

1 Corinthians 3 (Conrad Bowman) (4-22-07)

The last thoughts in chapter 2 were these, in verse 14. In contrast to believers being taught by the spirit (not the Holy Spirit), combining spiritual thoughts or spiritual words, in contrast to that, verse 14 says,

But a natural man [or soulish man] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually understood or discerned.

In other words, a man who's not reborn, or regenerated, and that word refers to the regeneration in a man of his human spirit. Ok. Not just the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but the regeneration of the human spirit. Because His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, teaches our human spirit the things of God. If you don't have a human spirit, you don't have the capacity for taking in the things of God. With the soul, you're compatible with human life. You collect human phenomenon, human information. The physical information, and that's collected in the soul. That's the soul of a man. In the spirit of a man, he collects spiritual information from God. From the Spirit of God. So the natural or soulish man doesn't accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually understood or discerned. So only the spiritual man can accept doctrinal truth, or, spiritual information. But, he who is spiritual, and that's the reborn individual, understands or judges all things. He himself is judged by no man. Why? Because judgment rests with God. And he, the spiritual man, has been joined to Christ, therefore, has been judged in Christ already. And, the price of sin, and sins, has been paid. Ok. Any questions on that. Because that's where chapter 2 ends. Comments?

Alright. On to chapter 3.

And I brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.

Now understand, he's talking to believers. But he said I've got to talk to you as if you're not a believer. I've got to talk to you as if you're a babe in Christ. Now remember back in Hebrews, chapter 5, when he said, I ought to be feeding you meat – the doctrine at this point. But I can't, because you're babies. I've got to feed you milk. The milk of the Word. That's in Hebrews, chapter 5. And then he said, meat is for the mature. So Paul is saying the same thing here. He said that to

the Jewish brothers. He's saying this to a Gentile Corinthian audience. I've got to talk to you as if you are babes in Christ, as if you were men who were not even redeemed. I've got to explain to you basic fundamental things.

I give you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able.

Now this is important, because what is says is, a man or woman can accept Christ as their personal savior, be redeemed from their sin and slavery to sin, by Him and His work. Actually receive the Spirit of God. He should be instructing that spirit. And yet because of their pattern and their habits, and their willing rejection of what God is teaching, they become babes again. You've seen your teenagers. I mean, they grow up, they're cute, they're cuddly, Ok. Then you mess up their hair, and you put bows in their hair, and you put short pants on them, and then they grow up and they become teenagers. And you say, this is really good. You know, 150 pounds. Is a big as daddy, and then he gets behind the wheel of a car, and does something absolutely insane. Throws his brain completely out the window, and does something that the most immature among us would do. He has no more sense than a baby. And you say, have I got to treat you like a baby again? You know? And those are words we often use. You don't say, "you're a thoughtless little pig. I'm coming out there to get you." [Alex Baldwin]. I couldn't resist that.

But, that's the way we are. We assume that. Now, what Paul is saying here is,

I give you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able. For you are still fleshly. [You're thinking with your human, soulish brain]. Since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly [that's evidence of it], and are you not walking like mere men.

And that "mere men" goes right back up to the natural man. You're walking and thinking with your soul, and not with your spirit. So God's instruction is [inaudible] ... of your behavior. If you are thinking with the Spirit of God, you would look on every person you come in contact with as a target for the ministry of reconciliation in the Gospel. But people move out of that category real quickly, don't they. Ok. It's easy to witness to somebody who you'd like to have next to you in the pew. It's more difficult when they're less desirable. Martin?

Martin Mosvold. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. That's another aspect of it. That's another aspect of it. Once you decide you want to reach that person, you've got to talk to them in language that they understand. Well, the Spirit of God within us says, if we're going to communicate the ministry of reconciliation, and that's the treasure that's been placed in our hands, which is what 2nd Corinthians is all about, by the way. If you're going to minister that Gospel of Reconciliation, then you have to do that in terms that they understand. Exactly what you're talking about. You've been to Africa, a place with a whole different set of challenges. But, the person down the street who knows nothing of the terms that we use, it can be just as foreign to them, if we're talking to them in high-tone doctrinal theological terms rather than street terms that they can understand. So the language has to be toned, and understandable. You are still fleshly, means that these people that he's talking to have not yet yielded to the instruction of the Spirit of God within them to their spirit. Their jealousy and strife among you are simply symptoms – are you not fleshly based on the symptoms,

Are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men?

In other words, you don't identify yourself by naming the leader you're following. That's not the name you carry. And Christianity is shot through with those sort of problems. It's the foundational reason for the denominations. But more than that, it's the foundation reason for the [inaudible] ... that's sweeping through Evangelical Christianity today. And it's identification with the personality who seems to be a lead dog, so to speak. And people gather and follow that. Well, we can't lose sight of the fact, as I tried to point out in chapter 1 and chapter 2 – beginning of chapter 2, how often Paul refers to our relationship to the Father, to God the Father. So when we say I'm a follower of Paul, we're shorting our vision of we are children of the Heavenly Father who loved us enough to give His only begotten Son for us. Ok. We even look at the work of Christ on the cross because remember, in other places he said, I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, no, no, I'm of Christ. Well, even that is short sighted, because it was the Father who sent the Son, and the Son in obedience to the Father – that's the first part of Hebrews chapter 5.

Though He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered, and became the author of our salvation and the finisher of our faith.

That's the first part of Hebrews, chapter 5. It was the Son who was acting in obedience to the Father so our salvation, our walk, our provision, our life today, has its genesis in the mind and sovereign will of God the Father. You're his child. Christ is taken to heaven in his ascension as the first born of bringing many sons to glory. And that's sons of the Father. As the Bride of Christ, united to Christ, we are the sons and daughters, if you would, of God the Father. We don't want to lose sight of that. We worship that supreme God. We adore that supreme God. We honor that supreme God.

The criticism of the Trinitarian, as if we worship three Gods. Well, the answer to that, is that we do not. We worship the one God, the heavenly Father, who has, through the three persons of the Godhead provided for our instructions, and our growth, and our maturity, and our preparation for becoming his sons and daughters. So, He's worked the whole plan of salvation, the whole plan of redemption and atonement, for our benefit. The genesis is the Father. The Father is the missing element in the evangelical church today. You hear nothing about that. You hear a lot about the worship of Jesus. We hear a lot about the worship of the Holy Spirit. We hear nothing of worship of the Father. And when we fail to do that, we disconnect ourselves from the very source of any blessing we have. We don't want to do that. We just don't want to do it, because it shuts us off. It's a short step for making that mistake to beginning to think like fleshly men.

When one says, "I'm of Paul," and another, "I'm of Apollos," are you not mere men? What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants [Servants of whom? Servants of God, of the Father] through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

Ok. In every case. There is not a circumstance I face in which the Father is not completely and totally aware of and in control of. Ok. It doesn't matter. Whether it's colon rectal cancer, or breast cancer, or the ailments that Martin faced. Or the things that I face. It doesn't matter. Our Father who loves us is aware, has been aware, and has prepared for every one of those. Ok. So, what's our job? Our job is to relax in His provision. Just relax in His provision. Ok. And watch Him work His work in us. Now,

So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants

and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

Now he's talking about, he's talking about rewards for labor. Now where is our labor? Our labor is in Him. He who plants, and he who waters, are one. And each one will receive it's own reward according to his own labor. But, where is the work that causes the growth? It's back in verse 7. It is God who causes the growth. It's God who receives the reward. Understand that. You are a trophy of His grace. He did the work. He caused the growth. You are on site, and He may have worked through you. And you become His reward. You're a trophy of His grace. So, you are God's reward to Himself for work He's performed. It's magnificent. Because at the Bema Seat of Christ, when we stand before Christ, when we present ourselves, and all our work before Christ, it all goes up in smoke. And then the Father who has done His work through the Son, presents you with His work that He's done in your life, and then He rewards you for it. And He gives you a crown of glory and you take that crown of glory and give it to the Son because you, as the bride of Christ, now have a dowry of something that is of value to the Father. And you had nothing when you walked up there. Now, you take that crown of glory that the Father just gave me and you put it at the Son's feet as the bride's dowry to the Son. And the Father is glorified through all of that. Isn't that a tight little package? And then you get to spend eternity with the Son as the object of His adoration and love. Would you trade that position for anything else? What do you want, in addition to that? You could you want besides being the object of the Son's adoration forever? Nothing, nothing more beautiful to let your mind come to rest on than that. It's a marvelous position to be in. And that's our destiny as God's heavenly people.

Now, some would trade that in. Some would trade that in because across this part of Scripture, right here, all of Acts, chapter 2, from here to here, God is dealing with earthly people. And man they were a hardheaded bunch. He gave them Judges, and they did not like judges. He gave them patriarchs, and they did not like patriarchs. Even gave them a leader that led them out of bondage. Moses, and they didn't like that. Ok. They're going to bury him. They're going to bury him, because all these – can you imagine just the people on this piece of real estate going to Tom Douthit and sitting him down in a chair and saying, "Tom, I've got a problem with Norma. She cannot ... [inaudible]" [something about cooking]. "I don't think she can do it. I don't think she wants to. And what can I do about it?" And Tom is going to look at me and say, "huh?" And that's the kind of thing we're bringing him. Every deal, big and small, to him, and expect him to resolve it. You remember this from our Genesis and Exodus study? It's

been three years Remember, Jethro, a Midianite priest, comes to him and says, wait a minute. You're killing yourself, that's crazy. You've got to organize this thing. Divide all the people – it's like 3 million of them – divide all of them into groups down to 50's. And over 50, you're going to set a man. And over a 100, set a man. And over a 1,000, set a man. And over 10,000, set a man. Now, they are going to render these judgments, right down to the local level. Ok. So now you've got county courts, and you've got circuit courts, and you've got state courts, and you've got federal district courts, and you've got supreme courts. Ok. Then up at the top you've got the king, you got the judge. And they are going to go all through these courts and matters are going to be taken care of. And you, therefore, will only have to take care of the most weighty matters. The only problem with that is, that at every level there's the fleshly mind of a man making the decision. God said, wait a minute. This is not going to work. You want decisions made, sit down, Moses on the mountain, we're going to talk. And Moses went up to the mountain, and God gave him the Law. And you run across that in Exodus 19, 20. And it rolls on for a few chapters. And God gave Moses the perfect Law. And, it's divided into three parts. Social part, ceremonial part, and the moral part. The moral part was the Ten Commandments. The people at large on the street tend to think that the whole Law is involved with those Ten Commandments. They don't know that there were 616 of them. And, you have to obey them all, because to the Jew it was one grape. Not a bunch of grapes, but one grape. That's what the Law was, and you had to obey it all. If you breached one of those Laws, and the grape was smashed. Ok. Had to keep them all. Now, He gave him the Law as the perfect definition of what sin was. You have the Law = Sin. Understand that? That's a simple equation, isn't it? Back in Numbers and Leviticus.

Now when you get to the cross, we find that Christ....

He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us in order that we might be made to be the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21.

So now you have

Law = Sin = Christ on the Cross

So when Christ died on the cross, the Law and sin both died. Ok. Sins, as ... [inaudible] ... of Sin (capital "S"). Sins (small "s") are the symptoms. So when Sin (capital "S") died, Sin died as a barrier between man and God. Because there was

no part of Sin that Christ's death did not pay for. [Inaudible] The Kinsman Redeemer brought man out of slavery to Sin, and into freedom, IF HE WOULD BUT ACCEPT IT. That's the only thing that stands in the way. Now the result of that is, no man dies and goes to hell because of sin. That doesn't happen. Man will die and go to hell because of rejection of the price that was paid. That is the tragedy of it. Our ministry is the ministry of reconciliation. Our job is to tell the world that the price has been paid. That's why we're here. So Martin goes to Africa and everywhere else he goes. He flies a lot of miles, preaching that ministry of reconciliation. God bless him. But that's our job. That's our job. Our job is to meet every person that we can and tell them that the debt has been settled. That they have been brought into liberty if they will but accept it. Ok. Any questions on that.

Paul says, don't let your life and your walk deteriorate into, I'm of Apollos, and I'm of Paul, or I'm of Christ. That's not what it is. Our life rests in our relationship to our Father, who sent His Only Begotten Son – laid aside His deity, He did, and took on the form of a man, He did, for us. Jesus did not die, and was resurrected from the grave by the power of the Father, and ascended to heaven, and quit being a man, and became again the Second Person of the Trinity. That did not happen. Understand, when He laid aside His prerogative to deity, and took on the form of a man, He ascended as a man, and it is a man on the throne in heaven today to whom we are joined. I've said that before. I say it often, because it bears repeating. Doesn't it? It is a man in heaven to whom we are joined. Jesus, the last Adam, the Son of God. Because it was man who sinned originally, in Adam, it took man in His obedience to the Father to become the author and finisher of our salvation. That's Hebrews. He told that to the Jew. That's what Paul said to the Jew. That's what the whole Law in that whole big section of Scripture, that we know as the Old Testament – that's what the whole purpose of the Law was – to make that obstacle between man and God so high that man understood: He could not get over that obstacle. He just couldn't do it. So in frustration, in absolute surrender to that obstacle, he would take an innocent animal that God had provided, a bullock without blemish, slay that thing, and burn it's hide and it's carcass on the altar, in order to satisfy God. He put in the hands of the high priest so that the blood could be taken behind the veil where he could not go because God was separated from him. The blood was poured out on top of the Ark of the Covenant, on the Mercy Seat. God was satisfied with that, and sin was atoned for, or covered up, because that's what atonement means. To cover up. He covered it up.

Now, John is in the water baptizing, and Christ approaches him, and you know the story from John's gospel. John the Baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God" The perfect sacrifice. And what's He doing? He's taking away the Sin of the world. The first time they had heard that. He's not covering it up. Because that's what they did on the day of atonement. They covered up their sin for a year. So John is telling them, "Behold the Lamb of God who is taking away the Sin of the world. That is a sea change in their understanding. If they had ears to hear, and could understand it. A sea change. Because sin is not being covered up. It's being taken away. So they judged Him according to the Law, which by His life satisfied – they killed Him. They took Him outside the camp and killed Him. They didn't kill Him inside the camp. They took Him outside the camp and killed Him. Outside the camp is where He died. Shouldn't have been, according to the Law, out there. That's foreign territory. Inside the camp is where the Law obtained. They took Him outside and killed Him. So He died without the Law outside the Law. Therefore, we have the perfect illustration of His death to all men. Because inside the camp they used the Law to judge Him, worthy of dying. But outside the camp, He died for all men. Isn't that a perfect picture?

Patrick Fairbain wrote a book in 1847, called *Interpretation of Scripture and Prophecy*. And in that he dealt with the typology of Scripture. And eventually he separated it into two books because it was too big. He taught at Oxford University, and he did a marvelous job. In Jackson, Mississippi, there was a little house full of old books behind the Baptist Hospital. I used to go over there when I was working for the doctors. I was over there one day and I found this copy. It didn't have a cover – it was ripped off. And it said, Patrick Fairbain, 1852 was the printing date, and it was the typology of Scripture. And I picked it up and I brought it home and put some duck tape on the back and put it on the shelf. And I didn't touch it until 1988. And this was when we lived in – must have been in the early '70's when I got it. I'm a procrastinator. I put off all kinds of things. But, what a marvelous story it is. Because he goes into the typology of Scripture, and the visual pictures that are presented to us in Scripture. By the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the temple, and the priesthood, and the clothes that they wore, and everything about them. Now, that has not stopped. As we elect elders in the Church, we come to the qualifications of elders. The qualifications of elders are tight. And people say, Well, Jeez, this is a ridiculous thing. Where are we going to find men that meet these qualifications? There might not be a half a dozen men like that in this congregation. The reason for those qualifications is because the elder within the local body is to represent the relationship between Christ and the Church, His Bride. Can you think of anything that is held in a higher place of honor, and a greater sense of perfection by the Father Himself, than the

relationship between His Only Begotten Son, and the Bride of the Son. Now remember, in Ephesians we studied that we are God's masterpiece, is what it said. His *poema*, is the word. His poem of perfection, is what it said in Ephesians. We are His masterpiece, created unto good works, which God had beforehand prepared that we should walk in them. Ok. That's me and you. We are God's masterpiece. His poem. His painting, painted before the world, so that they may look at us and see His perfection and the place He holds in His heart for the Bride of His Son. Ok. Never a father-in-law, never a father-in-law like this, who had the love for his daughter-in-law that the Father has for the Church. Magnificent. Magnificent. If we could see that for just a minute, and understand it even in part. Family would be a bulwark that was unassailable by any defect in society. If we could just see that, and begin to emulate that and take that on in our own relationships. To show that to our children, and to our children's children. You see the tightness of this package, that Paul is presenting over and over again. And as we go back in our studies from Genesis and Leviticus and Matthew and John. And then the Pauline epistles, you're going to see those things all come together in this matrix of doctrine that defines us as a church today. It's solid. It's solid. Ok. When Paul said, don't let anybody corrupt my gospel, that's what he is talking about. Ok. That solid body of truth that defines us as a Church. Another way of saying it that I use often is, content is everything. Content is everything. You've got to say the right things, and believe the right things, and hope do the right things. So, Paul says,

I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. [if He can find any labor worth rewarding]. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building [God's "house" is what it says in other translations. You're God's house]. According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder, I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now Paul will admit the laboring to build the foundation. But at the same time, he emphasizes, before he walks into that, it's God the Father who is causing the growth to occur. So Paul is the ... [inaudible] ... of that. He's picking up bricks

and putting them down. Picking up bricks and putting them down. But it's God's building owned, and it's God's design, and it's God's ... [inaudible]

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw, each man's work will become evident.

Now, Adam and I were just talking a few minutes ago. Gold, silver, and precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble. There are three categories. Go to any commentary you want, whether it's Barnes, or Matthew or Henry, or whatever. And they will say gold, silver, and precious stones represent spiritual work and wood, hay and stubble represents man's work. Now, I have come to believe firmly that gold, silver, and precious stones represents man's work that he believes to be valuable. But, it's still man's work, because that's the category. The gold, silver, and precious stones are the good works that we believe are good, that we lay at the feet of the Father. We present to the Father at the Bema Seat of Rewards. We don't present Him our bad stuff. Certainly not. I'm going to kick those under the chair. I'm going to present to Him the things that I think are good. And it's my honest conviction that those things go up in smoke because

Each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire.

And that's all of it. Even those – especially those things I consider gold, silver, or precious stones.

And the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

Mine's off. I don't know about you. You might have some that are scorched but they endure. Mine are gone. They're just history.

If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

In addition to that, at the Bema Seat of Christ, it is his work in us that remains. But I don't think that is mentioned here, because this is talking about man's works. And His works remain. I see that as the perfect picture of grace. Because I stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and I present Him the best I've cranked out, and whew, it's gone in an instant. It doesn't take – not the bat of an eye for

the fire to take it away. The wood, hay, and stubble doesn't even make it to the door. When the gold, silver, and precious stones are out of here, then there I am. And the Son presents to me His works in my life, and the crown of rewards that goes with it. And that golden crown, which I just received from Him, I lay at His feet as the dowry of the Bride. And I see that picture again, and He rewards me for it. That's grace. [Inaudible] That would be reward for work. That's wages. If he paid me according to wages, it would be the wages of sin, which is death. He rewards me for His work, which is perfect in all its parts, and then gives me the reward for it. That's grace, pure and simple. We are the only people on earth that can understand that. But, our lives are an expendable commodity and service to the Father, just as the Son's life was and expendable commodity. It's not something to be clinged to, just as He did not cling to His Godliness in order not to become a man with the limitations of mankind. He willingly put aside His prerogatives as deity and took on full humanity. And that boggles the mind, doesn't it" But that's what He did for us. Now, lets move on.

If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

And then it changes a little bit in verse 16.

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

That's the indwelling Spirit of God. "Dwells" is a ...[inaudible]... perfect. It means He dwells in you once and for all. He came and established a residence in you that will not change.

If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

Holy is set apart. *Hagios*. Set apart. So if you destroy the temple

God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age [and that's a first class condition. "If," and it's true. Since any man among you thinks he's wise in this age], he must become foolish, so that he may become wise.

It says that people who are so full of their own abilities to think through issues, and their intellect, and their abilities to move and what-have-you in this world, the people that think they are wise, they better become foolish so they may become truly wise.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is the one who catches the wise in their own craftiness." [or intelligence]. And again, "the Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless." [and he quotes those from OT passages]. So then let no one boast in men, for all things belong to You. Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas [is Peter] or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

What a treasure has been put in our hands. Here's the extent of what God has put in our hands in order to enable us to minister the gospel of reconciliation. Look at that list of things that are owned by us. We don't need to boast in men outside of us. Because these things of God all belong to us already, regardless of what they are. Questions? Any comments?

That's strong, isn't it? That's strong. It's stood for 2,000 years. The power of the Church to act, is incorporated into those two letters – 1st and 2nd Corinthians. I'm looking forward to working through both of them. I'm up to about chapter 5 or chapter 6 on 2nd Corinthians. Before we get there, the outline will be ready.

Closing Prayer by Conrad: "Father, we thank you so much for Your love for us that we cannot understand it Father, the way that we would like to. Just guide us as we study, and as You reveal truth to us, help us to take it in fully and then move us Father to act on those things that You placed in our hearts and our minds. And thank you again Father for the opportunity just to trust You to work Your will in our lives, guides us from moment to moment, in Christ's name, because He paid for it all. Amen"