

1 Corinthians 3:9-15 - Jesus the Foundation

PRAY

INTRO

Be a Berean - **Acts 17:11** - Paul writes that those in Berea were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica. The Bereans received the word with all-readiness and then they took what Paul told them, what they received, and went and searched the Scriptures daily to find out and make sure that what Paul was saying was true. - They didn't simply take his word for it.

That's my encouragement to you. Don't just take my word for it this morning. Go and search the Scriptures in your own personal time, and make sure what you've heard is true and aligned with the Word of God. - And if you find out something I said wasn't true, well you're wrong... I'm kidding of course.

Would you open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 3:9-15. This is what we'll be focused on this morning... Before 2 Corinthians...

With that, please stand as we read the Scripture we'll be centered on this morning: I'll read the odd verses, and have you all join in reading the even verses.

READING SCRIPTURE (I read odds, congregation reads evens)

Read verses 9-15:

PRAY

CONTEXT: The Apostle Paul in chapter 3 of his correction based letter to the Corinthians, is at a point where he's talking about building up the church. - The exact context here to the Corinthians is that Jesus Christ has been established as the foundation of the church, and many people will come and build upon it and they will teach different doctrines that are true or false... So this passage is firstly directed towards those who are leaders and teachers within the church, understanding that proper doctrine is very important, but the application here also extends to the whole church, including you and I today, understanding that how we build our lives upon proper doctrine is very important.

(Verse 9) God's Fellow Workers

Paul, despite his role as an Apostle, understood that before he was anything else in this world, he was a fellow worker with God. - This applies to us today. This means that before you're a mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, whatever roles you may have in life, before you're any of those, you are a fellow worker with God, for God...

Isaiah 41:10 - Fear not for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

God wants you to come alongside Him to do His Kingdom work. - God does not have to use us, what He wants to do is never dependent upon us, but He wants to use us. We should never neglect the blessing that it is to be used by God.

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for good works that have been prepared for us long before we were even born, that we should walk in them.

God has good works prepared for each one of us here, and His desire is that we would walk in them, with Him.

This doesn't mean that if you're unemployed... and someone asks you about getting a job you respond and say "Uhhh I work for the Lord!" No, if you're able, you need to get a job as well...

Now Paul ends verse 9 by saying "You are God's field, you are God's building." - He's of course directing this to the Corinthians, and the verses right before this, Paul is describing the work he and Apollos are doing in Corinth as one is planting, one is watering, and God is ultimately giving the increase. So keeping with this agricultural approach, he called the Corinthians the field in which these seeds have been being planted and watered. Now he also calls them God's building, which leads us into this new metaphor Paul uses.

(Verse 10a) According to the Grace of God

Paul opens up verse 10 by proclaiming that it is solely according to the grace of God that he has been given his position in establishing the foundation for the church in Corinth. We read in Acts 18, that Paul spent a year and six months there with the Corinthians. Any position you have, any open door, even the very breath in your lungs is according to the grace of God... We must not forget this.

Church let me ask you, did you wake up this morning? Was there a roof over your head? Did you get in a car to come to church? Did you have breakfast before or are you going to lunch after? Did you have clean clothes to wear? Are you healthy? - Many of us, we've lived with these great blessings for so long, that we simply neglect them. - Every single thing we have is a blessing according to the grace of God and we need to give God thanks.

A heart that is filled with gratitude will not be a heart filled with complaint. The Apostle Paul understood this principle better than most ever will.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Verse 16 that can be everyone's memory verse for the week: Rejoice always. That's it.

(Verse 10b) Build Carefully

Now in verse 10 Paul also acknowledges that others will come and build on this foundation he has laid, through God's grace. Verse 10 ends by Paul saying: "Let each one take heed how he builds on it."

Heed - Greek: blepō - to examine, to weigh carefully, and to beware
And I could be saying that wrong, I'm no Greek scholar...

So as we build on this foundation that has been laid, we need to examine how we're building on it, and weigh what we do carefully. We need to be aware that what we do here and now will matter in eternity. Understanding that absolutely everything we do will one day be tested as we'll get into deeper in verses 12-15.

Ask yourself, is the way I'm living today eternally beneficial to myself or anyone else, and ultimately is the way I'm living today glorifying God?

Colossians 3:2 - Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

As you go about and build upon the foundation of Christ, keep your focus on eternity.

I was talking to a group of folks after Renewal here one night, and I had submitted something late, which was my fault for sure, but I was on a mission trip whenever the deadline hit... And someone in the group told me "It should be fine since you were on a mission trip, but you weren't on a mission trip the past two months when you could have turned it in." And I looked at her and responded and said "My whole life is a mission trip!"

Church, we are citizens of Heaven. We should see our time here on earth as a mission trip to spread the name of Jesus, until we are called to our true and eternal home.

(Verse 11a) Jesus the Foundation

Now we've been talking a lot about this foundation that is Jesus and this brings us to **Verse 11**. This is our main verse and we'll focus on this for a while: For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the foundation. No other foundation can be laid besides what's already been laid, and that's Jesus.

Isaiah 28:16 - Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

(hastily/ hastily?) - I'm no English scholar either apparently. Please forgive me, I went to Benton High School...

But what a beautiful prophecy this is about Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our tried stone - Jesus was tried, he was put on trial, and despite all those who tried Him, from the religious leaders, the Romans, even those closest to Him, Jesus prevailed and claimed victory over death, sin, and shame.

Jesus is our precious cornerstone - That word precious: Greek: *yāqār* - valuable, prized, weighty, rare, and splendid - Jesus is indeed precious | and He is our cornerstone: You see the cornerstone would establish, direct, and align everything else that was to come.

And Jesus of course is our sure foundation. - We're at a point in our world today where we can't truly be sure of almost anything. But know that as this world is constantly changing, Jesus Christ remains the same, and He is a sure foundation. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever...

Now referencing verse 9, you are God's building, and you know what happens to a building that is misaligned with the cornerstone? Misaligned with the foundation? It becomes unstable and will not be able to fulfill its intended purpose.

It doesn't matter how strong and mighty the building may be, if it's not built on the foundation, and aligned with the foundation, it will eventually fall apart.

Matthew 7:24-27 - Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.

Is your life founded on the rock or the sand? Is your life founded on Jesus Christ? You can answer how you want at this moment, but the true answer to this question will be revealed when in your life the rain descends, the floods come, the winds blow, and your life is being beaten on. - How you're able to get through those tough seasons in life is the real indicator of your foundation.

When those trials and tribulations arise, and I say when, not if, because they will come, when they do, how do you handle them? Does your life collapse and fall apart, as you try relying on your own strength, and your own wisdom, or are you able to make it through with the comfort from God, and the peace He provides that surpasses all understanding, fully relying upon and trusting in the Lord. - I'm not downplaying that suffering is real and difficult. We all go through suffering. But what I am saying is that if Jesus Christ is your foundation, the suffering you endure, will not and should not dictate, and direct the way you live your life. - Do your circumstances control your life, or does Jesus, the sure foundation?

(Verse 11b) Total Exclusivity

Looking back to verse 11, I love the total exclusivity that Paul states here: "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." - Apart from Christ, there is no other foundation. There are many things we can build upon for a while in our life, but as we read in Matthew 7, only what's built on Christ will last, and He is the only true foundation.

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

This is very exclusive. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ. - You don't get to God through anything you can do, you don't get to God through Joseph Smith, Muhammad, Buddha, dare I say Mother Mary, Charles Taze Russell, the list goes on and on. Only through Jesus Christ can you get to the Father. Because Jesus Christ was the only perfect sacrifice that could atone for our sins.

Referencing John 14:6 - Thomas Kempis says this: "Without the Way there is no going; without the Truth there is no knowing; without the Life there is no living."

Jesus is the only way, the only truth, and the only life. - If you're living your life in a way that isn't pursuing Jesus, that's not actually a way, because it's leading you nowhere, it is a temporary pursuit of satisfaction that can only be found in Jesus Christ. -

And there is no other truth outside of Christ, truth by definition has to be exclusive, there's not my truth or your truth, no, there is the truth, that we find in the full Word of God, Genesis - Revelation, that is rooted in Jesus. -

And apart from Christ, there is no life. Jesus does not simply point you in the way to live your life, He is life Himself and He gives us life, and apart from Him, there is no life. - I think we have this phrase we use "Jesus changed my life." - Which is amazing and praise God for that. - But truthfully, if you've been redeemed in Christ, He has given you life. - And with the life we have been given, we should seek to live with God, and for God, only Jesus, nothing else.

(Verses 12-13) Tested by Fire

Let's move on to verses 12-13 - Paul now mentions building on the foundation, which is Christ, with these different materials: gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw. These materials represent our works, the things we do in this life upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.

The materials individually I don't believe hold specific value, but there is a clear difference between the first three listed and the last three.

Gold, silver, and precious stones

- Durable, valuable, and radiant

Wood, hay, and straw

- Perishable, fleeting, and shallow

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.

Yes, we are saved by grace through faith. - But our works will be tested by fire and they will become clear on "the Day."

The Day here is a direct reference to a day of judgment for believers only, that we call "The Judgment Seat of Christ ". - We don't know when that day will be, but we need to be prepared. - That Day will come either when our life is over here on earth, or when Jesus returns... But we all will face this testing and judgment.

2 Corinthians 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Now this is not the same judgment that we call 'The Great White Throne Judgment.' that is found in **Revelation 20:11-15** - Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

So let's simply break these two judgments down:

The Great White Throne Judgment:

- For Unbelievers
- Happens after the millennium (Christ's 1000 year reign on earth)
- Eternally judge those who have rejected God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ

Unbelievers when they die today, they go to a place called Hades. When this Great White Throne Judgment happens, they will be brought out of Hades, and every unbeliever will then face this judgment, this second death, and be cast into the final and eternal lake of fire.

Praise God that as believers we will not be a part of that judgment day because our sins have already been judged in Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:8-9 - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

The Judgment Seat of Christ:

- For Believers
- Happens after we die or after the rapture
- Testing of our works (Our motives, faithfulness, and service unto the Lord)
- For rewards only, not condemnation

(Romans 8:1 - There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.)

(Verses 14-15) Reward or Loss

If you want your works to endure the fire, they need to be works that are done for Jesus Christ, according to God's will for your life. - The best works you could ever do, are the works that God has for you.

Maybe you find yourself sitting here today, not knowing what God's call is for your life. There's nothing wrong with that. - I can tell you though that if you're not in a right relationship with the Lord, that's what He's calling you to before anything else. Get right with the Lord. - But if you're sitting here, you're a believer, and you don't know, my encouragement to you is to focus on what you do know is God's will for your life, and just be faithful wherever it is that God has you right now. - Whether it's in the workplace, your home, in school, the church, just be faithful where God has you here and now. And trust that as you're faithful where He has you, He will reveal to you and guide you where He wants you.

Let's look at some things we know are in God's will for our lives:

- Share about Jesus with others (Matthew 28:19-20)
- Live at peace with everyone (Romans 12:18)
- Obey the law (Romans 13:1)
- Only speak edifying words (Ephesians 4:29)
- Avoid idolatry (1 John 5:21)
- Avoid sexual immorality/ honor our body (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)

What is sexual immorality? Buckle up. Lock the doors. Sexual immorality is any type of sexual expression outside the boundaries of a *biblically* defined marriage relationship.

Matthew 19:4-5 - And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"

Adultery, premarital sex, pornography, the whole LGBTQ movement goes AGAINST what the Bible is FOR. You can't live in or support any of those lifestyles, and be in God's will for your life...

John 10:10 - The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Understand this... Everyone in this room right now is here because one XY chromosomed man, and one XX chromosomed woman to some extent were fruitful and multiplied... Feelings and hormones will never have authority over God-given chromosomes.

If everyone partook in this LGBTQ movement, there would quite literally be no more life. That's why this ideology is one of Satan's greatest tools, and believers today need to take a bold stand and focus on the Word of God that is truth, not the culture's agenda that is a lie.

I hear all the time, "I don't want to hurt their feelings. I don't want to lose them in my life." Truly losing them...

Psalm 84:11 - The Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Focus on walking uprightly with God, pursuing what you know is in His will for your life, trusting in the Lord, being obedient to the Lord, and He will withhold no good thing from you...

I want to encourage you with this: Being obedient to the Lord may be hard, but it's never as difficult as dealing with the results of disobedience.

Now Paul also mentions in verse 14 getting rewards if our works endure the fire: It's not prideful to desire these. With the rewards we would get, we would be turning to Jesus and laying them at His feet for all He has done for us. - Understanding that any reward we may receive, is due to the Lord and He is more than worthy of it. - These rewards are rooted in Scripture and they're God's idea. No need to have some false-humility. I want rewards, because I want to give them straight back to Jesus.

Matthew 6:19-21 - Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Now we need to understand that these rewards will not be based on publicity, impact, or numbers. Rewards from Christ are strictly based on faith and obedience.

John MacArthur - At the Judgment Seat of Christ, He will not reward popularity or visible results. He will reward faithfulness – doing what He asked, in the way He asked, for the reason He asked.

On the other hand, there will be works that are tested and burned, and we will suffer loss. - We'll suffer loss in the sense that the things we did with our time on earth, did not glorify the Lord, were not in line with His will, His plan for our lives, and they earned us nothing to give back to the Lord. - The works were built on something other than Christ, therefore they did not last, or you did build on the foundation of Christ, but what you were doing was out of pride, greed, your own will, in your own strength and wisdom—not unto the Lord, for His glory. Those works will all burn.

J. Vernon McGee - "Some of us are going to smell like smoke when we get to heaven. We'll be there, praise God, but we'll have nothing to show for our life except that we were saved by grace."

Will your works endure or burn in the fire? Will you have a reward to give back to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ after this judgment?

Nobody here should get to this day, that will happen, and say "Why didn't anyone tell me my works would be tested like this?"

They will all be tested, and made clear. There will be no hiding, or sugarcoating the things you have done in life, and the motive behind them. I hope and pray all of our works will endure that fire.

As we close, I want to give everyone a visual image here:

Have you ever been driving along the highway at some point, and you look off and in the distance, there is this massive concrete foundation, probably for some new headquarters of a large company or a new factory, just this ridiculously big foundation. - Now imagine you drive past it again a year later, and someone's gone and built a wooden shack on that foundation. - You'd think to yourself, "Man, someone really wasted that foundation." - This is what it's like whenever we have this foundation that has been lovingly and sacrificially laid by God, which is Jesus Christ, and then we go and live our lives in a way that wastes that glorious foundation. How foolish.

Now looking back at verse 15: I fear someone may read this and see "he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." and then they'll think - "Oh, if I'm going to be saved anyways, then why does any of this truly matter?"

You're right, at the point of this testing you will have already been saved through your faith in Jesus Christ, and God's grace and mercy, not because of your works or anything you did.

But it matters because when Jesus Christ died on that Cross, he died for a relationship with you, and to offer you a perfect eternal dwelling with Him in His full presence. But he died for so much more than that. - When Jesus died on the Cross, He was also up there for the plan and purpose that God had already established for your life. For you to deny pursuing God's will for your life, is to deny the fullness and the weight of Christ being crucified.

God didn't have to send Jesus to save us, God didn't have to make a plan for us, but He did. And He did so because of His great love for us.

Romans 12:2 - And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect. - Why would we settle for anything less than what God has for us?

Pursue God's will for your life, build upon the only foundation that is Jesus Christ, and may your works and the things you do today, matter and endure in eternity.