

Our Bible reading for today – **1 Corinthians 3:1-23**

“Build with Care!”

Near our neighborhood a few years ago a major house building project was underway. We would walk around after hours to see how things were going. In one of the 2-story homes I was unpleasantly surprised. I had thought that building code construction was 2X8 floor joists 16 inch-on-center. In those houses I saw that they were using 2X6's, 24 inch-on-center, and some of them were split. I wondered – how many buyers of those homes saw how they were being built.

On a church work day, we were winding down a long day of construction in our new building. One of the men, who was himself a building contractor, laid his hammer into his tool box and said what he customarily would say as he quit work, *“Well, it's good enough for who it's for!”* After a moment he looked at me with a sheepish expression on his face. And he said, *“I shouldn't have said that! This is for the Lord, nothing is good enough.”*

In our Bible text today Paul used two really good analogies for God's work, the church, and transitioned between them with verse 9: **“For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.”** He was teaching teamwork with the first analogy, as people work together with each other, with complete dependence on God for any good results. **“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”** (verse 6) That's a liberating truth which takes away the pressure of thinking it all depends on me. This also affirms that we shouldn't be divisive by following or glorifying a person, but only follow and glorify God.

“Building” is Paul's second analogy. As Christians our lives and our words are building the *“temple”* which God indwells, Christ's church. There are four things emphasized:

1. Christ must be the “foundation” we build upon! **“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”** (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 3:11)
2. The quality of our efforts is vital! **“But each one should be careful how he builds.”** (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 3:10)
3. The “building materials” we use are crucial! **“If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,”** (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 3:12)
4. We will be judged for how we build! **“His work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light.”** (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 3:13)

Just a brief comment on each of these:

- A lot of Pastors and Christian workers might well be asked if they are building their own empire or Christ's Kingdom.
- We can try to serve the Lord in the flesh, in our own strength and cleverness, instead of serving in the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- We really should be giving God's service our absolute best, instead of being shoddy about how we minister, serving diligently, prayerfully and within godly living.
- *“The Day”* in which our service will be judged is at *“The Judgment Seat of Christ”* **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”** (^{NIV} 2 Corinthians 5:10)

Serve well! Look forward to Christ's **“Well done!”** praise and his reward!