When our work becomes clear

(1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

(Story of when I was at Thrall Car and worked overtime and welded this huge plate of steel---but it wasn't lined up correctly. I worked hard but I wasn't careful.)

In verse 10, the Apostle Paul (maybe the one of the most *hard-working* Christians who ever lived) said that you and I have to “take heed” (or “be careful”) ***how*** we build.

All of us are building a life here on earth. We all play a role in building each other up spiritually and letting God work through our lives.

At the welding factory I worked at, when you finished your work, quality control came through and inspected it. In the same way, there will be a “heavenly quality control.”

This morning, I would like to share with you three reasons you should be careful about the life you are building on earth for God:

**1. Your work will be tested** (vv. 12-13):

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it,because it will be revealed by fire; and **the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.**

**2 Corinthians 5:10**-----10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**2. The quality of your work will become clear**

*Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,* ***each one’s work will become clear****; for the Day will declare it…*

John Smith was a loyal carpenter, working for a very successful building contractor who called him into his office one day and said, **"John, I'm putting you in charge of the next house we build. I want you to order all the materials and oversee the whole job from the ground up."**

John accepted the assignment with great enthusiasm and excitement. For ten days before ground was broken at the building site, John studied the blueprints. He checked every measurement, every specification. Suddenly he had a thought. **"If I am really in charge,"** he said to himself**, "why couldn't I cut a few corners, use less expensive materials, and put the extra money in my pocket? Who would know the difference? Once** **the house is trimmed out and painted, it will look just great."**

So John began to execute his plans. He ordered second-grade lumber, but his reports indicated that it was top-grade. He ordered inexpensive concrete for the foundation, put in cheap wiring, and cut every corner he could, yet he reported the purchase of much better materials. When the home was completed and fully painted, he asked the contractor to come and see it.

**"John,"** said the contractor, **"What an awesome job you’ve done! You’ve been such a good and faithful carpenter all these years that I have decided to show you my gratitude by giving you this house you have built, as a gift!"**

And folks, if you or I ever descend to the place where we start thinking thoughts like: **“Who will know the difference?”** do you know what we need? We need to realize that the answer to that question is **Christ**—the One who hung on the cross, so that you and I could be free.

The way we have conducted our lives on this earth — not just on Sundays, but every day of the week — will become perfectly clear.

**3. Your "boss" will decide what counts and what doesn't**

14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, **he** **will receive a reward**. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, **he will suffer loss**; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

—Notice the two phrases: reward/loss

One time at a girls' basketball game, in the last seconds of the game, a girl threw the basketball the entire length of the court and it went in. The crowd was going nuts … that is, until the ref blew his whistle and motioned that her foot was out of bounds.

**But wait,** someone might say, **she didn’t make a three-point shot!** **She threw it the entire length of the court. She should have gotten five or even six points for that shot!**

Sorry. The ref gets the final word. You can make a basket from the upper deck and the result will always be the same---it doesn’t count. Jesus will have the last word.

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One stormy night many, many years ago an elderly couple entered the lobby of a small hotel and asked for a room. The front desk clerk explained that because there were three conventions in town, the hotel was filled. **"But I can't send a nice couple like you out in the rain at 1 o'clock in the morning,"** he said. **"Would you be willing to sleep in my room?"** The couple hesitated, but the clerk insisted. The next morning when the man paid his bill, he said, **"You're the kind of manager who should be the boss of the best hotel in the United States. Maybe someday I'll build one for you."** The clerk smiled, amused by the older man's little joke. But a few years later, the clerk received a letter from the elderly man, recalling that stormy night, and asking him to come to New York for a visit. A round-trip ticket was enclosed. When the clerk arrived, his host took him to the corner of 5th Avenue and 34th Street, where a magnificent new building was standing. **"That,"** explained the man, **"is the hotel I have just built for you to manage."**

**"You must be joking,"** said the clerk.

**"I’m not kidding one bit”** hereplied.

**"Who -- who are you?"**

**"My name is William Waldorf Astor."**

That hotel was the original Waldorf-Astoria, and the young clerk who became its first manager was George C. Boldt.

One day, there are going to be many, many people who have been faithful to their Lord, who, when Jesus begins to show them the scope of their rewards and responsibilities in the kingdom, they will say, **"You must be joking."** It will be like standing before an architectural masterpiece and hearing Him say, **"It's all yours!"**

**Application** — If the Lord stepped in here right now and said He was to going to conduct His review of your life at 1:00 this afternoon, would you be ready?)