

## **The Right View of Service in Christ's Church**

*1 Corinthians 3:5-17*

### **The problem of the Corinthian believers, 1:10-3:4**

***The saints (1:2) at Corinth had an inflated view of themselves which lead to division (1:10), quarrels (1:11), jealousy (3:3) and ineffectiveness.***

***The reason for the problem was a defective view of all that the cross of Christ stood for, over against their worldly wisdom and philosophical perspectives.***

***They were spiritual, but not mature, (3:1-4). They were serving themselves.***

### **The right view of service in Christ's church, 3:5-4:21**

#### ***Paul and Apollos as examples***

Both were instrumental in the founding of the Church at Corinth, Peter was not ( Acts 18; 19:1).

#### ***None of God's workers are people of great status, 3:5***

Only servants (3:5b)...

*We work for a master*

**No one wanted to have a master, they wanted to be one.**

**"Be your own boss..."**

*We are only plowboys and waterboys*

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, 3:7

#### ***Success depends entirely upon God, 3:6***

God made it grow, 3:6... God, who makes things grow, 3:7

There is a place for correct methodology.

But if God doesn't bless, no church will ever grow.

## **Service truths to be emphasized**

Both the waterboy and the plowboy are equally essential (there is no growth without both).

There is no rivalry among humbled servants

*The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, 3:8*

**You must make certain you have the right purpose**

**It is imperative to be purpose-driven, and agree on that purpose.**

*They are God's fellow-workers*

Service to God is hard work

*Long work, exhausting work, humble work, inconvenient work, agenda changing work*

Service to God must have God's purpose

Getting service right in your local church is a serious matter because...

**God will hold each believer accountable for his service, 3:8-17. There are three possible evaluations.**

Reward for service is an individual matter

*Believers are teammates but...*

*Each will be rewarded according to his own labor, 3:8c*

*Each one should be careful how he builds, 3:10c*

*If any man... his work... each man's work, 3:12, 13, he himself, 3:15*

The only solid foundation on which to build is Jesus Christ, 3:11

*His cross (1:22; 2:2), his mind (cp. Philippians 3:5-8; 1 Cor 3:16), his wisdom.*

1. The only efforts that will be rewarded are those that stand the test of fire, 3:13-14.

*Work that endures God's flaming evaluation*

*Work that is built upon Jesus Christ (see above)*

*Hard work (see above)*

*Work in line with God's purposes*

**What are they?**

All of your efforts need to be evaluated

All of our efforts and ministries need to be evaluated

Work in line with the solid foundation of Christ

Work that is done with the wisdom of God and the mind of Christ

This kind of rewarded ministry, successful in God's eyes, isn't always immediately evident to all who see.

The day will bring it to light

It will be revealed by fire

## 2. People whose efforts do not stand the test of fire will suffer loss, 3:15

The nature of efforts that produce loss, lousy work.

Work that is consumed

Work that is lazy, ill prepared for, half heated and half baked.

*It's good enough for the church.*

*I have another job*

*I don't get paid for this. Oh yes you do!*

Work that blames others for not being done properly

*I'd get busy and serve Christ but...*

The pastor

The deacons

The program

My spouse

My kids

My job

Work that is focused on self-promotion, selfish purposes, work that claims glory for self

*Sometimes churches are monuments of past personal accomplishments*

Work that is focused on purposes other than God's

The description of the loss,

Loss = to be deprived of something

*He just made it on the boat vs those who planned on the trip for days*

*You are genuinely on the boat enjoy the glories of the boat forever*

**A tour of Gettysburg**

***You will miss something significant for eternity***

See also 2 Cor 5:10

**Some genuine believers**

### 3. People who will “be destroyed,” 3:17

***Plural YOU***

You (all) believers all have something in common

***Same Christ***

***Same Holy Spirit***

***Their efforts are undoing God’s work, destructive work.***

People who insist on their divisions, self-promotion, selfish agendas

***These are never described as such***

People who are critical, always finding fault, always putting roadblocks in the way of God’s purposes, God’s ministry

***The words “can’t” and “but” loom large in their vocabulary.***

People who want their own agenda and if they don’t get it, find ways to pout, sulk and drag their feet as they “serve” the body.

***The only team they will play on is the one where they get their way***

People who refuse to see the wisdom of the cross and the indwelling Spirit as a key to their unity.

***These are professing believers inside the church***

**The dividing line between the last two is not clear!**

***Be afraid, don’t make excuses.***

## So what?

***What reward do you expect?***

***You will get one of the three above.***