

Gamma 2017

Book	1-Corinthians
Topic	The Problem
Reference	1-Corinthians 3
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1 Corinthians 3:1-2 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

So here there is a contrast, spiritual people versus people of the flesh, infants versus adults, milk versus solid food. So he is trying to contrast. They are supposed to be spiritual adults and having solid food but instead you are of the flesh, you are infants, you are just drinking milk and basically what he is doing is that he is actually insulting them.

What does 'of the flesh' mean?

It is human way which is the meaning of the flesh and the results are jealousy, strife because everyone wants to become God.

PEOPLE OF THE FLESH

- Christians moved by entirely human drives
- Christians moved by self interest
- Self sufficiency

SPIRITUAL PEOPLE

- Christians moved by entirely Spiritual drives
- Christians moved by other interest
- Dependent on Spirit

So this is the problem with the church. They are not matured. No matter what their theological knowledge is

CONSEQUENCES OF BEING LED BY HUMAN DRIVES

1 Corinthians 3:3-4 **3** for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? **4** For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

So there is personal loyalty to particular leaders. I don't think the leaders were at fault but just as they happen to choose and is not very much different from other churches. Then he tells them you are infants,

2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready

Some people think milk as basic Christianity and meats means systematic theology. For a long time that was what I thought but recently I have changed my mind because of looking at the context. If we look here Paul is not necessarily saying, although if you say, the milk is just basic Christianity or the 12 steps or alpha and this is actually gamma. It is possible I wouldn't say you are wrong but a better interpretation is this kind of gospel versus the gospel itself which is actual meat and why, there was an interesting article by Morna Hooker who actually describes this change in thinking.

1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (ESV) **And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

So there are two kinds of gospel. There is a kind of gospel that is lofty, that is full of Greek wisdom that is powerful, it is out in front display and then there is a plain old Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and then God resurrected and the people are pulling that and they are going for this. So therefore it is very much possible that the milk is actually them listening to famous preachers with great rhetoric, sophistication, experiences but they have neglected what is really important, the meat of Christianity, Jesus son of god died and rose again. That is the meat, which is gospel centered teaching, gospel centered growth, gospel centered influence in your life. That is the meat that we have to get into if we want to be spiritually matured. Then if you want to be infants then you go for a supernatural encounter and a lot of razzmatazz with very eloquent speakers based on wisdom, power, miracles, all sorts of things but actually do they share the gospel.

When you actually share the gospel, the shared gospel is front and center. All these people who are focusing on the outward and then they are fighting. Paul gives a solution to this. He uses three metaphors of the church in this passage.

- Field (v6-9),
- Building (v 9-15)
- Temple (v 16-17).

The Field:

1. Leaders are servants with specific assignments

The church is like a field and all these people are fighting in the field,

1 Corinthians 3: **5** What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each.

The first point we learn is Leaders are servants with specific assignments. They are no more than servants. What he is saying is the church is like a field and the leaders are the labourers or the servants there. They are not to be lionized, they are not to be adored and held in huge esteem, each of them have been given a particular task. So therefore they don't decide to do this on their own, they are given a task. They are like waiters.

2. God pays them not you

1 Corinthians 3: **8** He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.

God pays them. We don't have to tip your leaders because the leaders have got reward from God.

3. Church belongs to God and He causes growth

1 Corinthians 3: **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. **7** So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

So therefore God gives the growth.

The Way of the Flesh:

A. Crediting Leaders with the Growth

If we look at the world. The top guy gets the most money because he is supposed to work the hardest. Our idea is that we actually depend on the leaders and the leaders are the one that brings the growth.

B. Personalized Authority

A friend of mine and he is in the website of his own church and he puts the title Apostle with his name. He belongs to the International Coalition of Apostles.

In the NT this person is a strategos, warrior-strategist, a general or governor in his assigned sphere.

When one is sent out as an apostolos, he is the full delegate and representative ambassador of his sender. He carries in his person the full authority of the one who sent him.

So this idea is based on a very humanistic Greek kind of idea of power that is all coming from personal authority. This friend of mine wrote a book in which on page 107 he writes, *FCBC has grown rapidly because of my strong and anointed leadership.*

Paul actually also does that but he also says that it is by the grace of God. It is God who causes the growth, not us.

C. Exclusive leadership

So therefore only the leaders can heal, only the leaders come to your house worth any money.

D. Blind Loyalty – No Accountability

City Harvest Church in Singapore pastor was convicted and still some people in the church trust him. If you place trust in leader and the leader can do wrong, can we trust them if they are convicted.

There was a letter from someone who left the church

I am a Christian and I've attended City Harvest Church for two periods in my life for a total of 2 to 2.5 years. I initially attended it with my folks. We enjoyed the sermon and the clear teachings of the pastor and his fellow leaders. But things went downhill one Sunday morning when a leader took to the stage to plug Ho Yeow Sun's new album. The horrifying thing was how he chirpily used hard sell tactics to move the units. We were asked to buy more than one copy and pass them to our friends. If one were to buy 6 copies or some absurd number, that would entitle one to a free poster or t-shirt (something along those lines). What was most upsetting at that time, was the fact that he was using the pulpit to push the sales of the pastor's wife who was more interested in cutting pop albums than say attending church service. The posters from her new album were also plastered along the entrance and lobby of the building. There were no images of Jesus. No, instead, this singer's face, the pastor's wife, was all over the building. If that does not trigger alarm bells in the average church-goer, what will? That was the last week we attended CHC.

Is this a disgruntle member who is causing trouble in the church and causing disunity. I think he is a sane person. When you walk in a building you see pastor's wife picture all over the place I would be very worried, because you are idolizing somebody.

Ed Stetzer and Thom S Rainer looked at a survey, they looked at 7000 protestant posters to work out those churches that have more 10% growth in five years and they published the data. They find that what is vibrant transformational leadership. These are the one with passion for God, his mission, his transforming power in people lead by examples and values rather than position, who basically draw people into send them out and promote the mission. This is what leaders should be.

Mindset

- Shifts from one to many leaders, which means they are focusing on training leaders rather than drawing the power to themselves.
- Shift in value
- Expand influence rather than hold it for self

They want influence diffuse along a great number of leaders rather than themselves

If God causes the growth then we must have

- Prayerful dependence
- Word based programs in line with His Word
- Gospel centered
- Leaders Equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, Ephesians 4:12
- Gift based
- Impossible goals

If man causes the growth then

- Minimal prayer
- Programs that attract people, entertainment ...only
- Buildings rather than people
- Minimal teaching of Word
- No gospel emphasis
- Led by leaders only
- Achievable goals

So there is a difference when you are led by the Lord himself in a church.

BUILDING

1. Build on the Christ foundation

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 **10** According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. **11** For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

So in your church you build on the Christ foundation. The foundation is very important. We cannot stray from the truth. Billy Graham made a very sad statement

They may not know the name of Jesus but they know in their hearts that they need something they do not have and they turn to the only light they have and I think they are saved and are going to be with us in heaven.

It does not matter who you are if you write this there is a problem.

Brian McLaren-TIMES list of 25 most influential evangelicals of America. He says,

I don't hope that all Jews or Hindus will become members of the Christian religion. But I do hope that all who feel so called will become Jewish or Hindu followers of Jesus

People are trying to bring a kinder and gentler brand of religion but Jesus said

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

This is the bedrock of the gospel; you cannot move from this. You have to build your church on such an inconvenient truth. If you build your church on this inconvenient truth than you call Christians fundamentalist. The whole idea is about sin; we talk about things that people don't like to talk about but important thing is sin.

We blame all sorts of things. This is a very interesting folk song brought up by Ravi Zacharias by Anna Russell

I went to my psychiatrist to be psychoanalysed

To find out why I killed the cat and blacked my husband's eye. He laid me on a downy couch to see what he could find. Here is what he dredged up from my subconscious mind.

When I was one my mummy hid my dolly in a trunk

And so it follows, naturally I am always drunk

When I was two, I saw my father kiss the maid one day

And thats why I suffer from kleptomania

At three I had a feeling of ambivalence towards my brothers

And so it follows naturally that I poisoned all my lovers

But I am happy now I have learned the lessons this has taught

Everything that I do that's wrong is someone else's fault

So basically we are build on psychiatry, we are build on psychology and then some people reach out to people's need as the basis of their evangelism.

CONCLUSION

Attempting to reach people for Christ through their felt needs is a bottomless pit. Christ centered people are not likely to be developed by creating programs that cater to their selfishness

So when you build on a foundation of Christ you build on the foundation of the gospel. So this is what we need to build on.

- Sin
- Need for righteousness
- Foolishness and repulsive

2. Build with imperishables

1 Corinthians 3:12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw- 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

So here is a picture of you building. So according to the grace of God given to me, which means to build God must give you the strength to build.

Let each one take care how he builds upon it.

God gives you the gifts, the opportunity to build, how you build is up to you. You could build with two kinds of things. You can build with imperishable or perishable. The perishable would be wood, hays and the imperishable will be gold, silver or precious stones. Now some people will differentiate.

How do we know if it is perishable or imperishable? There are only three Ms

- Motive
- Means
- Method

This talks to every single member of the church. When you build a church, right attitude towards the leaders that they are servants to help you grow and when you build you build on Christ foundation.

Motive: Love

1 Corinthians 13:2-3 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

If you don't do it because you love Jesus Christ, you do it because you want to look like a good leader or an effective leader it is useless, you can have miracles, you can have anything you like but if you have no love it is useless.

Means: Faith

Hebrews 11:4 **4** By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.**6** And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

So when you build, you build because of love and you build with faith believing in spiritual values. Building by faith means not looking at the things that are basically perishable, looks big, they don't cost much, they don't have much sacrifice. The ones that require faith look small, great cost and usually great sacrifice. Size does not matter.

Mark 9:41..I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.

It could be just one kind deed which God enables you to do for someone else because you love that person, because you love Jesus Christ and that is enough, that is gold. Matthew 25, the judgement day. The gold is about you feeding the poor, visiting the people in prison, they are put there because of sin and gives you an opportunity to do a kind thing and that is gold. God's economy is different. Our economy whatever is flesh, whatever is beautiful, whatever is exciting that is gold, no whatever gold is quiet and simple and straightforward.

7 churches of Asia

Smyrna: Revelation 2:9 **9** "I know your tribulation and your poverty

Philadelphia: Revelation 3:8 **I know that you have but little power,**

These are the best churches, out of the seven, but they are in tribulation, they have little power.

Smyrna: Revelation 2:10 **10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

Philadelphia: Revelation 3:10 **10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance,**

Not flesh, not exciting probably not mega churches but faithful churches, faithful to the word, willing to sacrifice and that is gold.

Method: His Will

Romans 12:2 **2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

You need to connect with the word of God to understand that whatever you do is according to God's will. For example, we look at City Harvest in Singapore. They actually took money from the church for good purpose which was so that they can win souls, but then the money was used for the

pastor's wife singing career, so that non-Christians can come in, but if you actually discern it, is it according to the will of God.

We must hold people to be accountable, we are all sinners. Things done according to God's will is not like that one. At the end whatever you do some will be burnt down and some will not be burnt down. The Lord will determine whether it is done by love, done by faith and done according to His will, three things in order for you to qualify and this applies to every single one of us.

The Temple

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 *16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.*

There is a particular Greek word for the holy of holies that is called Naos. So when Paul writes you are God's temple, he actually writes you are God's Naos, the holy priest enters once a year only, it is such a holy place if you go in with sin and you never prepared for the whole one week you be struck dead that is why they tie a knot around your legs to pull you out. Now Paul is saying something astounding, you are. The you is a plural you in Greek, which means not you alone, it is you all that means the church is so holy and so wonderful and so powerful as the body of Christ and that is the Naos.

It means that God will guard this church, you don't have to put too many guards out there, because God will guard His church. God has guarded His church from the beginning of time 2000 years till now and the church is now bigger than ever. Mao Tse-Tung tried, Hitler tried to destroy the church, but every time they tried it got bigger. If you destroy the church, God will destroy you and that is a promise.

How do we actually destroy the church?

You destroy the church with fighting, disunity, you cheat, you lie, you don't own up, then you got half the people surely support the pastor, the other half surely don't support, then there is a fight amongst them. Fighting from inside within destroys the church which is very-very sad.

Pastors like Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Baker committed sex crimes

Tullian Tchividjian, is a grandson of Billy Graham. He is a pastor of a mega church Presbyterian Church.

Last week I was approached by our church leaders and they asked me about my own affair. I admitted to it and it was decided that the best course of action would be for me to resign

He and his wife both have adulterous affairs. They actually confessed. Sometimes leaders are destroying the church, there are no ethics involved.