

23-0702a Transcript

23-0702a - 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, Scott Reynolds

Bible Readers: John Nousek and Kevin Woosley

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1 Corinthians 3:1-4, The Strong Church

Transcript (0:03 - 27:04)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader: John Nousek

Acts 18:1,11,18-22,

(0:03) Good morning. This morning's scripture reading, first reading, comes from Acts, and it is (0:15) Acts 18. I'll start with verse 1 and read 11 and then 18 through 22.

(0:25) After these things, he left Athens and went to Corinth, and he settled there a year and six (0:32) months, teaching the Word of God among them. Paul, having remained many days longer, (0:39) took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. (0:50) In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. They came to Ephesus, (1:00) and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. (1:07) When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, but taking leave of them and (1:15) saying, I will return to you again if God wills, he set sail from Ephesus. When he had landed in (1:25) Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and went down to Antioch. Amen. (1:35)

2nd Reader: Kevin Woosley

1 Corinthians 3:1-9,

(1:40) The second scripture reading is that of 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 1 through 9. (1:48) It's 1 Corinthians 3, 1 through 9. This is the New King James Version.

(1:54) And I, brethren, cannot speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to carnal, (2:01) as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food, for until now (2:08) you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able, (2:14) for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, (2:21) you are not, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, I am of Paul, (2:30) and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal? Who then is Paul and who is Apollos, (2:37) but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, (2:44) but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, (2:53) but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will (3:02) receive his own reward according to his own labor, for we are God's fellow workers. You are God's (3:10) build, you are God's buildings. (3:12)

Transcript

Preacher: Scott Reynolds

(3:18) Good morning. All right. I'd like to share with you a sermon (3:25) from Douglas Hamilton, preacher of the Junction City Church of Christ in Kansas.

(3:31) Douglas Hamilton entitled his lesson on the third chapter of 1 Corinthians, (3:36) The Strong Church. He's going to be looking at a little bit of history (3:45) before we actually get into the text of chapter three. And he's going to focus a little bit on (3:54) the history of Apollos.

And you might wonder why. Well, in the scripture that was just read in (4:02) chapter three, and also in chapter one of 1 Corinthians, Paul is talking about the situation (4:12) in Corinth, and the members were choosing people and saying, I am, and the first one on the list, (4:22) I am of Paul. The second one on the list, I am of Apollos.

The third one, I am of Cephas. (4:30) And the fourth, I am of Christ. So there was division in the church in Corinth.

(4:40) So in chapter one of 1 Corinthians, we talked about the strong division and the strong wisdom (4:47) of God. In chapter two, the strong gospel. And today we're going to talk about the strong (4:54) church.

And here's a spoiler alert. It has to do with unity. (5:03) Because any church that isn't unified isn't strong. United we stand, but divided we fall. (5:11) We've heard it before, and it's so true in many ways. Chapter three, the strong church.

(5:19) So some background to the chapter comes from Acts chapter 18. In Acts 18, the apostle Paul (5:28) arrived at Corinth for the first time. And this is on his second missionary journey.

(5:36) The following is a basic timeline of his visit in Corinth for the first time and following. He met (5:43) Priscilla and Aquila following their expulsion from Rome, along with all the other Jews that (5:50) were expelled by Claudius Caesar in AD 49. That's in Acts 18 verse 2. Working as tent makers with (6:02) Priscilla and Aquila, Paul preached the gospel to the Jews every Sabbath for a short time (6:09) until Silas, Timothy, and other members of his mission team rejoined him from their work (6:17) at the church in Philippi.

Assisted with mission support from the church in Philippi, (6:24) he went full time into the work to reach out to the Gentiles in Corinth. (6:30) Acts 18 verses 3 through 6. With the blessings and encouragement from God, (6:37) for God says, I have many people in the city in 18 verse 10. Paul stayed for about 18 months (6:45) reaching the word among the Corinthian Christians, laying a firm foundation of faith (6:52) in Christ for this new congregation, verse 11.

And when pressure arose against Paul by some of the (7:00) Jews, he moved on to complete his successful second missionary journey by heading back to (7:07) Caesarea. When he had landed at Caesarea, and that's the Caesarea that's in Judah, (7:14) not Caesarea of Philippi, which is in Galilee. So when he landed at Caesarea on the coast of (7:20) the Mediterranean in Judah, he went up the mountain traveling south and greeted the church in (7:27) Jerusalem, and then went down the mountain traveling north to Antioch and Syria.

Antioch (7:35) and Syria was Paul's home church. He had successfully completed what he set out to do (7:43) in the first place, planting new congregations and strengthening them. Acts 18, 22 ends Paul's (7:53) second missionary journey.

The very next verse covers the time he spent in Caesarea saying, (8:01) having spent some time there, and then it begins Paul's third missionary journey. (8:06) There was no distinction, or no mention rather, of Apollos in the work of the church. (8:15) There was no mention of Apollos in the work of the Corinthian church at that time.

The church (8:22) of Corinth was already well established for about three years, and it was at that time frame (8:29) which Apollos arrived. So Acts 18, verses 23 through 28. And having spent some time there (8:39) in Antioch, he left and passed successfully through the Galatian region and Phrygia, (8:47) that's in Asia, as he comes around from.

There's Judea and Jerusalem down at the lower end of (8:54) Judea, and as you go up into Syria, which is above that, which is where Antioch is, (9:03) he travels through Asia, that's current day Turkey, and he goes through the regions of Galatia (9:13) and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, (9:22) an eloquent man, came to Ephesus, and Ephesus is at this end as it goes to the (9:30) GNC, which separates Turkey from Greece. And on this west coast of Turkey, today Turkey, (9:42) which is Asia then, is where you find Ephesus on the coast.

And Paul is moving up through Galatia (9:53) and Phrygia, but he hasn't hit Ephesus yet, and the scripture starts talking about Apollos, (10:02) an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus. So they're close by. They're in the same (10:11) area.

And he was mighty in the scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, (10:20) and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, (10:27) being acquainted only with the baptism of John. And he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue.

(10:35) But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God (10:40) more accurately. And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, which is Greece, (10:48) which is where Corinth is, when Apollos wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him (10:55) and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. And when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who (11:01) had believed through grace, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating (11:09) by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

And the scriptures of this day are the Old Testament (11:16) scriptures. The New Testament hasn't been written yet. And Apollos, we are being told emphatically (11:23) that one can demonstrate with the Old Testament that Jesus is the Christ, because Apollos was (11:36) doing that.

It was on the third missionary journey in which a disciple named Apollos was discovered (11:44) by Priscilla and Aquila. And verses 24 and 25 of chapter 18 stated he was an Alexandrian, and that (11:54) is he was from Alexandria in Egypt, the most educated city in the world. This city also had (12:01) the largest library on the earth at the time.

To say that you came from Alexandria meant (12:10) something concerning your mental prowess and preparedness. He was an eloquent man, demonstrating (12:16) a high level of education. He was mighty in the scriptures, for he was well versed in the Old (12:23) Testament text.

He obviously had spent some time studying the sacred writings. He was instructed (12:32) in the way of the Lord, showing that he had been taught information from Christians along the way, (12:37) and he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, showing that he had (12:44) learned much about the life and times of Christ. And he was not properly taught concerning baptism, (12:53) for he had only known the obsolete at this time, the obsolete baptism of John the Baptist.

(13:01) Priscilla and Aquila saw great potential in Apollos, recognizing him as a messenger of the (13:09) gospel, but needing to talk with him privately about a flaw. And I want to stress here, I'm going (13:19) to have some of my own comments. I want to stress here that I absolutely respect and love Douglas (13:29) and very much appreciate getting this material so much and his preaching.

However, I am (13:39) uncomfortable when he says here that they needed to talk to him privately about a flaw, (13:50) because in no way, shape, or form does the Bible indicate that the message Apollos presented (13:58) was flawed. Does not say that. Flawed implies his message was in error, and the Bible nowhere (14:08) suggests that.

In fact, the Bible emphatically states that he taught accurately the things (14:16) about Jesus. That's not an error. That's not flawed.

The Bible does indicate that his message (14:24) was incomplete, but what he taught was accurate. They obviously, back to Douglas, (14:39) they obviously explained to him the details of Christ's command to be baptized in the name of (14:45) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins, combined with the fact (14:51) that the first text in Acts 19 presents a similar situation. And I'm going to read that for context.

(15:01) Acts 19, verses 1 through 8. And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, (15:09) so here we have confirmation that Apollos had made it to Corinth, (15:15) which is who we're tracking at the moment, by the way, because Apollos is one of those people (15:22) that the church members said, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos. He's number two in the list. (15:33) I am of Cephas, third.

I am of Christ, fourth. Okay, so, and it happened that while Apollos (15:42) was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. So he's back here.

(15:49) Paul's back here in Asia. Apollos is in Achaia. There's the GNC in between them.

(15:59) And Paul has now made it to the coast, which is where Ephesus is. And there he found some (16:09) disciples. And he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said, (16:16) no, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.

And he said, into what then were you (16:23) baptized? And they said, into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism (16:31) of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is Jesus. (16:38) On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his (16:44) hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. (16:50) And there were about 12 men in all, and they entered the synagogue and for three months (16:56) spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. And Douglass continues, (17:05) we must assume, therefore, that Apollos was rebaptized after being shown the way of God (17:12) more accurately.

And I believe that is probably true, since he knew only John's baptism. (17:21) Why would Priscilla and Aquila pull him aside to instruct him more accurately (17:27) if he only knew John's baptism, if they didn't talk about Christian baptism? (17:32) However, notice the language. It says in the Bible, Apollos taught accurately, (17:40) and Priscilla and Aquila explained to him more accurately.

You know what it doesn't say? (17:53) It doesn't say Apollos was wrong. It doesn't say Apollos was lost. It doesn't say that.

(18:07) It said he was preaching accurately. That doesn't sound like a lost person to me. (18:20) I think we need to allow for the transformation process that Romans 12, (18:29) 2 tells us about.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your (18:36) mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and (18:44) perfect. Transformation by the renewing of one's mind is a growth process. It takes time.

Is it a (18:56) flaw if you don't know everything all at once? Are you in error if your knowledge is accurate (19:06) but incomplete? Are you lost? I think we go a little bit beyond what is written when we call (19:16) that flaw. It's something we, this is off the cuff. Uh-oh.

We're Baptists in my optic. That's (19:38) all we see. And there's a lot more to it.

Baptism is absolutely important. No question about it. (19:50) But it's a growth process.

The Churches of Christ, the beginning of the restoration movement (19:59) did not baptize. Are you aware of that? The Churches of Christ existed before (20:11) they believed baptism was necessary. Were they lost? It's a growth process.

Our walk in Christianity (20:23) is a growth process, and we don't know everything. Even when we get to the end of our walk, (20:30) we still won't know everything. Back to Doug.

After a lengthy discussion with Priscilla and Aquila, (20:39) Apollos desired to go to a place where a skill set would be best used. It appears he was effective (20:46) through public debate, being able to shut down the hostile Jews that adamantly and openly worked (20:54) against them. That's 18 verses 27 and 28.

For more than three years, the Corinthian church had (21:02) built their congregation on the firm foundation laid by Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, (21:09) verses 1 through 3. And I, brethren, Paul says, could not speak to you, to the Corinthians, (21:17) as spiritual men, but as men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, (21:26) not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it. They didn't know everything.

(21:35) Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy (21:44) and strife among you, are you not fleshly? And are you not wise? Here, by the way, (21:53) I'll give you my take on this passage and then Douglas' thoughts. (21:59) Paul addresses the Corinthians not as spiritual men, but men of flesh, or worldly, the NIV says, (22:07) as infants in Christ.

And there are two realms that we know, spiritual and physical, (22:13) and the physical being the fleshly and worldly realm. As new Christians, we start out as worldly (22:22) steeped or surrounded and filled with a quality or influence by the physical world. We are told (22:31) that as Christians,

through the renewing of our mind, we are to be transformed from the world, (22:39) Romans 12, 2, and be conformed to the image of his son, Jesus Christ, Romans 8, 29.

(22:47) Transformation is a process, a learning process, through the renewing of our mind. (22:55) And that's why Paul gave the Corinthians milk, not solid food, for he says, you were not able (23:02) to receive solid food. Does this sound familiar? I ask again. Hebrews also tells us about milk and (23:14) solid food. Hebrews chapter 5, 11 through 14 informs us that milk, the elementary teachings (23:21) about Christ, is for infants in Christ, that is new Christians. Solid food is for mature Christians.

(23:30) Hebrews 6, 1 and 2 identify six elementary teachings about Christ, the milk of the (23:36) scripture. And these are the things that Paul probably was teaching the Corinthians. (23:42) Paul was concerned that the Corinthians were still not yet able to receive solid food (23:50) because they were still fleshly, worldly.

How did he know that? For he says, (23:58) since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, walking like mere men? (24:05) First Corinthians 3, verse 3. Their behavior, their actions, indicated that they were still (24:13) worldly and not spiritual. Jealousy and strife are worldly actions, (24:19) things from which we need to be transformed. From the Greek word for transform, we get the (24:28) English word metamorphosis.

The process of transforming is metamorphosis. Jealousy and (24:36) strife can be likened to actions in the caterpillar stage before metamorphosis. (24:45) The transformation has not taken place yet.

If we haven't metamorphosed yet, (24:54) then we are unable to receive the solid food for the mature. And Douglass continues. (25:03) In chapters 1 and 2, the Corinthians appeared divisive in their approach to each other.

(25:09) It was a culture who elevated great sophist speakers, demonstrating their superior debate (25:15) skills. Apollos had taken the lead in the continuance of spiritual growth for the Corinthians (25:22) and they began to see him as a more eloquent speaker than the apostle Paul. (25:30) Many of the church members were downplaying Paul's apostleship based on his less eloquent (25:36) style of speaking.

In 2 Corinthians 10, Paul himself says, for they say his letters are (25:44) weighty and strong and his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible. (25:51) This is how Paul viewed the Christians in Corinth's view of him. (26:00) Equally, the apostle Peter was lumped into the sophist rating system, (26:05) being mentioned in chapter 1, verse 12.

This would be dealt with in Paul's correspondence (26:11) and the Corinthian church was a divided, dysfunctional group. Within the remainder (26:17) of the chapter are four thoughts that eliminate division from within a congregation. (26:25) And just like division occurred in the first century Corinthian church, the same can happen (26:31) to the 21st century church.

How do churches effectively deal with division? There are four (26:39) realizations God's people must embrace for dealing with the division in the church. (26:47) We're going to talk about that tonight. So if you want to know what they are, (26:52) come back and listen to it.

Now, we are going to be extending the invitation to (26:58) anyone who is subject to it. If you need to come, why don't we stand and sing.