

LENT DEVOTIONAL

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LENTEN DEVOTIONAL MARCH 10, 2022

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 2:14-3:15

14 Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

1 And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? 4 For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human?

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. 9 For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw 13 the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. 14 If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Scott Paul-Bonham, DMin Student

How grateful we should all be that the Corinthians were such a dysfunctional group of Christians with so many misunderstandings. If they were not so, we would have not have the detailed teaching from Paul about spiritual divisions in the Church.

For two decades I was a chaplain in a U.S. penitentiary. I marveled at the intensity of converts to Christianity. They would throw themselves into the study of Scripture, even learning biblical Hebrew or Greek. They would spend every moment they could worshipping in the chapel. Some converts became extremely judgmental incredibly quickly, decrying things like tattoos and gambling—activities in which they had participated mere weeks before. Many thought of themselves as amazingly spiritual, better than all the rest of us Christians.

They thought they could handle the solid food. They could not. Many flamed out. I asked one such convert in the dining hall why he stopped coming to the chapel. His response was something like: "I tried it. I got really good at it. It didn't work. I knew it wouldn't." It seems this man had thought that if he became the perfect Christian, God would grant him release from prison. Funny how he never noticed in his Bible study how faith got a lot of biblical people into prison, not out of it.

To counter this convert crisis, we began a mentoring program. Men of faith, volunteers of all ages, would come in on Monday nights and just talk with two inmates for an hour each. The positive spiritual effect was dramatic upon both mentors and mentees. These meetings fostered humility and trust, positive growth and prayer.

It is not only the penitentiary that needs relationships like these. Let us endeavor this Lent to participate personally in intentional spiritual mentoring and to seek the mind of Christ together.

PRAYER

Lord God, give me the grace to see myself as you see me, loved but lacking. Help me to seek, in humility and faith, to grow in the mind of Christ with other Christians. Please bring a mentor, or an opportunity to mentor, into my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

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