

You Are God's Building

1 Corinthians 3:9-17

We've not been short of property things to do of late round here...

We have had the dry rot of course...

All sorts of conflicting advice

Pulling in experts

Trying to work out which expert to listen to

Raising funds

Trying to get permission from presbytery

Hours and hours of work

Moments when you thought it would never happen

And look

There we are

We've had discussions about all sorts of other things

We've had discussions about Christmas Trees

We've had discussions about what kind of window frames to use

How to install an outside plug

And why is all this

Because this building matters to us

It matters because it was handed to us on trust by an earlier generation

And it is our job to pass it on

It matters because nothing quite feels like this building

When you sit here, and contemplate the peace

Contemplate the sense of spirit here

And this building can only be like this

Because people cared about windows and plastering and what type of wood the pews were going to be, and where the door was going to be situated

And what were the designs going to be on the stained glass windows

And then there are countless things that none of us sees

Pipes and wires, which took hours and hours of work of skilled labour

Stonework and slates, so much of it unseen, and so much of it we are so grateful for.

This building matters because it was handed to us on trust

This building matters because of how it makes us feel when we sit here

And we know that there many unseen things that make this building what it is.

And then there is the meaning of this building
There are the roof supports, designed like the beams on the hull of a boat, turned upside down
Because we are all meant to be sitting on a boat, travelling together
That is why this part of the Church is called the Nave, which is from the same word as Navy

When we sit together in Church we are all part of the ship's company
And our eyes are focussed on the ship's captain, in the stained glass window behind me
Christ, the king, the captain of the ship
That is what this building means.

Now think of these things
The hidden things
The work that has gone into this building
The way that things matter in this building, and we put our work into him

And then contemplate that when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:9
"You are God's building"

He is not talking about this building around us
He is talking about us, the people of the Church.

And when he says in verse 17
"God's temple is holy"
He goes on to say
"You are God's temple".

In fact Paul is saying that the people temple
The People building
Matters even more
Actually matters far more
Than the physical building.

And he warns that no one should destroy that temple
And he warns the leaders of the temple will have their work judged
And that if we building with gold and silver, then we will survive the test
But if we build with straw, then our work will be burnt up.

It is series, how we look after the temple which is God's people.

So what does it mean to build well.

Firstly, Paul says in verse 11, that foundation is Christ
The foundation is Christ, which means that we build everything on his example of a loving life
And of his death in which he died for our sins
And his resurrection which brings new life to us all

And faith which means we trust in him.
That is the foundation.

And then what is the gold, the silver, the precious stones, the wood with which we build
That is love
That is the Word of God – applying it to our lives
That is the Holy Spirit at work amongst us

It means that we take as much care over that building
Than over the physical building

Actually, sometime, perhaps we take too little care over the people part of the building
Compared to all the care we take over the physical building

We are to build each other up
We are to encourage one another in faith
We are to study the scriptures
And we are to pray.

That will cause us to grow
And there is a great promise
That when we build up with the right things
Then at the judgement of Christ
We will stand.

That is both an awesome promise
And an awesome responsibility
It reminds us the importance of what we do in Church
And how much we matter as a Church
We are Christ's temple.

Built on the foundation of Christ
Let us build each other up in love

AMEN