all day. That makes no sense to me. Why aren't you down here doing fun stuff? What you do is not fun.

What I do as a four-year-old is great fun. Why don't you do what I do? Why don't you think the way I think? Why don't you value what I value? I like Tootsie Pops. You eat broccoli.

What's the matter with you? A more mature viewpoint, something that grasps larger issues, grander themes, greater purposes, more lasting and meaningful objectives doesn't make sense to a very immature mind. I'm hungry. Why aren't we eating? I'm thirsty.

Why won't you let me have a glass of Kool-Aid? I'm tired. Why can't I lay down right now? I want that thing on the store shelf. Why can't I grab it and take it with me? All of these thoughts make perfect sense to a child with their scale of values, with their perceptions, with their priorities, with their largely egocentric view of the world.

I need. I want. This makes me happy.

Why don't I get it? Why don't I have it? Why don't you think the way I do? And the adult world is largely nonsensical to a child. People in business suits. Have you ever seen little kids trying to watch a soap opera and all of the drama and the intensity of the psychological conflict? And, oh, I see what she's doing.

And look at that manipulative behavior. And look at this plot and this scheme and this deception. And they're going behind the back.

And little kids look at that and say, you know, where's Barney? Where's the, you know, where's the songs? Where's the cartoon stuff? Where's the slapstick comedy? Who would watch this and

enjoy it? It makes no sense to me at all. Of course, this is how I feel. And I'm sure people look down on me when I try to watch an opera.

I've come to appreciate a little bit more about opera now that they'll put the subtitles on. But when I was little, there was no such thing as subtitles. And so there'd be an Italian opera.

And if you didn't know the story, it's just a bunch of large people singing in a foreign language. And the singing was of a weird style. It's not a tune you could necessarily whistle.

But opera makes sense if you have a frame of reference. So that's where we are as we come now to Chapter 3 in 1 Corinthians. It's the contrast between the limited and immature physical world and physical perceptions versus the new and infinitely interesting and limitless vistas of eternal life, the eternity in which God dwells, the greater and grander reality that surrounds us.

We're just a snow globe on God's desk. And someday He's going to promote us out of this limited temporal sphere into the realms of eternal life. What a privilege.

It's the Pinocchio story, if you will. Right now we're little wooden puppets and we get to be a real boy. It's that kind of promotion that we look forward to.

But in order to be ready for that, we have to begin to see the spiritual perspective now. We have to begin to appreciate and grow out of the limited secular human materialistic viewpoint that we start out with. We have to mature.

So this is why in Chapter 3, Paul says, I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to carnal. I have to talk to you like people who are trapped in the world. I have to put everything in worldly terms for you.

And this was the law of Moses. The law of Moses didn't say develop love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, did it? It didn't tell the people of Israel to cultivate the fruit of the spirit. What did it say? Don't work on the Sabbath.

Bring a holy sacrifice to my altar. Observe these rituals. Perform these materialistic, visible actions because they speak of greater truths.

We try to teach our little children self-discipline. Don't talk out of turn. Don't cry every time you feel like it.

Control yourself. Be aware of your surroundings. Be considerate of others.

Don't be greedy. Don't be selfish. And these are overt actions that we teach in the hopes that eventually those will be natural responses that come from thinking on the inside.

But initially we control behavior on the outside and that behavior will later come from attitudes and values and goals and priorities that are established on the inside. God did the same thing with the human race with the law. It was a schoolmaster.

It was a teacher of children to bring us to Christ where we can mature. So Paul says I have to talk to you like little ones. I fed you with milk and not with solid food.

This is chapter 3 verse 2 in 1 Corinthians. I fed you with milk and not with solid food for until now you were not able to receive it. And even now you are still not able.

And this sort of reminds us, remember in Hebrews chapter 5 toward the end he says at such time as you ought to be teachers you need one to teach you again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. You aren't ready for solid food. Same idea.

Another reason I think Paul wrote Hebrews as you can see a very great similarity of thought here. Turn over just for a moment to Hebrews chapter 5 and note the similar line of thought when he begins to talk about Melchizedek. And he says in verse 7, chapter 5 verse 7 Hebrews, in the days of his flesh Jesus when he had offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death and was heard because of his godly fear, though he was a son yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

Even the Lord Jesus learned. And we think how is that possible? He is the omniscient son of God in his deity. He is eternal.

He knows everything God knows. He is everything God is and yet it says here that he learned obedience through suffering. And what does it mean to learn a thing? You practice it.

You implement it. When I was actually listening to a book on audio, Patty and I were listening to it, it was talking about a man who was a sniper and in training he fired literally thousands of rounds, but he was never stationed in a place where he would actually fire a round in combat or take out an actual live target. But he practiced and he practiced and he honed his skills and he became one of the best snipers in the army on the range and in various situations and calculating windage and elevation and how to set his scope and how to creep forward in a ghillie suit and all of this.

And the premise of the book is that he fired so many rounds and did this for so long and then the end of the war was imminent and he sort of snapped and he said, I want to actually do it at least once. And so he takes out some live targets that he wasn't authorized to take out because he just, all of this pent up training and preparation and no chance to implement it, but he learned the skill by constant repetition. And of course he knows all of the skills.

It's the practice. It is the implementation that ingrains it and makes it muscle memory and just instinct. And this, the Lord Jesus, even though he knew all of these things academically in the days of his flesh, he lived them out.

He practiced them. He felt what we feel. He saw what we see.

He experienced what we experience and he practiced obedience the way we do. So even though he was a son, the son of God, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

Having been perfected, having been completed, having had that experience, he became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him, called by God as high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have much to say and hard to explain.

Isn't that interesting? We have much to say, but it's hard to explain. Why? Not because he lacks the words, but because you are dull of hearing. If we're going to learn spiritual things, we've got to have our spiritual radio on.

We have to have our spiritual receiver tuned to the frequency where the information is going to come across. And it is hard to communicate because you've become dull of hearing. Though by this time you ought to be teachers, by this time.

It takes time. And we have to be patient as we learn and grow. It takes time to turn from a child into an adult.

It's just inevitable. By this time you ought to be teachers. You need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, the doctrines of God.

And you have come to need milk and not solid food. You have come to need milk. It's as though they've regressed.

They grew to a certain point, and when it was time to start solid food, suddenly they've been set back. You need milk and solid food. For everyone who partakes of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

Solid food belongs to those who are of full age, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised. Notice the tie back to the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. By reason of use, by repetition, by practice, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

And it is fruitful and useful for us to exercise that discernment. We look at world events. We look at situations.

And we try to figure out what is foolishness and what is wisdom. What is right and what is wrong. And Paul has talked about this, that they need to learn what is good and what is not good.

What is right and what is wrong, once again. So what God has revealed through the Spirit is available. But if you're not mature, if you are hard of hearing, if you're not skilled in listening and in comprehending, it isn't going to work.

That was back in chapter 2, verse 13. We speak these things not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, or conveying spiritual truth to spiritual people. The natural man doesn't receive the things of the Spirit.

They are foolish to him. He can't know them because they are spiritually discerned. He who is

spiritual discerns all things, even though people may not discern him.

Discernment. Understanding what's right and what's wrong. What is foolish and what is wise.

So back in chapter 3 now, verse 3. You are still carnal, for where there is envy, strife, and division among you, are you not carnal and behaving like men? Envy, strife, and divisions. Those were the specific symptoms of immaturity. Now, what are these things? Envy, strife, and division.

Well, envy, this is the Greek word *zealos*, and we get zeal from this. And you think, well, what's wrong with enthusiasm? What's wrong with having a passion for things? People love to say that they are passionate about this and passionate about that. But in Greek, this had often a negative connotation, but not always.

Zeal is an intensity of commitment to a thing, right? And what this implies is sort of a blind passion. It's not a thoughtful dedication. And this is your knee-jerk response to things.

It can be good. When you see the American flag go by, if you've served and worn a uniform, you have an instinctive response to the flag. You're on your feet without even thinking about it.

It can bring a tear to your eye to hear the national anthem, especially if you're on foreign soil, stationed in some far-off place, and they do colors, and you hear the national anthem over some loudspeaker someplace, and you see the flag go up the pole, there is *zealos*. There is an intensity of emotion and commitment to everything that that flag represents. This is why it's difficult for some of us to watch people not respect the flag and what it stands for.

But the negative connotation comes when this sort of commitment becomes blind and unthinking and isn't conditioned with thought. It's one thing to be able to justify your zeal. You know, if you have a strong zeal in terms of commitment to your spouse or your children or children to their parents, if somebody says, well, why do you have this strong commitment? You can say, well, here's why.

Honor your father and mother that your days may be long. You know, fathers, don't afflict your children. Be good to them.

Nurture. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. When you rise up in your goings out and your comings in, explain to your children their heritage and their opportunity in the covenant relationship with God and so on.

And so the problem comes when there is zeal without thinking behind it. There is an impassioned commitment and the thought is lacking. There are people who get all bent out of shape if the civil authorities don't want to allow a Christmas tree to be put up somewhere.

And you say, wait a minute, you know, you're an enemy of Christmas. I can't believe it. We're going to go fight.

You won't let them put up the Christmas tree on the courthouse lawn. Well, that's a zeal without thought because stop and think about it. Where's a Christmas tree in the Bible? They say, well, they won't let me put up a nativity scene.

Have you ever thought about the nativity scene and why are the wise men standing there at the stable when you don't even know your Bible? And so unthinking zeal is in the context here, where there is unthinking zeal. What is it in this particular context? I'm a big fan of Paul and you're talking against Paul and I'm upset now or I am of Apollos or I am of Cephas, of Peter. And this zeal of commitment is one step short of the goal.

You're looking at the communicator and he may be a great guy and may be doing a good job, but what should your zeal actually be directed toward? The message, not the messenger. And what Paul is arguing here is that all of the messengers are bringing the same message. The foolishness of the cross, the foolishness of preaching goes back to the same Lord Jesus, goes to the same salvation, the same plan and purpose of God.

And if you're making an issue and becoming impassioned and zealous about what color of telephone you're listening to instead of the message coming across the telephone, that's a bad kind of zeal. It's an unthinking sort of passion, zealous. The second word here, where there is what I would say, if I was going to translate this in the context, where there is unthinking passion.

And I like the word passion rather than zeal because zeal, we almost always think in positive terms. Passion can be good or bad. You can have a passion for growing African violence or you can have a passion for some unauthorized illicit relationship.

So this is unthinking passion. Strife is the word eris, E-R-I-S. And this actually gets translated debate and contention.

It's contention. And this is interesting because isn't it okay to debate? Don't we often gain ground by having a debate and airing out the parameters of an issue? But in the church, unthinking passion is going to step on other people. And debate that turns into contention, it's one thing to explore ideas.

Well, should we or should we not as a group do this? Do that? With maybe the funds that have been given to the church or with the, you know, are we a big enough group that we can't fit in living rooms anymore? Should we rent a building? Should we support a missionary? Should we send money to this effort or to that effort outside of our own fellowship? Certainly discussion is in order, but when it turns into contention, contending means opposition and butting heads and a sinful sort of conflict. So I would translate eris as conflict. You can have a difference of opinion and discuss it ironically and grant the validity of other people's point of view.

You might disagree. You can have disagreement that does not mean conflict. And there can be ironic disagreement, but we're all friends.

We respect each other's point of view. There's understanding. There is the oil that lubricates and prevents friction, heat, and sparks.

Eris. So where there is unthinking passion, where there is conflict and divisions. And notice this is in the plural here.

Dicostasia. I gave you this word before. Dicotomous.

You know, two parts of a thing. It's dicotomous. Well, this is dicostasia.

Stasis is where you stand. So standing in two different places. You remember the old patriotic ideal, if we don't hang together, we'll all hang separately back during the American war for independence.

Well, if we don't stand together, we're inevitably going to be standing separately. And we are all supposed to be standing on the same ground, on the same foundation. Not two foundations, not two separate places.

So why is this important? Why am I belaboring this a little bit? If we want to know whether or not we are maturing, gaining ground and becoming mature, what Paul says is you're not mature. You're a milk and not solid food person. You are a babe and not grown if these things exist.

So we look in our soul and say, do I find myself unthinkingly passionate? Do I end up in debate that turns a little ugly within the realm? And this is within the realm of our believer relationships. This is in our marriage, in our home, in our periphery of believers. And if we allow ourselves to let our passion run away with us and be zealous to a fault, if we are arrogant to a fault, if we are dichostasia to a fault, we need to go back and review where we are.

And all of us, I think, can find where we revert, we fall back. And adults all the time engage in childish behavior in the secular realm. You go to the workplace and people are selfish or childish or immature or take offense or become excessively impassioned about a thing and throw a tantrum and throw a fit and do the dying cockroach, at least verbally.

And we think, well, that's immature. Aren't we adults here? Can't we do this in a mature and adult manner? Well, the same thing pertains in the spiritual realm. And Paul says you need to watch yourself in these three areas.

These are dashboard lights coming on to say the oil is low. You need to check the air filter here. You've got a spark plug that's not firing.

Something is amiss if you have these symptoms where there is unthinking passion, where there is contention or conflict, where there is standing in two different places and not uniting on common ground. Are you not carnal and behaving like men? Any unbeliever can do that. We are supposed to have a supernatural peace, a supernatural bond of unity, a supernatural care

and love for one another that is fueled by and powered by the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

And many times this is just not stopping to think. We have these tools. We have these resources.

We know these things. We just don't remember how important it is to live in the light of that and to avail ourselves of what the Lord Jesus has given us. When one says, I'm of Paul and another, I'm of Apollos, are you not sarkicos? Are you not fleshly? Are you not carnal? And he's going to make this point.

Who then is Paul? Who is Apollos? But ministers through whom you believe. You're being short-sighted. And this is our common problem, isn't it? We're short-sighted.

I want to win this debate. I want to score my point in this discussion. And we all know, I certainly know from personal experience how easy it is to act like any unbeliever.

And when you want to score a point and somebody doesn't assign what you think ought to be the weight to your argument and your point of view, things can quickly turn ugly and you begin to go ad hominem and you begin to drag up the past and you begin to use whatever tactical ammunition you have at your disposal to do what? To be excessively passionate about something that you shouldn't. I will carefully tell you about a failing on my own part and you'll laugh, but I let this happen to me on the orientation of the Aleutian Islands in a debate. And I'm ashamed of myself.

I got to thinking, what is the matter with me? Who cares which direction the Aleutian Islands are? And it's a shameful thing. I was just embarrassed and sorry. And apologetic, but excessive passion over inconsequential things to allow it to turn into a conflict that isn't upbuilding, isn't uplifting, doesn't promote love and fellowship and common purpose, but it inevitably divides and causes us to stand in two different places.

And that's a symptom that we're not acting in light of what we know and who we are. We're not being mature. So Paul says in their particular case, you're arguing over which teacher you like better.

Who is Paul? Who is Apollos? Get some perspective. Put these things into the larger view. They are just ministers through whom you believed as the Lord gave to each one.

Notice there's value in each. The Lord gave some things to Paul. He gave some things to Apollos.

You don't have to distinguish between. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. And this is the advantage of availing yourself of a lot of what's available in terms of teaching in the Christian world.

There are a lot of wonderful ministers of the Word of God. J. Vernon McGee did a wonderful job in going through the Bible. And you can't go wrong listening to McGee.

He has a lot of wonderful points that you get at the level through which he travels the Word of God. I like C. H. McIntosh from over a hundred years ago. I love to read what he wrote.

Ironsides and the radio Bible class guys, Dr. DeHaan, both M. R. DeHaan and his son Richard and others, do a wonderful job. You can glean great insight to the Word of God from all kinds of places. And to say, well, I only listen to M. R. DeHaan, or I'm only going to listen to McGee, or I'm only going to listen to fill in your teacher here, is short-sighted.

God has given to each one. In their particular case, Paul says, I planted. He's the one that founded the church.

He introduced them and laid the foundation. That foolish message of the cross came to them through Paul. And he said, I didn't come to you with power.

I didn't come to you with great words. I just gave you that truth. Apollos watered.

He added something that wasn't available in the planting. He supplemented. He complemented.

He shared the things that God gave him. God gave the increase. And this word increase is really wonderful.

It's auxano. I think we talked about this last time. There's auxano and there's hyper auxano.

This is the word that Jesus uses, at least the Greek, of the parable of the seed. And the increase of the fields, 30-fold, 60-fold, and 100-fold, that increase, it's usually of fruit, of agriculture. It can also mean to promote or to elevate, to raise someone up in stature or in position.

So, the growth, if you will, is there. So, neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. And you have it repeated.

God who gives the increase is the issue. So, anytime we take our eyes off of God and his grace and his power and his provision, we're going to end up with zealous and eris and dichostasia. And those are the symptoms.

Subjectivity, eyes on people, is going to inevitably divide us. Subjectivity creates division. It's me and everybody else.

It's us and them. And we begin to draw distinctions and we begin to focus on the distinctions instead of on the commonalities. He who plants and he who waters are one, he says in verse 8. Now, he just got through saying that Paul did one thing and Apollos did another.

I planted Apollos water. Now he says they are one. How are they one? They are one in the sense

that they are in the same category of God's provision.

They are teachers. All teachers who are teaching the Word of God, who are sharing that wonderful truth of God faithfully, are one. They are one in kind.

They are one in type. And it is their responsibility to be one in fellowship. We have no scriptural evidence or indication that Paul and Apollos ever argued or ever had a difference or ever cast stones at each other.

They were united. And so Paul says, if Apollos and I are like-minded, because we are mature and we are standing on common ground and we are not in conflict and we are not over-committed in some way that separates us, why would you separate based on choosing one or the other of us? If we are one, you should be one. You should look at us as unified ministers of the gospel of Christ and not divide.

We are not divided. Why are you dividing over us? He who plants and he who waters, Paul and Apollos, are one. And in any situation where God uses one person to start a thing and introduce a thing and someone else to cultivate it and bring it along and nurture it and help it grow, to make a distinction between the founder and the builder is wrong.

Wrong. It's a sign of immaturity. And it's interesting that he talks about laying the foundation and another building on it here in verse 9 and 10.

We are God's fellow workers. You are God's field. You are God's building.

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. I've laid the foundation, another builds. Well, think about this.

Remember in Hebrews 11 and it says, Abraham dwelt in tents. Why? He was waiting for a city whose founder and builder is God. Founding and building.

Those same two elements are here. God used one man to found the group, to give them their foundational truth, their foundational teaching and understanding, and another to build on that and develop it and flesh it out. And to say, well, I'm a fan of the foundation.

Oh, well, I only like the building. It's very nonsensical. We are God's fellow workers.

You are God's field. You are God's building. And this you is you plural.

And it's important to see that this is you plural because it's talking about the group. You individually are not in view here. You as a group are in view.

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. Now, we're talking about the group and it's important to keep this in mind.

You can make an application to the individual, but the first blush, what Paul is talking about here is the church, the group, the body of believers, the local fellowship collectively. It's a collective. And when he says, let each one take heed how he builds on that foundation, he's talking about action toward the group.

If Paul laid the foundation and Apollos built, then he's talking about others who will do what Apollos did, which is come in and flesh out the teaching of Paul, flesh out the gospel of Christ, widen their understanding of the plan and purpose of God. Paul says, the teacher who comes to the group better be careful how he builds. That's what he's saying here.

Just think back, Apollos was the builder on Paul's foundation, but they are God's workmen and they are united. The building and the foundation match. You don't have a part of the slab sticking out.

You don't have a building hanging out over no slab. There's a slab and a building and they match. Paul and Apollos are one.

They are God's fellow workmen and that part is good. Anybody else who comes in to build and to add to that better be careful. Paul says, for no other foundation, verse 11, can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Nobody's going to come back and change the core doctrinal truths of Christ that Paul taught them. If he does, he's going to be in big trouble. Nobody can lay any other foundation.

Now, they actually can, but it's going to be sand and not solid rock. If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw, each one's work will become clear. What's intriguing to me about this is normally I don't see people making buildings out of gold or out of silver or out of gems.

You just don't typically see that. So, it's kind of a strange picture. Then he says wood.

Okay, well, wood, quite a lot of structures. Wood in the ancient Near East, a lot of things were made out of mud brick, out of stones, assembled stones. A lot of the stone foundations are still there to this day, but he doesn't ever mention stones.

He doesn't mention granite blocks. He doesn't mention clay or brick of any kind. He says, if anyone builds on this foundation, which is the foundation of Christ, so we're already sort of straddling the metaphor and its higher truth.

Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw. Normally, I would think wood would be a nice building material. There was a lot of cedar in the temple and cedar in Solomon's palace.

Cedars of Lebanon were one of the quality building materials of the age, but he says, each one's work will become clear for the day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire. So now we're not talking about ordinary dwellings. We're talking about something that will be

tested by fire.

They like to build now according to codes that will survive earthquakes. I was thinking about this. I went to tune a piano and there was a little boy named Peter there.

He was probably nine or ten. He was there at his grandparents' house and he had Lincoln Logs. You don't see Lincoln Logs much anymore because they are really expensive.

I thought, well, it would be fun to give my girls some Lincoln Logs. That's what I grew up with. My brothers and sister and I played with Lincoln Logs.

I went to go get some old-fashioned Lincoln Logs and, oh my gosh, you'd think they were made out of gold and silver and precious stones. As much as they cost, you get a 15-piece set and it's like \$25 or \$30. It's ridiculous.

Well, this guy had all kinds of Lincoln Logs. He had built some stuff on a card table. Well, when I got finished and I was trying to put the piano back together, I backed into that card table and the Lincoln Log building fell over.

I felt really bad. I turned around to little Peter and I said, I'm so sorry. I've knocked down your little thing.

He said, oh, that's okay. He said, I didn't really like that one anyway. I want to build one that's more sturdy.

I said, well, it didn't survive the piano tuner earthquake here, did it? We were talking about how you build so that when you shake the card table, it will survive. That's the idea here. Only instead of an earthquake or instead of just time and erosion, we're talking about judgment by fire.

This has to be a fireproof building so that when fire comes, it's still standing. This is a weird mix of the spiritual truth and the physical metaphor because we don't ordinarily build with gold, silver, and precious stones, but the day, meaning the day of judgment, will declare it. Declare here means to reveal.

This is D-E-L-O-O. The first O is in Omicron. The second O is in Omega.

D-E-L-O-O. It means to make evident, to clarify, to make clear, to demonstrate. The day is going to reveal what it's really made of.

It's going to demonstrate its composition. It isn't so much like a verbal declaration. It's a revelation.

You open up the kiln and you see how that pottery turned out. How did your glaze do? What color did it finally turn? How far did it run? Did anything crack? Did anything sag? When the fire of the kiln has done its work and you cool it down and you open the lid, and I've had the

privilege of seeing this, it's like Christmas. You look inside and you see what you did not see before.

The fire of the kiln reveals it of what sort it is, of what kind it is. So those who build on the foundation have to be careful because the day of judgment is going to reveal whether they did a good job, whether their teaching was sound in the church. And this is interesting because it speaks of denominations.

It speaks of priorities and persuasions in individual groups. I get into a lot of churches under my piano tuning hat, and I went into a Free Will Baptist church last week, and they had our creed up on the wall. This is what we believe, and it was interesting to read because many of these creeds and statements of belief are forged in a particular time.

If there's a time when maybe Calvinism is running rife, someone will either be very much for or very much against Calvinism, and it'll be one of the few points that they mention. This particular church seemed to have been formed right after they repealed Prohibition, and they said, we're against alcohol. I mean, right there in the first paragraph, this is what your whole church is about.

And they picked that one issue and included it in there. And I mean, God bless them. Whatever you want to agree to as a group, go ahead.

But the day is going to reveal whether the priorities and the teachings and the stuff that is built on the foundation of Christ is going to stand the test of God's judgment. Did you do what was really important? Is it more important to be a teetotaler, or is it more important to look out for your widows and your orphans and to ensure that you're not divided and that you're not divisive, that you are not overly passionate about non-essential things in a way that causes strife and contention and division? The day will reveal it. Each one's work will become clear.

And each one here are those who guide and teach churches. That's who's specifically in view. And so there's a twofold perspective here.

Paul is warning those who take up that occupation or that exercise, that assignment from God, each man better be careful how he builds. And by extension, people who listen to and support and are influenced by a teacher need to be equally aware that the day is going to reveal whether this is wood, hay, and stubble that's being promulgated, or whether it's gold, silver, and precious stones. And oddly enough, you would think wood is a good building material, but not if you're looking ahead to the fire.

Then not so much. The fire will test each one's work of what sort it is. Verse 14, if anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

Ah, interesting. The work endures. It lasts.

It has benefit and effect and potential beyond this life. This is why the invisible attributes, the

fruit of the Spirit, like patience and self-control and endurance, peace, these carry forward. They're good in whatever environment you find yourself.

Spending a lot of time learning one particular skill that is in the material world might be an unbalanced kind of a passion. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss.

Interesting. If I, as a teacher, give you a bunch of wood, hay, and stubble, not only do I not get a reward, but in the day when I stand before the judgment seat of Christ, I will suffer loss. You do not have this privilege.

You do not have this form of access. You do not have this opportunity. You do not get this particular potential for service and for closeness and for functionality in the new Jerusalem, in the kingdom of the Father.

You're not going to go to that hill. You're not going to be in that place. You will not hear and see and do.

There is loss. He himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God? We're going to pause here and take our break, but this you is also plural, and it puts what we've just seen in the preceding six verses into perspective.

There is a foundation. There is a building. Any of you that have been homeowners know that the last thing you want to see is a crack in your foundation.

The last thing you want to see is a crack in the brick facade because your foundation has been moving. You want the whole thing to be unified and to stick together. You don't want to see cracks above the corners of your windows in the sheetrock.

You don't want to see doors that are sticking and that don't latch when you close them because the foundation and the house are not a strong and unified whole. How much worse, if that is not just your house, how much worse if it's God's temple and God's temple is cracking and shifting and coming apart? That's where He's going. Not only do we have personal motivation to pay attention to these things and ensure that we ourselves are not overly passionate, divisive, or standing in a different place from our fellow believers, and these are the ones in our near fellowship.

It's fine to be of a different point of view of those that are in a different fellowship prioritizing different things. This is within the church in Corinth. This is within your fellowship, your periphery.

There should be unity because we're the temple of God. That's what we'll see when we pick up after the break.