

JUNE 8, 2025

God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing
The Book of 1 Corinthians – Part 3, Chapter 3
Renovation Plans For The Church

Today we continue on our multi-year journey through the New Testament where we are seeking to understand the historical, chronological and missiological of the 1st Century Church so that we in the 21st Century Church can keep the 'CHURCH LIVE & GROWING'. As we have made our way through the Book of Acts we have stopped at various points to delve into other books of the New Testament that seem to have been written at that specific point in time. We just completed study of Acts 19 and it seems that at this point in the 30 plus year time span that the book of Acts covers, that Paul took the time to **write to the Church in Corinth.**



In the past two messages we discovered that the Church in Corinth which Paul and his DreamTeam of Silas, Timothy, Aquilla, Priscilla & Apollos had spent about a year and a half planting churches, leading to salvation, baptized and given basic discipleship to a large number of believers. After he and Aquilla & Priscilla had left and went to Ephesus it appears that the cosmopolitan atmosphere in Corinth of debauchery, hyper-sexuality, materialism, and prideful academia had caused them to

become >>> **Defiled, Divided, Disgraced, Deluded,** and today in Chapter 3 we find they are **in Disrepair.** We then discovered how Paul, the consummate Evangelist, Church Planter, Pastor, Discippler, Encourager and Disciplinarian and Spiritual Physician responded to those problems with some prescriptions to help with the spiritual sickness. He also **REMINDS** them of their **HIGH CALLING TO...**

1. **Be Holy**
2. **Develop A Rich And Genuine Fellowship Of Harmony and Love**
3. **Fulfill Their Ultimate Goal To Glorify God.**
4. **Have the Mind of Christ.**

And today in Chapter 3 To...

5. **Be God's Sanctuary & Temple**

Today in 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, Paul addresses the many problems and issues in the Church at Corinth and moves into the role as a Church Building Inspector, Architect, Consultant, and gives them some **RENOVATION** ideas with the hope that they live up to their true calling and be the Building/Temple/Sanctuary of God and bring Him Glory in the process. Sadly, the Corinthian believers had been deluded and deceived by the carnal and fleshly society in which they lived. They were so deceived that in essence they were like spiritual babies, confused and immature. They were focusing more on people and materialistic things than on spiritual truths. These young believers had been caught up in 'Celebrity & Human Hero Worship'. Rather than focus on the true power and wisdom of Christ and His Cross, they were deceived by

the human philosophy and materialism of the world. They were not living up to the goal and expectations to Glorify God.

There are many way to address this chapter, but I have chosen to follow the ‘**building**’ theme. As we discovered, Paul was in a sense the architect of the Church in Corinth. However, when he had departed, the Church did not follow the blueprints Paul had laid out, and the outcome was a **Defiled, Divided, Disgraced, Deluded, and Disrepaired Church**.

The Laborers for God in the Corinth Church were:

- A Immature, Distracted Workforce (Maturity)
 - A Selfish, Non-Productive Workforce (Quantity)
 - A Lazy, Non-Caring Workforce (Quality)
- The result was an Inadequate and Inferior Spiritual Building (aka the Church).

Paul gives Renovation and Rehabilitation Plans:

1. Develop & Train a Mature Workforce.
2. Develop a Growth Mentality
3. Develop a Quality Control Team

Let’s listen to how Paul addresses the three problems and how he begins to develop his **Three -Stage Renovation plans**. Paul uses some word pictures to help them see their error and to give them guidance on how they can go about a Church Renovation project. As Warren Wiersbe and Daniel Akin describe, **Paul reminds them that:**

1. **The Church is a Family with the Goal of Maturity.**
2. **The Church is a Field with the Goal of Quantity.**
3. **The Church is a Building with the Goal of Quality.**

1. The Church is a Family with the Goal of Maturity
1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-4...¹ *Brothers, I was not able to speak to you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh, as babies in Christ.* ² *I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. In fact, you are still not ready,* ³ *because you are still fleshly. For since there is envy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and living like unbelievers?* ⁴ *For whenever someone says, “I’m with Paul,” and another, “I’m with Apollos,” are you not unspiritual people?*

The imagery of the Church as a Family is a very common one in the Bible. Just as in a human family there are different levels of maturity and ability, so it is with the Church Family. Sadly, the Church Family in Corinth were acting like children and young adolescents. They had failed to grow in their spiritual maturity. This explains why they were **Defiled, Divided, Disgraced, Deluded**, and in **Disrepair**. Children and young adolescents have not developed the wisdom and knowledge that more mature family members have. The Corinthian Church family had a large nursery and children’s department but inadequate mature leaders. This is why Paul referred to them as ‘*babies in Christ*’ needing milk instead of meat. They were acting childish in their fleshly wants and desires, they were setting up human heroes and celebrities to follow like young

groupies of a popular Boy Band, or Swifties. They were not putting their attention on the Head of the Family...Christ... they were instead looking to their human leaders and thus falling into division and distraction. Thus their Family Home was crumbling. The point to take away is that it is Ok to start out your faith journey as a child, but the goal is to grow into **MATURITY** and be a well-functioning member of God's Family - The Church.

The 2nd imagery of the Church is that of a Field. Just like the Family imagery is common in the Bible so is the metaphor of Agriculture and a Field.

2. The Church is a Field with the Goal of Quantity.
1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-9b...⁵ *What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? They are servants through whom you believed, and each has the role the Lord has given.* ⁶*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.* ⁷*So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.* ⁸*Now the one planting and the one watering are one in purpose, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.* ⁹*For we are God's coworkers. You are God's field,*

Not only was there a maturity problem in the Church, but there was also a quantity issue. They were not producing fruit as we are called to do. In the gospels we read many parables about seeds, fruit and gardens.

A key point of these parables is that a healthy/mature field, tree, plant or vine produces fruit, and a great harvest of fruit.

These immature Church family members were not tending to the fields and gardens. They were so focused on immature and childish opinions and desires that they forgot that they were called to be '*tenders of the garden*' (remember Gen. 2:15)

The Corinth Church was so busy playing in the nursery and on the playground that they didn't do their job of sharing God's good News Story and bringing new family members in not God's Household.

Now I don't think Paul, nor the New Testament, teaches us to be an overly '*number conscience, nose counting*' people. As we all have seen, just because there is a large group or crowd does not necessarily mean it is a healthy group. The Bible reminds us that "***small is the gate and narrow the way and few find it***" (Matt. 7:13,14).

However, we are also reminded that a good tree produces good fruit and in **John 15:5** we read "***Jesus said, 'I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.***"

If we put the 1st and 2nd picture together, we can see that God's Church is built on **MATURE** believers 'work the fields' and produce a good harvest or **QUANTITY** of new believers and disciples.

In the last verses of 1 Corinthians 3 we see the last portrait or metaphor for the Church.

3. The Church is a Building with the Goal of Quality.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:9c-23...⁹ *(You are) God's building.*¹⁰ *According to God's grace that was given to me, I have laid a foundation as a skilled master builder, and another builds on it. But each one must be careful how he builds on it.*¹¹ *For no one can lay any other foundation than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ.*¹² *If anyone builds on that foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw,*¹³ *each one's work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one's work.*¹⁴ *If anyone's work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward.*¹⁵ *If anyone's work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will be like an escape through fire.*¹⁶ *Don't you yourselves know that you are God's temple/sanctuary and that the Spirit of God lives in you?*¹⁷ *If anyone destroys God's temple/sanctuary, God will destroy him; for God's temple/sanctuary is holy, and that is what you are.*¹⁸ *No one should DECEIVE himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, he must become foolish so that he can become wise.*¹⁹ *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, since it is written: He catches the wise in their craftiness;*²⁰ *and again, The Lord knows that the reasonings of the wise are meaningless.*²¹ *So no one should boast in human leaders, for everything is yours—*²² *whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come—everything is yours,*²³ *and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.*

A Healthy, God Glorifying Church is made of of Mature Believers, Who work hard and produce Godly Fruit and who also are visual examples or testimony to God's greatness. Mature, fruit-bearing believers produce both quantity but also **QUALITY!**

In this final section Paul moves to a Building Metaphor. It applies to building a Mature Family, a growing Quantity of Believers who have a Godly quality in their lifestyle. Thus God can use these believers to BUILD a CHURCH that BRINGS GLORY TO GOD and HONORS CHRIST.

The Family members of God's Church are to work together as a Family to produce quantity and quality of fruit and then to come together to be a BUILDING, A TEMPLE, A SANCTUARY in which the Spirit of God can dwell and direct.

We are Called to Be God's Building, Temple, and a Sanctuary. Built on the foundation of Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Take a moment & evaluate your life & our church's life.
Are we Maturing Family Members?
Are we producing a Quantity of fruit?
Are we building a Church of Godly Quality?

It's time for us to grow up, produce fruit and live lives of Godly Quality and Character!