

Church Planting Success

1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5 | God Gives the Growth

1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-4:5

Church Planting Success

- Watch the sermon "Church Planting Success" on the Jesse Campbell Ministries/The Redemption Church YouTube Channel.
- Apply your life to the Bible alongside your group or family with the honest questions in this lesson.
- Be sure to close with "The Takeaway" and keep a journal of answered prayer requests in your final minutes together.



This stand-alone study and its sermon both come from 1 Corinthians 3:5–4:5
For more resources, visit: jessecampbellministries.com

Context

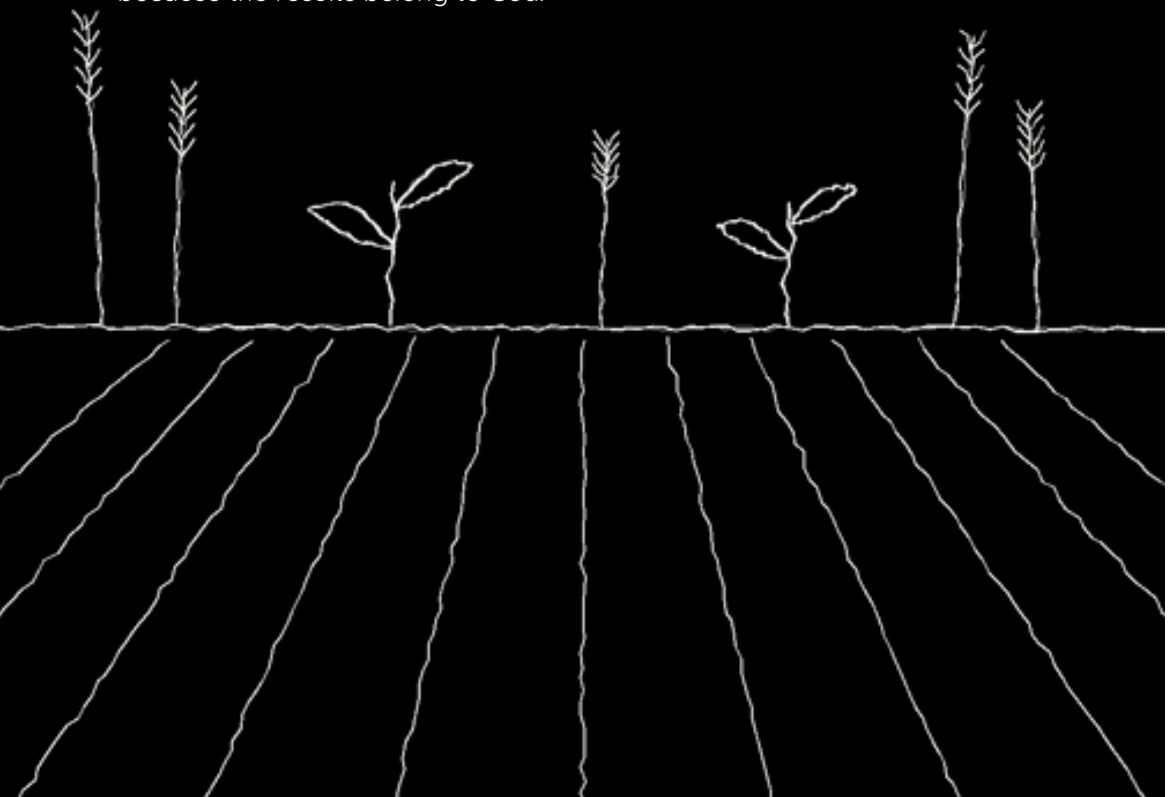
Paul planted the church in Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18). He reasoned in the synagogue first, got shut down, and moved next door into the house of Titius Justus, where Crispus, the synagogue leader, came to faith. Corinth was a wealthy, proud port city that prized eloquent speakers and status. A few years later, the young church was riddled with sin and divided into fan clubs: "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos" (1 Cor 3:4). Paul wrote from Ephesus to confront this celebrity culture. He reminded them that preachers are only servants, Christ alone is the foundation, and God alone gives the growth.

The Big Idea of the Text

Paul taught that ministers were mere servants, Christ was the only foundation, and God alone gave the growth.

Connecting the Session to the Sermon:

Sunday's sermon came two weeks before Redemption Church joins Grace Fellowship of Kent and moves into a permanent building, after five and a half years of setting up and tearing down in public spaces, just as Paul once planted next door to the synagogue. The sermon asked a simple question: what is the metric for church-planting success? The answer comes straight from verse 6: "God gave the growth" (1 Cor 3:6). Pastors are like FedEx, delivery men for God's Word, not the source of the growth. Crowds can be attracted, numbers can be bloated, but disciples making disciples is God's work, and He gets 100 percent of the glory. That same truth should break our fear of sharing the gospel with coworkers, neighbors, and friends, because the results belong to God.



Biblical Text (CSB) - 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5

3:5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? They are servants through whom you believed, and each has the role
the Lord has given. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So, then, neither the one who
plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 Now he who plants and he who
waters are one, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's coworkers.
You are God's field, God's building.

10 According to God's grace that was given to me, I have laid a foundation as a skilled master builder, and
another builds on it. But each one is to be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other
than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on the foundation with gold,
silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, 13 each one's work will become obvious. For the day will disclose it,
because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one's work. 14 If anyone's work that he
has built survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will experience loss, but he
himself will be saved—but only as through fire.

16 Don't you yourselves know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you? 17 If anyone
destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is holy, and that is what you are. 18 Let no one
deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a fool so that he can
become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, since it is written, He catches the wise in
their craftiness; 20 and again, The Lord knows that the reasonings of the wise are futile. 21 So let no one boast
in human leaders, for everything is yours— 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or
things present or things to come—everything is yours, 23 and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

4:1 A person should think of us in this way: as servants of Christ and managers of the mysteries of God. 2 In this
regard, it is required that managers be found faithful. 3 It is of little importance to me that I should be judged
by you or by any human court. In fact, I don't even judge myself. 4 For I am not conscious of anything against
myself, but I am not justified by this. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 So don't judge anything prematurely,
before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the
hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God.

Applying Our Lives to the Text Together

1. Describe Paul and Apollos: "servants through whom you believed" (v. 5). Which leaders do you put on a pedestal, and how does this verse correct that?
2. Consider who does the work: "God gave the growth" (v. 6). Where do you secretly take credit for growth? How would giving God the glory change you?
3. Explain why Jesus is the only foundation (v. 11). When fire tests your work, what is gold and silver, and what is hay and straw (vv. 12-15)?
4. Imagine your church truly believed "the Spirit of God lives in you" (v. 16). How would that shape our unity and how we deal with sin (v. 17)?
5. Why is "the wisdom of this world" foolishness with God (v. 19)? Where do numbers or status measure your life?
6. List what God requires of managers in 4:1-5: to "be found faithful" (v. 2), not famous. Who needs the gospel from you this week? How will you trust God with results?

The Takeaway: So What, Church?

God gives the growth.
Jesus is the only foundation.
Be found faithful, not famous.
Pray by name for the coworker, neighbor, or friend you're afraid to talk to about Jesus. Plant the seed this week, and trust God with the growth (v. 6).
In Jesus' name, Amen!

For Parents:
Have you ever planted a seed in the garden? You put it in the dirt, and maybe your sister poured water on it. But can you make it grow? No. Only God can make a seed grow. The Bible says the church is like that. Paul planted the church in Corinth, and his friend Apollos watered it, but God gave the growth. A long time ago, God promised to send someone who would build His family, and that someone is Jesus. Jesus is the strong foundation, like the rock under a house. When people trust Jesus, God grows His church, and God gets all the glory.



FOLLOW ALONG

Subscribe to Jesse Campbell Ministries on YouTube or on most podcast apps.

OTHER OFFERINGS

With an abundance of Bible Books to cover just like this study, there's plenty more to explore and learn from JCM, such as:

- The Seven Thunders: The Book of Revelation for Groups
- And Then You Will Know: The Book of Ezekiel for Groups
- Daniel: The Book of Daniel for Groups
- Dear Skeptical Friend: The Gospel of Luke for Groups
- Holy Dissident: Isaiah for Groups
- Letters to My Sons: The Pastoral Epistles
- Into The Fray: I Corinthians
- The God of All Comfort: II Corinthians
- Reason For Hope: 6 Apologetic Sessions for Groups
- The Sacred Acts: Ordinances of the Church
- The Revival Project: A Transformative Study of Nehemiah
- And many more!

Start your free 30-day trial with JCM by visiting us online at: jessecampbellministries.com

ABOUT JCM

Dr. Jesse Campbell is the founder and head Pastor of The Redemption Church, located on the outskirts of Seattle, WA. Jesse has a strong calling to preach the Bible as it is written. In the midst of a socially and religiously starving culture, his biblical foundation for understanding and preaching the gospel in a strong, clear, and concise manner has earned him a large following in a short amount of time. He's grown the JCM platform quickly, has been featured on national radio shows, and has been a guest speaker across the nation at many churches and large events.

Originally from the Pensacola, FL area, Jesse moved with his family to Nashville and worked at Lifeway Publishing for a while before completing his pastoral education. He was led to launch his own biblically-based church, The Redemption Church, in 2020.

Jesse is married to his wife, Jessi, and they have had five children. Together they also run a conference for bereaved parents, in memory of their son, Aiden, called Aiden's Hope. When Jesse and Jessi aren't investing their time in JCM or The Redemption Church, you can find them on the bleachers cheering on many baseball and football games or mountain biking and snowboarding in the beautiful Pacific Northwest.