I Corinthians 3:1-23

Review...

- THE CITY OF CORINTH...
 - o Corinth was a beautiful, very prosperous, and influential city in the Roman Empire...
 - o But Corinth was also infamous for its idolatry and sexual promiscuity...
 - o This is the place where Paul began a church but it became a church with lots of problems!
 - o Paul devoted his entire letter to the church to address these problems...
- I Corinthians 1:1-9 The greeting to the chruch...
- I Corinthians 1:10-17 The 1ST Problem Division in the church following men...
 - o Paul spends the next 4 chapters dealing with this problem I Corinthians 1:10-4:21
 - When there is division in the church it keeps us from being effective for Jesus...
 - The solution to division focus on Jesus Christ the one thing we all have in common!
 - o The first cause of the division following men I am of Paul / Apollos / Peter / Jesus...
- I Corinthians 1:18-31 The 2ND problem Division in the church the wisdom of men...
 - o 1st the Wisdom of God's message the cross is foolishness to the world!
 - o 2nd the Wisdom of God's messengers the foolish people of the world!
- I Corinthians 2:1-16 The simplicity of God's Message...
 - o Paul determined to just preach Christ crucified to the church the simple Gospel...
 - o So that the faith of the believers would be based in God's Word not men's words...
 - o Those who received the message of the Gospel were made perfect and understood...
 - The 'mystery' of God's love Jesus crucified from the foundations of the world
 - The riches God has planned for those who love Him (eyes has not seen...)
 - Revealed by the Spirit of God within us who knows the mind of God..
 - Unlike those who do not believe cannot know the truths of God no Holy Spirit!

The 3^{RD} problem - Division in the church - spirtual immaturity... vs. 1-8

- Spiritual vs. carnal... vs. 1-4
 - o The 3rd reason for division in the church the immaturity of the believers...
 - o Paul rebuked the church I could not speak to you as 'Spiritual' instead as 'Carnal'...
 - Spiritual mature in the faith able to handle the 'meat' deeper truths of God's Word...
 - Understanding life is about far more than momentary needs and pleasure...
 - Recognizing the consequences both temporary and eternal for actions...
 - Desiring to please and serve the Lord in both actions and thought...
 - Carnal immature in the faith only able to swallow the 'milk' simple teachings...
 - Those who know Jesus but live for their flesh their basic desires...
 - Live to eat / sleep / enjoy the pleasures of this passing life...
 - Still bound to their sin they live only to please themselves...
 - o I fed you with milk not with meat...

- At first Paul could only feed the believers with 'milk' which is to be expected...
 - The believers in Corinth had not grown in their walk with the Lord...
 - But right up to the writing of Paul's letter they still could only receive 'milk'!
 - They had never grown in their faith they had never matured in the Lord...
 - When we first come to know the Lord we are not going to understand much...
 - There is a LOT about Jesus and God's Word we do not comprehend...
 - We are going to make a lot of mistakes and struggle to overcome our sin...
 - But we should not stay that way as we get into God's Word we should grow...
 - It is cute to bottle feed a young infant no surprise when they mess their diapers
 - But when a 20-year-old adult is still on the 'bottle' still wearing diapers...
 - It is a tragedy something has gone terribly wrong...
 - When a believer whose been saved for 20 years is carnal still living for this world
 - It is a tragedy they never grew in the Lord they never matured in their faith...
- When those who should be teaching others still need to be taught simple truth...
 - * Hebrews 5:12 "You have been Christians a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things a beginner must learn about the Scriptures. You are like babies who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food."
 - As believers in Jesus we should by spending time in God's Word...
 - Be growing out of 'milk' the simple truths salvation by faith / eternal judgment...
 - Growing in the Lord to a place where we can begin to teach others about Jesus!
- o The proof of their childishness...
 - The believers in Corinth should have been zealous for Jesus...
 - Instead they zealously debated with each other over their 'divisions'...
 - Their 'denominational' attitude I am of Paul / I am of Apollos...
 - Showed their immaturity showed they were still babes in Christ...
 - Paul does not hold back here those who divide over denominations are immature
 - People who argue over being Catholic / Baptist / Adventist...
 - Reveal they are either not saved or have never grown in the Lord...
 - Because they are acting no differently than before they knew Jesus!
 - People in the world love to divide they have their groups / barkada...
 - In the world it is all about who is your family / town / county...
 - Men have fight and kill each other just because they are rival sports teams...
 - But it should not be the same in the church we are to be united by love!
 - John 13:35 "All will know you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
 - When we divide the church over denomination we show we are like the world!
- Planting and watering... vs. 5-7
 - o It's not about the messenger...
 - Who is Paul who is Apollos just servants of God who told you about Jesus...

- If you got a letter in the mail with 1000 pesos from a good friend...
- You don't thank the messenger you go and thank the friend who gave the money...
- In the same way it does not matter who told you about Jesus the Gospel...
- It does not matter what church you got saved in the point is you received Jesus!
- o One plants another waters God gives the increase!
 - One man might sow a seed another adds the water but only God can make it grow!
 - So it is not about the one who plants or waters the credit goes to God!
 - The one who plants and the one who waters work together so the plant will grow
 - Paul planted the seed of the Gospel and Apollos watered those seeds...
 - But it was God who ultimately caused the people to grow in the Lord!
 - Churches pastors do not get the credit for people growing in Jesus...
 - You might have gotten saved (planted) listening to a pastor in one church...
 - Then you grew in God's Word (watered) in a different church...
 - That does not make one church better than the other both were used!
 - And ultimately it was God who used both to plant and water you in the Lord!
 - So don't look to the church don't give credit to men give credit to Jesus!

A WARNING TO PASTORS... VS. 8-15

- The reward for the labor... vs. 8-10
 - o So if all the credit goes to God what do the Pastor's get...
 - In farming both the planter and one who waters receive a reward for their labor...
 - If either one failed to do their part then the crop would fail...
 - The reward they receive is the fruit that comes from their combined labor...
 - Their reward for serving God...
 - 1st The church in Corinth was God's field Paul was sent to 'farm' in...
 - The reward Paul received was seeing the fruit in the lives of those who believed...
 - He planted / Apollos watered both rejoiced in seeing the people grow fruit!
 - It is a sad thing to me that many pastors today think they are the 'only farmer'...

- As though there is only one church their church that is the 'right' church...
- The joy of the pastor should be to watch the people grow and mature...
- No matter where they attend church we are all one in Christ!
- 2nd The church (people) was God's building Paul was sent to build...
 - The reward Paul received was seeing the church of God built in Corinth...
 - The reward of the pastor is seeing people grow and the church of God built...
 - My greatest joy is seeing people grow in the Lord bear fruit for the Lord...
 - I am constantly amazed as I get to be a part of God building His church!
 - III John 1:4 "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

THE WORKS TESTED BY FIRE... VS. 10-15

- o Paul was the wise master-builder (architect) of the church in Corinth...
 - Paul set the foundation of the church cause he was the first to share the Gospel there...
 - Other men came and added to the work building on that foundation...
 - But he warns they needed to be careful on how they added to the church...
- o Because the only foundation is Jesus Christ...
 - Matthew 16:18 "On this rock I will build My church..."
 - The 'Rock' that is the foundation of the church is Jesus Christ!
 - The foundation that Paul set the only foundation that the church can stand upon!
 - There were those who sought to 'replace' the foundation...
 - They wanted to build the church upon a denomination name rather than Jesus!
 - When a church uses a man's name / churches name more than Jesus names...
 - When a denomination become more important than Jesus wrong foundation...
- o If any one builds upon the foundation (Jesus) their work will be tested...
 - It will be tested to see if it is Gold/Silver/or precious stones or Wood/Hay/ Straw...
 - It will be tested by putting the 'work' through the fire on THE Day (Judgment Day)...
 - The idea is the works of pastors/leaders who serve and teach in the church are tested
 - Was their work based on Jesus or on their own name / their own efforts...
- o If anyone's 'work' endures he will receive a reward...
 - If the foundation of their work was Jesus then the work will endure...
 - It will be obvious because of the fruit that comes from the work mature believers!
 - You can always spot a church that is founded on Jesus the people grow in the Lord...
 - Faith comes by hearing God's Word Romans 10:17 getting to know Jesus...
 - The fruit of the church is gold/silver/precious because it lasts John 15:16
 - In the same way you always spot a church that is full or wood/hay/ and straw...
 - There is no maturity in the believers 20 years down the road still babes...
 - Still arguing over denominations still living like they did before they knew Jesus!
- o If anyone's 'work' is burned he will suffer loss but himself will be saved...
 - The pastors work is burned up (sermons, lectures, books, teaching, all dry as dust)
 - He will still be saved but all of his efforts are lost in the fire...
 - It is the tragedy of a fruitless life a minister who built so poorly on the true foundation
 - His work goes up in smoke His sermons were empty words without building power...
 - They left no mark in the lives of the hearers it is the picture of a wasted life!

THEREFORE DO NOT CAUSE DIVISION... VS. 16-23

- You are the church of **G** od... vs. 16-17
 - o Paul turns back to the saints of Corinth you are the temple of God...
 - The Holy Spirit (who is God) dwells within you within the Church of God...
 - The church of God is not a building it is not a particular denomination...
 - There is only one church of God we are all part of the Body of Christ...
 - No matter what name no matter what traditions we are all part of God's church!
 - o If you destroy the building of God (the church) God will destroy you...
 - Going back to the idea of causing divisions within the church tearing down the church
 - The punishment is equally effective God will wreck the church-wrecker!
 - If we cause division within God's church if we focus on denominations watch out...
 - If someone beat up your wife what would you do to them...
 - We are the Bride of Christ what do you suppose God will do to someone who hurts us
- Do not follow the wisdom of men... vs. 18-23
 - If any of you are wise in this world become a fool for Jesus...
 - Cause the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God the thoughts of the wise futile!
 - Just because others divide do not follow in their example don't follow men's wisdom!
 - Keep in simple stay firmly planted on the foundation of Jesus!
 - Don't settle for less don't rob yourself of the blessings of the riches of the church...
 - Not just one church but the blessing of knowing all of God's kids...
 - o Everything is already yours Paul / Apollos / the whole world!
 - Things present things to come life and death are all yours!
 - And you are Christ's and Christ is God's!