**To the Church**

**Week 3**

**1 Cor 3:10-15**

*“By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.”  
‭‭1 Corinthians‬ ‭3:10-15‬ ‭NIV‬‬*

*By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it.*

Paul laid the foundation - someone else is building on it

God has called each of us to do our part in building the kingdom - but none of us are meant to build the whole structure as well. Giving our lives for the Kingdom means we are part of a bigger picture

There’s often 3 steps in building something for God (ministry/personal/calling):

1. Obedience
   1. Sometimes obedience is stepping out into the unknown
   2. Sometimes obedience is staying faithful to where God already has you
   3. “Sometimes the greatest step of faith is to stay where you are”
2. Work
   1. God has called us to work hard
   2. No matter what you are called to do, you are called to work hard
   3. If you are a stay at home parent or an engineer or a teacher - we honor God by being faithful to do what he has called us to do
3. Release - the hardest OR most rewarding thing about Kingdom work is that God always asks us to release what we have worked so hard to build
   1. We have been passionate and obedient and then God either moves us on to something else or we get old
   2. We have to watch someone else take over the thing we made
   3. Not unlike raising a child and releasing them
   4. The goal was never to retain their infancy - we treasure the seasons of the small beginnings and we rejoice in those God has called to sustain and continue the work we have started
   5. That’s why we want you to get involved early on in your time at The Bridge - God has a purpose for your time in Paris, and this church has been built on layers like layers of rock face from the faithfulness of people that have come in for a couple years and then moved on and were obedient during their time here

*‘but each one should build with care - for no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ’*

* We have to remember that we can achieve nothing without Christ
* We can’t build anything better than what Jesus intends to be built

In order for us to build our lives well, we have to start with a foundation of Christ

* Building across the street - months spent on foundation
  + Structural problems in a building start with the foundation
* If your life keeps falling apart, I want to encourage you to check in with te foundation
  + Nothing will do for you what a firm foundation on Jesus Christ will do for you
  + Matthew 7:24-27 *- everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.* ***25*** *The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.* ***26*** *But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.* ***27*** *The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*
* If you live in hurricane country, you don’t build a house without taking the hurricane into account. If you build your life pretending that a storm is never going to come along, you’re going to get knocked down

*“If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, and costly stones, wood, hay or straw…”*

* Reference to the temple
* You can be doing work in God’s name for your own glory
* Each one of us is responsible for our own obedience
* The contributions we make to the Kingdom can only be judged by God. Others might think we are bringing hay, etc

*Their work will be shown for what it is for The Day will bring it to light*

* The work of my life will be laid bare before God - all the things I strived for, all the effort I put into my relationships, all the effort I made to be a good Christian, to succeed, to be obedient will be laid bare before God

*It will be revealed with fire and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work.*

* Paul gives a visual (a metaphor) and asks us to imagine what we are building with our lives. He goes okay, take the foundation, and what are you building?
* Fire not only reveals, it also tests
* The test doesn’t necessarily come on ‘judgment day’ - but the test comes in the storm
* In the testing, the revelation takes place
* When everything is said and done, what have I spent my life on? What of my life will be left standing at the end - what of my life is being spent on things of eternal significance?

*If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward*

* Not about material rewards - God notices and honors our obedience
* You may not be rewarded for doing the right thing in this life but God sees it
* The work we build in partnership with God outlives us and impacts the kingdom for eternity

*If it is burned up the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.*

* When we work for our own success or our own glory, our work dies with us
* When we can’t release the work God has done through us to the next generation, our work dies with us
* We did miracles in your name...I never knew you

**1 Kings 18:16-39**

*V 21-24 -*

*Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”*

*But the people said nothing.*

***22*** *Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only one of the Lord’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets.* ***23*** *Get two bulls for us. Let Baal’s prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it.* ***24*** *Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God.”*

* The prophets got first choice of bull and called out to their gods to send fire
* Elijah made fun of them - the prophets escalated in desperation, screaming and cutting themselves
* Then it says Elijah built an altar and he put his bull on the altar
* He told them to fill 4 containers full of water and pour it on the altar - 3 times

*V 36-39*

*At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command.****37*** *Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”*

***38*** *Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.*

***39*** *When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!”*

* Elijah started by positioning himself under God’s authority and then telling God he was his servant then that he was obedient to what was asked of him
* He wasn’t seeking his own glory but God’s - his desire was to see God glorified and made known
* Everything on the altar was burned up

The difference in our lives is that some of us welcome the fire, and some of us fear the fire

* Paul knew the fire - he knew what he was before it and he knew what he was after it
* The fire will burn up everything you bring to the table until only the Lord remains
  + God loves us enough to want to refine us and give us new revelation
  + We have to open ourselves up to this
  + Paul is telling the Corinthian people look, someday God is going to evaluate what you’ve done with your life. You can let that happen now or you can wait until that day, but it’s going to happen
* Elijah got it - he prayed for fire because he knew that the fire was all he had
* Elijah prayed, “Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”
* When we step back from what we’ve built and we invite God to burn away everything that is not of him, we invite him to show his own glory through our lives and we become a willing vessel to be used for Kingdom purposes

The grace of Jesus is big enough to hold whatever it is God wants to do through you

* It’s big enough that even if you mess up, even if you mess everything up, he’s still going to use you
* Participating in kingdom work is not just about our own glory or our own purpose - our partnership with God is a gift that God gives us
* Your life has purpose. Your life has meaning. You are not here by accident.

**Always come back to the foundation**

Today:

* You can have a fresh start and start building on the foundation of Jesus
* You can welcome the fire and allow God to begin positioning you for your purpose