

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2007**

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE BELIEVERS

Message Thirteen

Their Symbols—

**Wise Master Builder, Stewards, a Spectacle,
the Offscouring of the World and the Scum of All Things,
the Temple of the Holy Spirit, Threshing Oxen,
Contenders in a Game, and Runners in a Race**

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 3:10; 4:1-2, 9, 13; 6:16-20; 9:9-10, 24-27

I. The apostle Paul was a wise master builder, a chief craftsman—1 Cor. 3:10:

- A. The Lord builds the church not directly but through His ministers, even through every member of His Body—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:16.
- B. By the grace of God Paul was a wise master builder who had laid the unique foundation, Christ, for others to build upon—1 Cor. 3:10.

II. The believers are symbolized by stewards—4:1-2:

- A. The Greek word for *steward* is of the same root as the word for *economy* in Ephesians 1:10 and 1 Timothy 1:4; the word means “a dispensing steward, a household administrator, who dispenses the household supply to its members.”
- B. A steward is a dispenser, one who dispenses the divine life supply to God’s children—Luke 12:42; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10.
- C. In the dispensing ministry it is most important that stewards be found faithful—1 Cor. 4:2; Matt. 24:45; 25:21:
 - 1. Faithfulness, which means fidelity, trustworthiness, is shown toward the Lord and is for reigning in the kingdom—Gal. 5:22; Titus 2:10; Matt. 24:45, 47; 25:21; Rev. 17:14.
 - 2. The faithful stewards are one with the faithful God and are constituted with Him as their faithfulness—2 Cor. 1:18-19; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:13.

III. The believers are symbolized by a spectacle—1 Cor. 4:9:

- A. The Greek word for *spectacle* refers to a show, a display, made in a theatrical way for entertainment; this also is a metaphor, referring to the fights between criminals and wild animals in the Roman amphitheater.
- B. The apostles were such a spectacle to the whole universe.
- C. In the New Testament all the overcoming believers are likened to such a spectacle, a gazingstock for the public—Heb. 10:33.
- D. We who enjoy Christ have become as criminals in the sight of men for their enjoyment, but in the sight of God Christ is our destiny for our enjoyment.

IV. The believers are symbolized by the offscouring of the world and the scum of all things—1 Cor. 4:13:

- A. *Offscouring* denotes that which is thrown away in cleaning; hence, refuse, filth; *scum* denotes that which is wiped off; hence, rubbish, refuse.
- B. Both *offscouring* and *scum* are used metaphorically regarding condemned criminals.
- C. In 1 Corinthians 4:13 Paul likens the apostles to the lowest animals, to off-scouring, scum, rubbish, refuse.

V. The believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit—6:16-20:

- A. The temple of God in 3:16 refers to the church corporately, whereas the temple of the Holy Spirit in 6:19 refers to the individual believers, in particular, a believer's body.
- B. The Holy Spirit is in our spirit, and our spirit is within our body; hence, our body becomes a temple, a dwelling place, of the Holy Spirit—Rom. 8:16.
- C. To glorify God in our body is to allow God, who dwells in us, to occupy and saturate our body and express Himself through our body as His temple—1 Cor. 6:20; 1 John 4:13.
- D. The key to our being a temple of the Holy Spirit is that the indwelling Spirit of the resurrected Christ imparts life to our mortal bodies—Rom. 8:11.

VI. The believers are symbolized by threshing oxen—1 Cor. 9:9-10:

- A. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 25:4 and applies it to the present situation, in particular, to those who labor in serving the Lord.
- B. According to the type in Genesis 1:24, the cattle and the animals are a higher life that can accomplish something for God's purpose:
 - 1. The ox typifies Christ as the One who bore responsibility and labored faithfully for the accomplishing of God's will—Matt. 20:28; John 6:38.
 - 2. Through growth in the divine life, the believers are able to live on earth a life that is useful for the fulfillment of God's will—1 Cor. 15:58.
- C. Instead of being muzzled, threshing oxen should be free to eat what is under their threshing—9:9.

VII. The believers are symbolized by contenders in a game—vv. 25-27:

- A. The incorruptible crown, which the Lord will reward to His overcoming saints, is a reward—the crown of righteousness—in addition to salvation—2 Tim. 4:8.
- B. In order to obtain this incorruptible crown, we must exercise strict self-control in all things and contend lawfully—1 Cor. 9:25-27; Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Tim. 2:5.

VIII. The believers are symbolized by runners in a race—1 Cor. 9:24; Heb. 12:1:

- A. The Christian life is a race, and we need to run this race to receive the prize, the crown of righteousness, which the Lord will award to his overcoming saints, who finish their course—Phil. 3:12-14; Acts 20:24.
- B. The apostle Paul finished his course and obtained the prize—2 Tim. 4:7-8.
- C. As we are running with endurance the race set before us, we need to receive grace and look away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith—Heb. 12:1-2, 28.