

You are Christ's, and Christ is God's

7afterEpiphany

Pastor Josh Frazee

1 Cor. 3:10-23

Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

“Mi casa es su casa.” Whether you have studied any Spanish in your life or not, you’ve probably heard that statement before. What is more, you probably know what it means, too. “Mi casa es su casa”—basically, what’s mine is yours to use.

This statement may be made when a new person is allowed into another’s home for the first time, especially if the person being permitted to come in is a friend of the host, but not always. Sometimes it is said to a new acquaintance as well.

“Mi casa es su casa.” That is almost the same sentiment our Lord Christ gives through our Epistle text this morning—among others. If you look again at our text from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, you’ll see that Paul goes all over with the ideas he writes: from the teaching about our Lord Jesus Christ being the foundation upon which we build; to our building on Him with our good works; to how some may be saved even if their works do not stand the test; to the fact that we are all God’s holy temple; to the futility of the world’s wisdom. There are just a lot of things packed into these thirteen or so verses.

But again, our focus today will be on how all things of Christ’s are yours in His death and resurrection. *His casa es su casa.*

Verse 1

“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Jesus’ casa—His house—is yours, and He Himself is the foundation. But what does that mean? For Jesus to be your foundation, you must be properly trained in the doctrine He taught in the Scriptures. Paul had laid the foundation of that doctrine in the lives of many of those at Corinth but someone else, probably Apollos, was building upon it. But Paul’s concern was not that Apollos or Cephas or one of the brothers was building on the foundation—it was that someone else would come in and try to distort the foundation. That’s why Paul warns that “no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid.” In his second letter to the believers at Corinth, Paul would write about a group called the “super-apostles.” These were false teachers who claimed to know more about Christ than what Paul and the apostles had been teaching. So Paul warns those at Corinth that no one should distort or lay a different foundation, but should build on it according to the Word of Christ.

Today, we receive the same warning from Paul, and yes, even our Lord Christ through Paul. Don’t let anyone distort or try to lay another foundation other than that which you’ve heard from the Word of God. Devotional books, TV and radio preachers, and divisions abound. Some of these may be well and good, but be warned that others are trying to change your view to fit theirs, even when theirs may be based on something other than the pure Word of God. So take care how you build upon, and how others build upon the foundation you have heard. If God says one thing in His Word, and the devotional book you are using says something different, stick with God’s Word. That’s not to say that everything in that book or what someone says may be wrong—Paul and Christ through Paul are encouraging you to test everything by God’s Word. If it goes along with God’s Word and doctrine as you have learned it, well and good, but if not, dismiss it, so that nothing may be built on the foundation of your faith but that which is directly from God.

Verse 2

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”

Paul wrote these words to his fellow believers in Corinth. He was pointing them to their baptism, just as we would be reminded of our own baptism by this question. The Corinthians no longer had to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem. As a result of Christ’s work in living, dying, and rising again, all who would come to faith in Him would be part of His Church, and the Spirit of God would reside in them. This was true at Corinth in Paul’s day, and it is still true for us today.

Jesus’ life, death, and rising again has paid the price for your sins, and has cleared the way for His Spirit to live in you as God’s holy Temple. You are the Church—you and me and all of the fellow believers throughout the world, and even into heaven itself. We are the Church, and God’s Spirit dwells in us because Jesus has removed the guilt of sin from you.

As the Church of God, and God’s Temple, we are His casa. Individually, then, we each receive the things of God’s house. We receive all the gifts Christ earned for us by His life and especially His sacrificial death in my place and your place. We receive His Holy Spirit and become the Temple of God in baptism—in which we also receive the forgiveness of sins. We receive that same forgiveness in the Lord’s Supper: Jesus’ true body and true blood in, with, and under the bread and wine given for you, for your forgiveness, and for the strengthening of your faith by the Holy Spirit. You receive fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ. And you receive a called and ordained pastor to speak to you God’s Word. Again, should he attempt to distort the foundation that you have heard in God’s Word, then you should be concerned. But if he does not, then there is no need for you to go church shopping, because you are receiving everything of your Lord Christ’s as your own.

Verse 3

“So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

Just last week, our Epistle text was how the Corinthians should not have boasted that certain of them were following Paul or others of them were following Apollos or still others of them were following Cephas. In the same way, do not boast that I am your pastor or let others boast to you that Pastor Speers is their pastor or others that Pastor Emrick is their pastor or Pastor Meyer is their pastor. Who are these pastors and who am I that you should boast? We are only servants delivering to you the gifts that are yours already by your membership in God’s Temple.

All things are yours already. The Word, Baptism, the Lord’s Supper—once you have learned how to properly partake it in catechism classes, that is. In addition, Paul mentions “the world...life...death...the present...(and) the future.” Christ has created you to have a body and has called you to faith that you might serve in the world even now in its fallen state. You have your entire life to serve Him and to serve your neighbors. Even in death you may serve your neighbors by dying in faith in Him. So it doesn’t matter if it is the present or the future, the time is yours as well. You are no longer under God’s judgment because Jesus Christ has taken your place. Instead, you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s, in order that you can live having everything, and especially the rich gifts that Christ has left for you as members of His house. His casa most certainly is su, or your casa. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

