

We ended last week in (1 Corinthians 3) with EVERY gospel minister's work and responsibility in the church of Jesus Christ.

If you recall from chapter 1, Paul rebuked the Corinthian church because of contentions and factions that existed between brethren over ministers and apostles; I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, and I am of Christ.

There would be no strife or comparing of preachers if believers LOOKED by faith to GOD for what they had received, and NOT their favorite preacher.

Because God is **The Source** of every truth revealed. The preacher is called to explain and exposit and give the sense/meaning of the scripture, but only God can give understanding; only God can reveal His Word to those that hear it. Paul dealt with their spiritual immaturity in the beginning of this chapter.

Gospel ministers are planters, (farmers); workers and sowers of the good seed of the Word of God and builders in the church of Christ.

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase (V6):

Pastors must trust God for the seed of the Word that is preached, planted, and watered. But it is God who must give life to the seed in the hearts of those that hear it.

As for God's under-shepherds/pastors, they/we are all laboring in one field; in the church of Christ.

YE Christians (the church); YOU are God's husbandry (or farm); ye are God's building! (V9)

The foundation has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ and Him crucified:

The Apostle Paul was called by God to go to many Gentile cities to preach the gospel; to lay the foundation of gospel truth in those cities, and then to oversee the calling of ministers ~ pastors in those new churches. Thee God called men were to build upon the foundation of Christ which Paul laid down in that city. (V10-11)

Look again with me at (V12-15), specifically to the builders and their work, the building materials, and then, to God's examination of every builder's work, and then lastly, to the rewards or losses to each builder after his work is tried by the fire.

(V12): Now if any man (or any gospel minister) build upon THIS foundation; (from V11), and then there are the building materials.

There are good building materials, and there are bad building materials. The gold, silver, and precious stones signify the solid and enduring truths of God's Word. They are tried, they are pure, and they are powerful! And, they are the only building materials that the Spirit of God will use!

Psalms 12:6, 18:30, 19:7-11, Proverbs 30:5, 1 Peter 1:22-25

So, the strength and quality of the building or edifice depends on the materials, which I believe to be the infallible

truths and doctrines of the Word of God. 1 Timothy 3:15
But then there are the bad/faulty building materials; wood, hay, stubble; which are NOT to be used by builders and ministers of the gospel. What are wood, hay, and stubble in the church of Christ?

Teaching that is NOT Biblically based; men's opinions, humanistic teaching and erroneous doctrines that cannot be, and are not supported by God's Infallible Word! Jeremiah 23:1, 16-18, 25-32

Here is where the difficulty comes in; in 1 Corinthians 3, Paul seems to be speaking of preachers that will ultimately be saved, (who did not intentionally preach error), nonetheless, they shall suffer losses at the judgment of the great day.

They used some faulty materials; they built upon the foundation of Christ with some wood, hay and stubble. When the refining fire comes, those materials will be burned up; they will not endure.

A building is only as strong as its foundation, and after that, it is only as strong as the materials used to build it.

What is being examined and judged in this text? Is it the building or the church? Converts? Or is Paul speaking here of God judging every minister's labor and ministerial work?

Think about it; Jeremiah preached the truth as a prophet of God, and yet, he may have only had one convert. Ebed-melech. Not much of a building!

Poor Jeremiah won't have enough gold for one wall! But every last bit of what is written in Jeremiah's prophecy in the Word of God is gold, silver, and precious stones! No wood, hay, or stubble there!

And don't forget this: Christ said, I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH! He uses pastors and teachers in His church, but Christ is the One who fits every living stone into the church of Jesus Christ, not preachers or pastors or anyone for that matter. Ephesians 2:20-22, 4:11-16, 1 Peter 2:5

(V13): Every man's work (his ministry) shall be made manifest:

For the day shall declare it. What day? I believe Paul is speaking of the day of judgment. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
EVERY ONE of us will appear before the judgment seat of Christ; but in the context of 1 Corinthians 3; Paul is not speaking to every Christian, but to every pastor/gospel minister.

THE DAY shall declare and manifest every individual pastor's pastoral ministry of what sort it was! How did he build upon the solid foundation and truth of Christ? What materials did he use? Did he faithfully preach the Word of God? Or did he turn aside and preach his own opinions and the thoughts of his own heart?

Now let me just say; it would be the height of arrogance for any preacher to boast that he has preached completely error free in all of his ministry.

We must never forget that gospel ministers are imperfect men

with a perfect message; and therein lies the great care, seriousness, and terror of preaching the Word of God! And this is where EVERY gospel minister must be so careful of inserting his own thoughts and opinions into (HIS WORK) and the preaching of God's Word. Paul told Timothy: Preach the Word!

1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 1 Thessalonians 2:4-9

This passage in 1 Corinthians 3 speaks of the examination of every pastor's pastoral ministry. Every gospel minister/pastor will give an account of their ministry to the Lord Jesus Christ in the last day; and they will also give an account to the Lord for everyone who sat under their ministry. Hebrews 13:17, READ ~ EXPLAIN V13.

On the day of judgment, Christ will call every pastor to give an account of, and to answer for his stewardship, and of his oversight and care of the Lord's church. Give account of thy stewardship

(V14-15): Here is where we come to the fire, the rewards, and the losses.

Note that the FIRE here is NOT the fire of judgment; but is it a refining and a purifying fire.

Every minister's work shall be made manifest; for The Day shall declare it, because (every minister's work) will be revealed by fire; for the fire shall TRY every man's work of what sort it is.

Every pastor's WORK will be examined and known in that day. All of the gold, silver, and precious stones will abide and endure; but the wood, hay, and stubble will be burned up. (READ V14-15)

So, there will be rewards and losses for each minister; but he himself saved; yet so as by fire.

So, once again, I do not see this passage speaking of the fires of judgment and wrath against unbelievers; I don't believe the wood, hay, and stubble to be unbelievers. The text just does not seem to support that thought.

If any man's work abides (or endures) the Lord's examination and proving of his pastoral work in that which he has built upon the solid foundation of Christ, he will be rewarded.

But if any man's work shall be burned up; he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved.

AGAIN, what is it that abides or endures? And what is it that is burned up? Fire refines and purifies gold, silver, and precious stones; fire consumes wood, hay, and stubble. And those ministers that suffer losses;

But he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire

Closing:

Every Christian will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged, and to receive the things done in his body, according to (ALL) that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Romans 14:12: So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God

But not only will gospel ministers give an account for their

own life, but also for the lives of everyone that sat under their ministries. Hebrews 13:7
AND they will also give an account for their pastoral ministry and their work in the Lord's church. How did they build upon the One True Gospel Foundation of Jesus Christ and Him crucified? With what did they build?

Revelation 14:13: And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me. Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them

Christian, your works will follow you to the judgment; and so, every minister's works and labors in the ministry will follow him to the judgment seat of Christ. This is an admonition to every Christian; but it was written specifically to a young preacher, Timothy!

2 Timothy 2:15-21