1 Cor. 3:16 Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?

As you listened to the reading of the Epistle text, did you pay attention to the opening words, to verses 10-11? They said this: **“By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”**

I point out those words because our highlighted verse then starts: **“You yourselves are God’s temple.”** There is here, as some would say, a rather subtle message as you consider the two sections of this reading. Me, I don’t think it is so subtle. I think it is rather blatant. Blatant in the words: **“So then, no more boasting about men!”** There is a message here. Have you put it together yet? You are the temple. Upon what is that temple built? It is built on the foundation. And what is to be the foundation? Jesus! Jesus is our foundation! For that matter you cannot be the temple of God without having the foundation of Jesus!

And yet, it amazes me how many people try to build the church, to build the Temple without Jesus as the foundation. That can be seen in any religion or faith where Jesus, the Son of God and his redemptive work is not taught or acknowledged. They might be religions where they declare Jesus a prophet of that religion but they reject and deny that Jesus is God’s son and the Savior from sin. Dear people that is not a Christian religion.

But then there are those churches who “in the name of Jesus” teach things but it is not really the message of Jesus. Those are the churches today that treat Jesus as just some sort of moral teacher, who came to show us how to live and make our worldly lives better than they are. Those are the churches that tell you how good life will be with Jesus, how happy you can be, how satisfied and blessed with success you will be. They miss the point. They miss the heart and core of Jesus. It’s like they are preaching someone I don’t even know. They are teaching a Jesus who says life will be grand and wonderful, successful and rich if you just follow him and do it His way. Seriously, I don’t know such a Jesus!

Or they try and teach a Jesus who never condemns sin or who never addresses the issue of sin. They try and teach a Jesus who ignores the law and who is willing to go along with anything that suits your needs. They try (and sadly, many people go to these churches!) to teach a Jesus where you get to pick and choose what parts of the Bible you want to believe and what parts you don’t want to believe. You get to customize your God, just like you get to customize your car and house! Again, I don’t know that Jesus. That is not the Jesus, not the God found on the pages of God’s Word.

So let’s you and I explore today, why Jesus is so important and why having Him in our life is so important. Our theme: **GOD’S TEMPLE. 1st. Destroying it. 2nd. Having it.**

That verse we highlighted is such an awesome verse to key off of. Again it said, **“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”** As you just think about that sentence you can begin to grasp the awe and wonder that these words are pointing to. Here is God’s Spirit telling us, emphasizing with us that **“we are God’s temple!”** It is clear the Spirit thinks this is something and this something is special and wonderful. It is clear this is a declaration of pure delight, spoken of with a tone that says, *“Yes, this is what you want to be and this is what God is making you.”* It is a sentence laced with excitement and joy. It is a sentence that just helps us grasp and understand that being this temple, having God’s Spirit live in you is the greatest wonder of our lives and life.

But note immediately the strong words of warning that follow. I find it so interesting that in our Bible, after this one sentence of joy you now find 7 sentences that warn you and direct you so that you don’t lose this joy in Christ. That is done, because God clearly understands the dangers and temptations this world will present to this wonder of Jesus. The world and the men of the world are hostile to God, hostile to faith and hostile to you being a part of this temple of God in Christ. It’s just the way the sinful world is. So I think it is important that we look as closely as possible at these warnings that are given. Warnings about destroying the temple.

Warning one. “**If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him.”** Remember, in this context, you and I are the temple. This is talking about destroying our souls, destroying the joy and wonder we have as the children of God and heirs of eternal life. This is not talking the Holy Christian Church, for we are clearly told elsewhere by Jesus that **“even the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”** The Holy Christian Church will never cease to exist, but you and I, as temples of God, we can be destroyed and we can lose our faith and eternal souls. And so it is that God then tells the person who destroys our soul that they too will be destroyed. Destroyed by God! I believe the threat is quite significant and quite undeniable.

So what is it that destroys the soul or the temple you are? What is it that can snatch away your faith and empty your heart of Jesus? I think the first place we can start is by thinking of the foundation. If your temple, your faith is built on anything but the true wonder and marvel of Jesus there is a problem. You need to grasp and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who became the atoning sacrifice for your sins and who through His resurrection from the dead has made you his temple. In other words, make sure your foundation is Jesus! Jesus the Son of God. Jesus the very Word of God. Jesus, the Savior who suffered, died and rose from the dead for the forgiveness of your sins and who in this work grants you eternal life and salvation. So, foundation!

But there is more. Verse 18 says, **“Do not deceive yourselves.”** Here is our biggest problem. US! We think we know better than God! We think we are smarter, more insightful, filled with greater knowledge than God. So we deceive ourselves. We don’t believe every word and sentence of the Bible is God’s Word. We don’t believe that anyone could really be raised from the dead. We don’t think the Church is important. We don’t think throwing out a few troublesome parts of the Bible will do any harm. The list here is pretty big and pretty devastating. We are our own worst enemies.

But there is more. We think we are wise, but that wisdom is of the world and not God’s. Do you see how that verse encourages us to be **“fools”**? The message of God is foolish to the world. The world ridicules and mocks what is of God. If you are like me, I can’t tell you how many times I have been mocked and snickered at just because I hold fast to the simple fact that the Bible is God’s Word! That whole section from verse 18b through 21a is exposing the great danger we face in the world. Listen to what it says again: **“If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a “fool” so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written; ‘He catches the wise in their craftiness’ and again, ‘The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise are futile.’ So, then, no more boasting about men!”**

Did you hear the warning? Yet how often we get wrapped into the ways and wisdom of men. Men teach that in Jesus you will be successful and know only happiness. Yet Jesus teaches you that the world will hate you, persecute you, even arrest and kill you. The world says, “Here is how you should raise your kids and how we need to live our lives.” Jesus says, “Teach honor and respect, obedience and love, forgiveness and patience.” Jesus warns against the philosophies of the world and their destructive power to our souls and still we follow after them. Seriously we are more likely to believe what a scientist says is true than what God says is true.

Worse yet, we want to run our churches like some sort of business that measures itself in numbers and money. We are gonna slick up the pastor, light up the stage, throw emotion around and make sure there is a great back beat going on. We are going to be loud and proud, and we are actually going to believe that WE will make or break the church, that we the instruments are the reason for the great concert rather than grasping that the musician Jesus is the cause. When we think we are the cure rather than Jesus and His atoning sacrifice, we have a problem.

Or how about this quote that I heard in a paper at our Pastor’s Conference. It is talking of the allure of the world. **“The other trial is found on the right hand. It is the trial that lures us to unchastity, lust, pride, greed, and vainglory, to all that appeals to our human nature. It is especially strong when people let us have our way, praise our words, our counsel, and our deeds, and when they honor and esteem us. This is the most pernicious trial…It has gained the upper hand today, for the world strives only after wealth, honor, and pleasure. It is particularly the youth which no longer learn to contend against carnal lust and temptation. They are so corrupt that they no longer know any shame. The whole world is filled with stories and songs of wenching and harlotry, as though that were perfectly right. This all is a sign of the terrible wrath of God, who permits the world to fall into temptation because no one implores him for help.”** What will astonish you is that those are the words of Martin Luther written in the 1500’s! In other words, the dangers of following men rather than God has been going on for as long as this world has been!

Do we not grasp what God has given us? Do we fail to understand the wonder and marvel of this gift of Jesus? Listen to how we are brought back to this great gift of God in our text: **“All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ and Christ is of God.”**

What do we lack in Jesus? No matter what hardship, difficulty or stress we might have in Jesus there is no fear. It does not matter who your pastor is as long as that man leads you to Christ and the wonder of what Jesus has done for you on the cross and through the empty grave. Look at what is said…**”All things are yours…whether...the world or life or death or the present or the future.”** I am going to say, that pretty well sums up everything. What do we lack? What has the Lord our God in Jesus shorted us of? Absolutely nothing! All things are ours!

Please, paint this picture with Jesus in mind. Jesus is the Lord of Glory. Jesus has all authority, power and dominion! But remember Jesus was rejected by his own people. He was betrayed by his own disciples. He was arrested for nothing, suffered the cross because He was perfect, died with criminals though He was holy, had to be buried in a borrowed grave! Yet, Jesus lives and rules over all things. He sits on the throne of grace and all creatures, great and small, answer to Him. I, as a follower of Jesus, expect the same in this world. Trouble, hardship, persecution and ridicule! But I also expect the wonder of heaven, the glory of eternity, the joy of salvation and the peace of God forever. All of this in Jesus. All of this yet to come. All of this because, through, in and with Jesus. He is my foundation, victory, my help, strength and sure salvation.

What will it be? Will you be God’s Temple, filled with his Holy Spirit, founded on Jesus, sure and certain of the gift and wonder Jesus has won or will you destroy this temple, settle for the winds and storms of man’s desires and hopes? I pray you are God’s temple in Jesus. That all things are yours in Him. Amen.