

There's no I in Team (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 & 1 Cor 3:1-23) 23-Feb-20¹

We'll be looking at 1 Corinthians chapter 3

Please have your Bibles handy - and there's an outline to take notes - if you wish

Let me pray first...

INTRO

I have a **dream**

That our **whole community** comes to **believe** in **Jesus**

I have a **dream**

That **everyone I know** (friends and family) comes to **believe** in **Jesus**

Actually - it's not just my **dream**

According to Acts 17:30 it says - in the past God overlooked the ignorance of not believing - but now He commands all people to repent

You see - God is patient not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)

God wants everyone to **repent** of their sins and be **saved** for Heaven

However, **people** have **choices** whether they repent or not

God has **given** us the **church** - not the building - but **the people who believe** - to achieve **His mission** to bring people into **repentance** and into a **relationship** with **Jesus**

But the **church** has to be a **team**

Team work makes the dream work

Wouldn't it be **great** if everyone here at St. David's was in a **growth group** - studying **God's Word** together - and being **equipped** to be a team of believers **enabling** more and **more** people to **follow Jesus**

Wouldn't it be **great** if more **people** came and **joined** the team so we could **reach** the **community** with the **Good News** of **Jesus**?

Wouldn't it be **great** if we had **too many Scripture teachers** - so we had **cover** for when **teachers** are **sick** or **away** on holiday

Team work makes the dream work

But the **Team** has to be properly **unified** and the **Team** has to **realise** **who** is in **control** of this team -

God is in **control** of His **team**

Speaking of making the dream work

Let's watch this video...

[PowerPoint 1 - Show Video of Orchestra]

An **Orchestra** is a good **metaphor** for **God's Team**

A **metaphor** is:

[PowerPoint 2-Metaphor]

a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.

e.g. William Shakespeare uses the metaphor: The **World is a stage** and all **men and women** are merely **players** on this stage

An **Orchestra** is a great **metaphor** for **God's Team**

Each person in the **orchestra** has a **part to play**

Without the **conductor** of the orchestra, though - they can't play together properly

In **God's Team** - **God's orchestra** - **God** is the **conductor**

The **Church of God in Corinth** - had **problems** in their team

[PowerPoint 3-Problems]

Problems in the Team of Corinth (1 Cor 3:1-4)

- The **Corinthians** are not living by the **Spirit** but **worldly** (v1)
 - As **Christians** they have the **Holy Spirit inside** them - but they are not living life in step with the **HS** - they are not showing the fruit of the spirit - but are still following the way of the world
- Paul says - the Corinthians are **immature** -it's like they are on **baby food** and not **solids** - - in other words they're not growing spiritually (v2)
 - I'm grateful to Jenny Carson for an illustration she shared at B/S this week -we can **feed ourselves** up on **junk food** - like **Maccas** or **KFC** on the **way home** - and then we can't eat the lovely **roast dinner** we have **waiting** for us at home - because we're **full up on junk food**
 - In the **same way** we can **fill ourselves up with** the **junk** of the **world's wisdom** and the **world's way** - and then have no room for **God's Word** in our lives and in our hearts - and we **remain immature** Christians
 - A mature Christian means we go from **believing Jesus is my Saviour** - to believing **Jesus is my Saviour and Lord** of my life
- Also, Paul says, the **Corinthians** are **jealous** and **quarrelsome** (v3) - and that's a human characteristic - not a spiritual one. Remember as Christians - the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patient, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. There's no mention of jealousy or quarrelling in the fruit of the spirit
- You see the reason there is jealousy and quarrelling in Corinth is (v4) - because the Corinthians are **following church leaders** - like **Paul** and **Apollos** - **instead of following the Lord God**. They've **set** their **favourite**

leader up as a king - just like the Israelites wanted a king like the other nations - the Corinthians want a leader like the "world" wants.

- Living the world's way - leaves God (and His Son - and His Spirit) out of the equation

So, the bottom line is - the church folk in Corinth - are still following the pattern of the world - and not focusing on Jesus - and spiritual/heavenly things

So, Paul describes what God's Team - the church - should look like - that's in vv5-21

God's Team:

1st God's team must have leaders working as a Team under God- that's in vv1-5

[PowerPoint 4a-Team under God]

1. Must have leaders working as a team under God (vv5-9)

- In vv1-5 - Paul uses the metaphor of a garden or a farm
- Apollos and Paul are mere servants (diakonos = minister = servant) not bosses - v5
- Apollos and Paul are instruments - sent by God - through whom the Corinthians came to believe - v5
- Paul planted the seed of the Gospel - v6 - He was the church planter
- Apollos watered the seed - v6
- Paul and Apollos are aren't anything special - only God is special - because he makes the seed of the Gospel grow - v7
- Paul has one purpose - to plant a seed - v8 - he will be rewarded for that
- Apollos has one purpose - to water - v8 - he will be rewarded for that

- But they are both **co-workers** - serving the **MASTER** - who is **God** - they are **not masters** - just **God's servants/workers** - v9
- They are **God's field** - literally **God's farm**
- **GOD IS THE ONE WHO GROWS HIS CHURCH - NOT LEADERS - LEADERS ARE SERVANTS AND GOD'S INSTRUMENTS - AND SHOULD BE A TEAM - NOT THINKING GROWTH RELIES ON THE LEADER OR THEIR STRENGTH**
- **Application** - our church has had **continuous ministry** for **67 years** now
 - There have **been many leaders** come through
 - They have **planted** and **watered** - and **replanted** and **re-watered**
 - **No one leader** is **better** than the **next** - they all **served** - remembering **God** is the **Master** and the **Grower**
- **Application** - In our church today - we have **various leaders: elders, preachers, youth leaders, music leaders, growth group leaders and different ministry leaders** (you can read about them all in our **ACM reports**)
- **No one leader** in our church **family** - is **better** than **another** - they **all work together** - in **God's Team** - realizing **progress** is **dependent** on **God**
- **Application** - are we putting certain leaders in our church on a pedestal - & having them in competition with other leaders - and quarrelling about it?
- **Application** - are we a **team player** or **individualistic**?

2. Built on the Foundation of Jesus (vv10-15)

2nd point - **God's team** is built on the **foundation** of **Jesus Christ** - that's in verses 10 to 15 - Paul uses a **building metaphor** this time

[PowerPoint 4b-Foundation]

- **God's grace allowed Paul** to be the one to **lay a foundation** of the Corinth church - like a **wise builder** - v10 - in other words it was a **huge privilege for Paul** to be the one to **plant the church**
- **Someone else builds on this foundation** - but Paul says anyone building on this foundation must **do it with care** - v10
- The **foundation** that was laid was **Jesus Christ** -
- Jesus is the **cornerstone** or **foundational stone** of the Church. In **building terms** - the **cornerstone** is laid **first** - and everything is **built** and **measured from that cornerstone**
- We can't **build a church** on any other **foundation** than Jesus - otherwise there will be confusion about who we are serving - v11
 - For **example** - a church can't be built on a **leader** who is **charismatic** and **charming** or a **huge personality** - **people will start following that leader** - and not Jesus [we can certainly **admire** a charismatic leader - but remember it's Jesus we're following]
- Paul goes on to say - v12 - **some things** that are **built on top** of the **church's foundation** of Jesus - might be **more precious** - or better quality **than other things**
 - Precious/top quality building materials - are like gold, silver, costly stones
 - Other less precious or lower quality materials - are like wood, hay, straw
 - So, Paul's point is - there are **two types of things built on top** of the foundation of Jesus

- **Permanent**, imperishable, lasting things
- Or **temporary**, perishable or short-lived things
- For **example**, in our church - we could have **ministries** - that clearly **proclaim** and reinforce the **Gospel**- the Good News of Jesus [like Growth Groups and Jaffa]
- And they're might be other **ministries** - which **appear** more like **social** ministries [like Movies on Saturday - Art/Craft]
- Paul says - whatever ministries we build on the foundation of Jesus - will be judged and evaluated when Jesus returns - v13 - to see if we were wise builders or not
- All our **efforts** will be **put through a fire** - to **burn** off any **impurities** - and to **test the quality** of that **work** for the Lord - v13
- If the **work survives** the quality control test - the builder will receive a **reward** - v14
- If the **work burns up** - the builder will suffer a **loss** - but will still be saved - but scorched by the flames
- WE NEED TO BE WISE WHEN WE BUILD OUR CHURCH (NOT BUILDING) - IT NEEDS TO BE BUILT ON JESUS' FOUNDATION - CHRIST CENTRED - AND THINGS WE BUILD SHOULD BE JESUS FOCUSED - SO THEY MAKE DISCIPLES AND GROW DISCIPLES
- **Application** - it's worth us taking a self-evaluation
 - **Are** the **ministries** we're running here at St. David's **focusing** on the love of **Jesus** - and **inviting people** to come to **Jesus** as their Lord and Saviour - or are they just **social ministries**. **How** can we **change** a particular **ministry** to be **more Christ Centred**?

- **Application** - are we involved in a ministry for the right reason? - is it to tickle our ego? - or to share the Good News of Jesus - and make and grow disciples of Jesus?

3. God's Team is the Church - which is the Temple of God (vv16-17)

3rd point - God's Team is the church which is God's temple - vv16 to 17

[PowerPoint 4c-Temple]

- Paul says - v16 - **collectively the people of the church are God's temple** - because God's **Spirit** lives in its **midst** - v16
- It stands to reason that if the **Holy Spirit lives inside each Christian** - then as **Christians gather** together - God's **Spirit** will be **amongst** them
- Paul's telling us the **church is the temple of God for a good reason**
- See v17 - he issues a **serious warning** - if someone messes with God's temple - they will bring trouble on themselves - **God's temple is sacred** - and together the people of the church are God's temple
- To **stress** how **important God's temple** is - Paul mentions temple 4 times in these 2 verses (16 &17)
- **Remember** - **Jesus built the church on the confession of faith of the Apostle Peter** - that Jesus is the **Messiah** - the Son of God - Matt 16:16-18
- And **Jesus promised to build His church on the faith of His believers**
- And **Jesus died for His church** - so **people would believe** in Him - be **forgiven** and have **eternal life**
- So, Paul says **don't mess with God's church** - His temple - because you're **messing with people's salvation** - **don't mess** with God's church - or you

will be **destroyed** - Remember **persecuting God's church is persecuting Jesus** (Acts 9:4)

Our Response (vv18-21)

How should we respond then - as members of God's team

[PowerPoint 5a-Response 1]

First response - we need to realize that **we don't know everything**

- Paul says - v18 - **we should become "fools"** - and **admit we don't know everything** and that maybe there is a **higher wisdom** from **God** - through His Spirit -which we learnt about last week
- **Oliver Crowell** sent this message to the **Scots**: *I beseech thee from the bowels of Christ, think it possible that you may be mistaken*
- We should not think we know it all - and realize **only God knows all**
- In the **world's wisdom** - **many people** think **they don't need God** - they can **figure everything out on their own** - and they see **God** is just a **crutch for the weak**
- But Paul says - v19 - when we **compare the world's wisdom** with **God's wisdom** - there's **no comparison** - v19 - the **world's wisdom** is **foolish** in **God's sight**
- **The world outsmarts itself** - because it **thinks it's wiser than it is** - v20

Second response - Paul says v21 - **we must not boast in human leaders** (or ourselves for that matter) - **we can't serve two masters** - **instead boast in Jesus!**

[PowerPoint 5b-Response 2]

- Why shouldn't we boast in human leaders? Because...
- **Human leaders are** - fallible, temporary and sinful
- **Whereas - Jesus is heavenly** - infallible, permanent and sinless

There's no comparison

Conclusion (v22-v23)

- To **finish up** then
- Paul **argues** in v22-23

[PowerPoint 6a-All]

- Why **boast about a human leader or yourself** - when you can boast about Jesus - the king & master of the universe - and be part of team God
- V22 - **all is ours** Paul says - because v23 - we are of **Christ** - and **Christ** is of **God** - so we are on **team God**
- What does it mean to have all because we are of **Christ**? - v22
 - It means we have the **forgiveness** of our sins - past, present and future
 - We have **His strength** (not our own) for the **present** and **future**
 - We have the **certain secure hope** for the **future** - with **eternal life** in Heaven guaranteed

We have **everything** by being on **God's Team** - through the **Work of Jesus** - so **why** would we **follow** something **inferior** when we have the **best**?

I **began** with my **dream** - that the **whole community** comes to **believe** in **Jesus** - and that **everyone** I **know** comes to **believe** in **Jesus** - and that everyone at St. David's would be in a **Growth Group** becoming equipped to make disciples of Jesus - and that the **number** of **Scripture** teachers would **overflow** -

That **dream** is possible in **God's Team** - if we remember

- **Jesus** is the **foundation** of the team
- That the whole **purpose** of the **Team** is to **promote Jesus**

[PowerPoint 6b-John 3:30]

- And if **we do** as **John the Baptist** said - when **Jesus** arrived on the **scene**
- **John the Baptist** said in **John 3:30** - He [JESUS] must become greater - I [Paul, each person in St. David's] must become less

(pause)

There's no I in TEAM

[PowerPoint 7-No I in Team]

Let's pray...