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We Are Working Together With God

1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-9

Introduction

1. You and I are a part of a movement unlike anything this world has ever seen.
2. It began before, what the apostle Paul called, “the foundation of the world,” with God choosing to save us through His Son so that we might be “holy and blameless before Him” (Ephesians 1:4).
3. The Old Testament prophets often spoke of One who was to come:
 - a. “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him” (Deuteronomy 18:15).
 - b. “Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).
 - c. “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).
 - d. Daniel 7:13–14
4. That promise was fulfilled with the coming of God’s Son into the world: “But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10–11)
5. Jesus is God’s one and only Son who came into this world “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

6. He chose 12 men to follow Him and become His disciples.
7. He promised them that He would “build [His] church” and that “the gates of Hades (death) [would] not overpower it” (Matthew 16:18).
8. Following His ascension back to His Father, those men, minus Judas Iscariot, plus Mathias, carried the news of salvation to a world that was lost in sin.
9. That movement, which Jesus called His church, changed the world and continues to change it.
10. Armies have not accomplished as much; neither have nations and governments.
11. The kingdom of heaven has outlived every nation and kingdom which has ever existed and will continue to do so, because it is eternal.
12. You and I sit here today as a part of this great kingdom, but our work is not over.
13. As Paul said in our text this morning, we still have more to do.
14. As we look more closely at what he wrote, let’s each ask ourselves, “What is my role?”

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I. What Is This Church?

A. GOD’S FIELD

“You are God’s field” (v. 9b).

1. Oftentimes in the Old Testament prophets, God spoke of the people of Judah as His vineyard, in which He . . .
 - a. Selected a fertile hill and prepared the soil (Isaiah 5:1,2).
 - b. Removed the stones and put up a wall around it (Isaiah 5:2, 5).
 - c. Planted the choicest vines (Isaiah 5:2).
2. Here, Paul, says that we are God’s field.
 - a. The soil, which represents our hearts, has been prepared.

- b. The seed of God's Word has been sown (Luke 8:11).
- c. Now, God awaits His harvest.
- d. The question for each of us is this: "Have we received that seed with good and honest hearts, and will we hold on to it so that we may endure and bear fruit?" (Luke 8:15).

3

B. GOD'S BUILDING

"You are . . . God's building " (v. 9c).

1. Every building must have a foundation.
2. Jesus is the very corner stone of that foundation (Ephesians 2:20).
3. As Paul wrote in verse 11 of this chapter, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).
4. In Ephesians 2:21 the apostle Paul indicate that "the whole building" as it is being "fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord."
5. In verse 22, he added that we "are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

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II. What Are We?

A. GOD'S SERVANTS (v. 5)

"What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed" (v. 5a).

1. The church in Corinth struggled with division — such division that quarrels were erupting between the members.
2. The Christians in Corinth were picking and choosing that person with whom they wanted to identify themselves: "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of

Cephas (Peter),” and “I of Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:12).

3. Here, in verse 3, Paul indicates that it was even causing “jealousy and strife” among them.
4. So he asked the questions, “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul?” (v. 5).
5. His answer: They are “servants through whom you believed” (v. 5).
6. That is how we are to view one another today — we are each one, servants of Christ, that is all.
7. Jesus, Himself, told us what our attitude should be: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).
8. The greatest compliment any of us can ever hope to hear are the words of our Lord, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21, 23; ESV).

4a

B. “GOD’S FELLOW WORKERS” (V. 9)

“For we are God’s fellow workers” (v. 9a)

1. There is no higher privilege in our present day and age than to be allowed to work alongside God.
2. Four times at the last supper, Jesus used a term in reference to the Holy Spirit — Gk. *Paracletos*.
 - a. The KJV translates this word as “Comforter” — several other translations use the word “Helper.”
 - b. It literally means, “one called alongside to help.”
 - ☐ God’s Holy Spirit comes alongside us to help us in our service to Him. Thus, we are working alongside God.
3. Nothing is more important in all of life than that.
4. The greatest honor which any of us could ever be given is that of bearing His name and being an instrument of His grace where we live, where we work and in our family.

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III. What Must We Remember?

A. GOD GIVES THE OPPORTUNITIES (V. 5)

“. . . even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one” (v. 5)

1. It is the Lord who assigns to each of us a task (ESV), who gives to each of us a role (HCSB).
2. In Romans 12:6-8, Paul tells us what we each are to do with our gifts.

“Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” (Romans 12:6–8)

3. One of the beauties of our Lord’s church is that not all of us do the same thing.
4. While we have different gifts and talents, we use those together in serving our Lord.

5b

B. GOD CAUSES THE GROWTH (VV. 6, 7)

“So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth” (v. 7).

1. Paul came to Corinth as the “planter,” sowing the seed of God’s Word through the preaching of the Gospel.
2. Later, Apollos came behind him as the “waterer,” teaching those newborn Christians how to live their new lives.
3. Some of the Christians in Corinth apparently argued over which of the two was more important — Paul as the evangelist or Apollos as the teacher.
4. Paul said that neither he as the “sower,” nor Apollos as the “waterer,”

were anything.

5. Without a sower, there would have been nothing to water.
6. Without someone to tend the growing seed, it may as well not have been planted.
7. The truth is, only God gives increase.
8. God is the one who opens the mind and changes the heart (Acts 14:27; 16:14).
9. Our emphasis must never be upon our methods or our abilities, but upon our God who alone causes the growth.
10. Instead, let us pray without ceasing that God will open the hearts and minds of those we encounter to be receptive to His Word.
11. And let us give Him the glory and praise for all that is done.

Conclusion

1. As Paul said, you and I are God's field, God's building.
2. He continues to seek a bountiful harvest and for more blocks to be added.
3. God has given to each of us the gifts we need to fulfill the roles to which He has assigned us.
4. He promises to work alongside of us, but He still expects each of us to work in His kingdom.
5. Let me encourage each of you to sit down with our elders and ask them, "What can I do to help in the work here?"
6. Seek to be of service wherever the Lord will use you.

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7. If you not yet given your life to Christ in obedient faith and asked Him to wash away your sins, then why not do so today.
8. He is ready to put you to work in His kingdom.