

I wanted today to kind of back up a little bit and try to hammer in what we've talked about so far so that we really clearly understand what this is. If you followed with us last week, we were talking about the church as a building. Now, the church is not really a building—it's a metaphor. The church is made up of different parts. Those parts are different people that are Christians, believers.

What he said is that the foundation of the church is Jesus. If you go to a church—or something that calls itself a church—and the foundation of that group is not Jesus, if they're not based on what the Bible says about Jesus, that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, that He really died a real death, that He really was crucified, that He really did raise from the dead... if you go to a church and they don't believe that, they're not based on the foundation. They're not the church.

But then, in addition to that, not only is it based on the foundation, but the body is made up of different parts of the body, and each person in the body is doing works and doing things. Now, not for salvation—we're not saved because of these works—but we're doing good things. We're trying to live lives that have eternal value.

There are some things that you'll do in your life that have eternal value. Once your life is over on this earth, you'll stand before God. If you have faith in Christ, you won't burn in hell. You won't face any kind of retribution that way. But God is going to look at the things you did, and some of the things that we did are going to get burned away because they weren't eternal things. They didn't matter.

Each one of us in this room—we're going to face fire on a lot of our stuff. When you were playing Pokémon earlier, some of you guys are playing on your phone and scrolling—that's going to get burned up, because it didn't have any eternal value. But there are other things that *did* have eternal value, and those are going to stand up for eternity.

So, like: Did I work extra hours so that I could buy that boat? Or did I—instead of working all those extra hours—say, “You know what, I'm not going to do that, because I don't need as much money. What I need is to spend time with my kids, coach his little league team, and minister to those kids”?

That has eternal value. The boat doesn't. I know that's hard for you to hear back there, and some of you guys are like, “The boat...” but that's not going to have eternal value.

Did I shave the truth to maintain my reputation? Or was I honest about who I was so that people would see God working through me? Or did I scroll through another hour of social media for entertainment? Or did I spend that time praying and encouraging friends, or spending time at a Bible study, or just sitting down with somebody that's hurting?

Or did I spend my money on some cool gadget I bought on Temu? You may have your shop on Temu—I bought some cool gadget on Temu. Or did I use that for something that's eternal, something that affects people's lives?

And so, the passage that we read last week—this is what it said. Verse 15 of 1 Corinthians 3:

“If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss, but yet will be saved.”

So, he’s saved. It’s not a matter of going to hell and suffering for your sin. Jesus suffered for your sin on the cross. It’s about reward. And he’s talking about the church even though only as one escaping through the flames. Verse 16 goes on and says:

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?”

Okay—this is where things get a little bit different. Watch this. This building that’s being built—the church—you’re like, “Dustin, why are you spending so much time on this?” Because my greatest fear as the pastor of this church is that *something will divide us*. Satan wants to divide the church. The church is under attack and he wants to divide the church. We cannot allow the devil to divide the church.

He divides us on all kinds of petty things—carpet color, just ridiculous kinds of stuff. But we’re seeing a lot of division in the church, and we can’t allow that to happen. When Satan wants to hurt God’s people, he divides them. When he wants to lead a group astray, he divides them. So, in the garden, what does he do with Adam and Eve? He doesn’t talk to Adam and Eve together—he talks to Eve alone. He separates them so that they’re not relying on each other and they’re not united. That should say something about your marriage—it’s important that we’re all together in what we do.

You say, “Well, what does that look like if we’re united together?” He talked about the church being one body. What he’s saying here is that the body of Christ is made up of a whole bunch of little bodies—each individual Christian. And now what he says is that those little parts of the body *are the temple of God*. What do you know about the temple of God? When did the temple start? What is the temple? The temple is the place where God dwells with His people. God dwells with us. It’s a place where God comes to earth and—in a way—lives among us.

So, if you go to when they were freed from Egyptian captivity—they go through the Red Sea, they’re on the other side, and everybody is living in the desert. What are they living in? Tents, right? It’s a big, huge, really uncomfortable camping trip where they don’t really have a home yet—not until God shows them. So, they are all living in tents, but God wants to live with His people. God wants to live with His people. So, God says, “I want a tent too.” And He says, “My tent has to be different than yours. I have specific things that have to be a part of My tent, because for Me to dwell with you in that tent, it has to be a certain way. But I want you to build a tent for Me too, and it’s going to be called the Tabernacle.”

So, the Tabernacle is the first what we would call “temple.” It’s a building, it’s a place, and God is with His people. God ministers from that place. What represents Him in that place is in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle—there’s a thing called the Ark of the Covenant. And the Ark of the Covenant is this big box, and on top of it is the mercy seat. It’s got these cherubim, and in the middle of it is where God is. So that represents God’s presence.

So, you’ve got the Tabernacle. Well, finally, they leave the desert—they’re not camping anymore. So, God doesn’t have to be out in the wilderness like, “Hey God, we got our houses, but You can stay camping.” It doesn’t work that way, right?

So, they go in, and now you've got the united kingdom. You've got Saul, then David. Israel is created. And David says, "Listen, I've got this huge palace that I live in. I've got a house here in Jerusalem—but God, You don't have a house. You should have a house like we have a house." And God's like, "Yeah, I should have a house like you, because I want to dwell with you."

The point is: God loves us, and He wants to be with us—and like us, in the sense that when we're in the desert, He wants to be in a tent with us. He wants to tabernacle with us. That's the way God is. It's not like He's saying, "Hey, I want to be far away." Yes, He is wholly different, but His love compels Him to want to join you in your everyday life. That's the God we serve. We don't serve some distant being who wants nothing to do with us—we serve a God who wants to camp with us, who wants to live with us, who's willing to be with us intimately.

And so now He says, "Let's build Me a temple." But He says, "David, you can't do it because you've shed a lot of blood. You've killed tens of thousands of people, and I can't have that person build My house. But your son can." So, Solomon builds this big temple, and they dedicate that temple. And what happens? God comes, and He dwells in that temple. He lives in that temple.

Now that temple had two specific rooms. One was called the Holy Place, where priests would go. But there was another place that was even more serious, and it was called the Holy of Holies. Now let me tell you something about the Holy of Holies: **we don't go into the Holy of Holies.** The number of people who actually saw the inside of the Holy of Holies is very, very small, because only one person—the high priest—would go into that room, and he would only go in once a year.

And when he did, he had to go through all kinds of a rigmarole to be able to go in there and not die. Because God is holy, and His presence is there. You can't go in and be in God's presence however you want. You can't just throw on a jacket and say, "Hey, I'm going in," right? You can't do that. You have to be ready.

So, they'd have to bathe, they'd have to purify themselves, and they would have to kill animals to sacrifice for their own sins. And then they would go in—and tradition says, if you look at what the Jews wrote during the time, that they would tie a big rope around his foot so that when he went in there, if something went astray, something went amiss, and God struck him down, they could pull his body out of there without going in. Because you can't go in and retrieve his body—you're unclean too, and now there's a dead body in there. So, it was really serious. Being in the presence of God is really, really serious.

So, watch what it says. It says:

"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?"

And then it says:

"If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple."

So, when he's talking about the temple, there's a sense that we are each a temple—we each are the temple of God, that God is living in us. But then there's also the fact that *we together*, when we gather—

whether we gather at McDonald's, whether we gather here—we are the temple of God. And it's where God is moving.

We get done with the temple—the temple that was created by David. What happens after that? Well, after Solomon built his temple (David did all the prep work, to be honest, and Solomon built it), they were unfaithful to God. They weren't using the temple to meet with God. The temple wasn't being used properly.

So, why would God stay in the temple if they're not going to worship Him there? If they're not going to use it as a place to meet with Him, there's no reason for Him to remain there. So, what happens? God leaves, and He allows the people to be taken captive. The people leave, and the temple is destroyed. So now they're captives for a long time. There's no place for God to "live" on earth—not in the sense of a central place of His presence. Yes, God is everywhere, but there's no *temple*, no physical place where He chooses to dwell in that unique way.

Finally, they're able to build another temple. So, Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah—Nehemiah builds the walls—they build another temple. And that's the temple that exists when Jesus is around. When Jesus is alive on earth, that's the temple He sees. And they dedicate that temple, and God comes into that temple. They begin to worship God, and they're faithful—at least for a time. Then what happens? The body is not faithful to God. And so, by the time Jesus shows up in that temple, is that temple really a temple anymore? Because over time, they have not worshiped God properly.

Jesus shows up to that temple one day, and what does He do? He starts flipping over tables, flipping over coins. They're trading money, they're selling animals, they're gouging each other. There's not really true worship happening. God is not truly the center of it. He's not the foundation of that house like He's supposed to be. Jesus flips the tables over and says:

“You have made My house—which is supposed to be a house of prayer—into a den of robbers.”

So, the temple is no longer a temple. It's a den of robbers. Then where is God? God is in Jesus. The fullness of God is in the *new* temple—Jesus. So, Jesus will say, when they ask Him, “What authority do you have to flip over tables and say these things?”—He says:

“Tear down this temple, and I will rebuild it in three days.”

And they're like, “Tear down this temple? It took forever to build this temple!” But what temple is He talking about? The temple at that point is **Jesus Christ**. The fullness of God is in that temple—in Jesus.

So, Jesus is crucified. Why is He crucified? Because the body is not based on the foundation. The building is not based on the foundation. The religious leaders—they're not the true church—and they kill Him. He dies. He's crucified. And then He raises from the dead. And as He raises from the dead, He says, “Go into the upper room,” and what happens? He says, “I'm going to send a new Counselor for you. I'm going to send the Holy Spirit.” And so they go into the upper room, and all of these individual people who believed in Him now each receive the Holy Spirit. They receive the God that was in the Tabernacle, the God that was in the first temple, the God that was in the second temple, the God that was in Jesus—*that* God comes into you in the form of the Holy Spirit.

And now God can minister in ways He had never ministered before, because now it's the most powerful sense of what the church is going to be. The church is a whole bunch of temples filled with God that can go out and minister and serve and love and be the hands and feet of Jesus. And so, it says that if anybody destroys this temple... Let's go on. Where's verse 18? Let's look at this. Here's what it says:

“Do not be deceived. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise.”

You say, “Alright, well, that sounds like some kind of puzzle.” Let's keep going.

He says, “Do not deceive yourself.” What does that mean—*do not deceive yourself*? What he's saying is that, in some way, the problem the church has in Corinth—the problem that leads to division in our church, the problem that leads to division in other places, the problem that leads to the kind of sin that happens in Corinth, the kind of sin we want to avoid as a church, the kind of sin that keeps us from doing things that have eternal reward and keeps us spending all of our time on just earthly things—that type of life is the result of us *deceiving ourselves*.

You say, “Well, huh, Dustin—how are we deceiving ourselves? What are we deceiving ourselves about?”

Well, first of all, it says:

“If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age...”

Here's what you need to understand: if you are a believer—listen, we should put this on the application when you want to become a Christian. Right? You say, “Oh, you want to be a believer? Well, fill this out.” Here's the first rule:

Are you willing to be considered a fool by everybody around you?

Because if you believe the things God says in His Word—if you believe those things, if you believe that Jesus died on a cross and somehow that makes you justified before God, if you weren't even there for it, if you believe the world is 6,000 years old, if you believe some of these things—people are going to say: “You're cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs.” “That's like a butterfly driving a truck.” “We need to stay clear of that guy—he's bizarre.” If you believe the things God says, the world is going to say that you are a fool.

Are you willing to be a fool for Christ?

And that's what this is saying. Don't be deceived. If any of you think you are wise by human standards—by the standards of this age—then you should become fools so that you may become wise. So, how are we deceiving ourselves? We're deceiving ourselves by saying that somehow, we are wiser, or smarter, or that the wisdom we have—our human wisdom—is in some way superior to everybody else. **We think too highly of ourselves.**

When you see division in the church, what's the division? What's the problem? Usually, it's because you've got people who think they're right. You've got two groups of people—or three groups—who all think they're right. “I've got my opinion, and my opinion is this, and *I'm* right. That means you guys are morons.” And the people over here say, “No, *we're* right, and our opinion is right, and *you* guys are morons.” Not only that, we get even worse when we're in church. We say, “You guys aren't as Christian as

us. You're not as holy as us." We saw this in this church several years ago—groups saying, "Well, *we're* the ones eating meat; *they're* only eating milk because they don't have the kind of spiritual understanding that *we* have."

The first problem he points out here is: **Do not deceive yourself.** Don't deceive yourself into thinking you are wise or wiser than you are when you're basing your wisdom on just human thinking and human reasoning. What caused the division? What caused the problem we had in the temple? Why was the temple—before Jesus—the place where He showed up and flipped tables? What was the problem?

The people who ran that temple, the religious leaders of that temple, thought way too highly of themselves.

It's what we would call *prideful boasting*. And that's what we have to be aware of. We have to be aware of prideful boasting within the church. The Pharisees were like, "Oh, look at us. We're so good, and you guys have to do all the stuff we say and follow our rules." And Jesus comes up and says, "I'm not following that rule—that's a stupid rule." And they go, "Oh yeah? Well, we'll kill you."

That's prideful boasting.

When you think you're so smart that you kill God, you may be off track—just a *scosh*. Just a little. It would have been a good idea for them to check themselves, humble themselves, and look at what they were doing. But that's not where he ends. Let's read this through, because this is interesting:

"Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight."

And then he cites Scripture: **"He catches the wise in their craftiness."** Why is boastfulness—why is boastful pride—bad?

First of all, because it's not real wisdom.

God catches your boastful pride and your fake wisdom—your opinions and all the things you think are solid—and He exposes them for what they are: *earthly wisdom*, not eternal wisdom, not wisdom based on Scripture or on God. You're putting all your confidence in what you think as a human being—and that's not right. Then he goes on: **"The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."**

He uses another Scripture from the Psalms, and what is he doing with that one? He's saying not only is prideful boasting *not* real wisdom, but it also **doesn't lead to anything**. The things you're prideful and boastful about—your earthly knowledge, your opinions—**none of it leads to anything eternal**.

Nobody on earth can ever figure out the things of God on their own. You can't figure out eternal things, how to live, who God is—the most important things in life—through your own brain power. Those things must be revealed by God. So, everything you come up with on your own—every opinion you form without God—it leads to a ceiling. It never reaches eternal truth, because that has to be revealed. So, those are two reasons why prideful boasting isn't worth anything. Paul is saying, "Don't do that."

You say, "Alright, Dustin, I understand what you're saying. But if I'm not supposed to be pridefully boasting, then **how do I stop being pridefully boasting?** Because I *like* to pridefully boast—it feels good to pridefully boast. So how do I stop it?"

Alright—let's keep going. So then: **“No more boasting about human leaders.”** Right? Because that's what they're doing. They're boasting, they're pridefully boasting about, “Oh, we love Paul. Paul—if you don't think Paul is the best pastor, then you're wrong. And we don't even want to hang out with folks who don't think Paul's the best pastor, because they must have bad theology.”

And then others go, “Yeah, but we love Apollos. We like how he speaks. We like what he teaches. He's teaching about Jesus too!” “Yeah, but...” And so, they say, “We don't care about Paul.” That's really stupid. That's *really* stupid. He's saying, “Don't do that.” Because you're basing all of that on human wisdom.

Now watch this: **“So then, no more boasting about human leaders. All things are yours.”** Let's just stop for a second and see what he just said. What he's saying is: **Why should we stop boasting in our human wisdom?** How is that going to keep us from dividing?

First of all, your problem is that you think you are something you're not. You're deceiving yourself into thinking you are smarter than you are. And so, you're making yourself feel secure. You're in a really wicked world, a scary world, where we don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. And so what do we do? We come in and say, “I've got it all figured out. *I'm* right and you're wrong. *I* have the answers, and that's why I feel secure.”

So, I boast. And sometimes I even bully other people, because I'm right and you're wrong. And he says: **Stop doing that.** But second of all, he says: **“All things are yours.”** Now what does that mean?

Here's what it means: When you're boasting—when you're talking as though you've got it all figured out, like you've got all the answers—on the outside you look secure. But **that person is actually very insecure.** Think about school. Think about that kid who was the bully. He shows up and talks like he's got everything figured out—he's tough, he's smart, he's in control. But when you actually get to know that person, you find out that the reason they act that way is because **they're very insecure.** They have nothing to base their security on except themselves.

Follow me on this. You've got someone—maybe in this room—who deep down doesn't know how they're going to make it, how they're going to answer the questions in life. If something major happened—your barn burns down, you lose a bunch of money—there's all these fears. There's a lot of insecurity. So how do you deal with that in human wisdom? You say, “Well, I've got to be secure in my answers, my reasons, my opinions. I have to know the truth. I have to be firm in what I think. And by that, I'll feel secure.” But you're feeling secure in *just your own self.* And that's the problem.

So, what Paul is saying is: **“Get rid of all that pride, because all things are yours.”**

By becoming Christ's, all the answers you need belong to you. All the solutions to the things you're insecure about—they're yours. All the answers for your marriage that's falling apart—they're yours. All the answers for the things you stay up late worrying about—they're yours. God is providing that for you.

Because what we do when we divide is—we eliminate most of the answers. We become unwilling to recognize any answer except the one we already want.

So, what do they do in this church? They've got three guys who are leaders: Paul, Apollos Cephas (Peter) Some of them are saying, “We're all about Paul.”

And so they go all in on Paul—but by doing that, they exclude two *other* incredible teachers who have a lot to offer, teachers who preach the Word of God and who are building on the proper foundation.

They eliminated two-thirds of what God wanted to give them, simply because they weren't humble. If they had humbled themselves and said, "God, we just want what You have for us," —they would have understood that **all things are ours**. Paul is ours. Apollos is ours. Cephas is ours.

It goes beyond leaders—he continues: "**...or the world...**" God has given us the whole world. "**...or life...**" We didn't even have real life until we met Christ. "**...or death...**" Death is ours—the gateway into eternity forever. "**...or the present...**" The present—your current circumstances—that belongs to you because God is with you in it. "**...or the future...**" Your future belongs to you because God purchased you and has a plan for you. He lists all of this to say:

You don't need to fight. You don't need to divide. You don't need to boast.

You already have everything you need in Christ.

So how are we going to stay unified as a church? How are we going to do that? We're going to do a couple of things. We're going to be **really careful** that we don't base what we do as a church on the *opinions of people*. Now, we're going to use wisdom—we're going to look at what God says, and we're going to evaluate things. But if something isn't from Scripture, if something isn't what God has said—if it's not based on the foundation of Christ—we don't want anything to do with it, at least as a church.

Now, that doesn't mean don't learn earthly wisdom. Learn how to fix a car. Go to college. Get smart. All that stuff is really important—but **not** for the eternal things that we care about as a church. This church is **not** about opinions. It's not about siding with this political party, or siding with that specific person, or that teacher, or whatever. It's about the *foundation of Jesus*.

What keeps us unified is that we're humble enough to say, "We just want to submit to Your Word, God." And we can do that because all things are ours. You've given us everything that we need. Does that make sense?

Sorry I went a little crazy on you there, but hopefully I wrapped it all up together and you've got a little clearer understanding of what's going on. I just want Randy, when he comes next week, to not be hanging over a cliff with what I left him. So hopefully we got that tied up with a little bow. Let me pray for us.

"God, thank You for Your Word. I thank You that not only do You give us all the wisdom that we need on things that are holy and right, and salvation, and things of who You are, and the truth about how You want us to live, and the power to do that... God, all that You give us. So it's not based on our human wisdom. God, we don't want to be secure in our own boastful pride. We want to be secure in the gift that You give us—through Your Word and in the way You take care of us and provide for us. All things are ours, and we need not be insecure because we have You.

God, we love You. We thank You. And we go out in the name of Jesus. Amen."