

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 5TH - 6TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

MANAGEMENT (1 COR. 4:1-5)

A MANAGER IS A SERVANT

Paul was trying to help this young church understand that he and other Christian leaders are obligated and entrusted to share the gospel. While they are leaders, they are also servants of Christ who manage and serve out of humility and love. A manager isn't the owner, a manager works for the master but that doesn't degrade their value.

A SERVANT IS FAITHFUL

Paul spent part of chapter 3 explaining that each of us has a role to play and no one is above another. He's continuing to let them know that he, Apollos, and Peter all have the same goal. Each has a responsibility to share the (gospel) "mysteries" of God.

- **We must all be faithful to the mission to which God has called us.**

"MYSTERIES OF GOD"

As a follower of Christ, the mysteries of God are being revealed in you. This redemptive grace of God is being revealed to you through the work of the Holy Spirit. The "mysteries" of God don't make sense to those who aren't followers of Christ.

- **Our responsibility as Christ followers is to tell the story of Christ's work in us.**

DON'T JUDGE ME!

The Corinthians were evaluating different servants of God and comparing one with another. This is not to say we can't judge each other (1 Cor 5:12). We're not above correction, but God judges our character and motives.

- **Comparison is a funny thing. Most of the time we compare ourselves with someone we think isn't as good as we are.**

YOU'RE JUDGING ME?

Paul says, "I don't even judge myself." Only God can judge correctly, and He's the one Paul wants to please. It isn't that Paul couldn't evaluate his life but that God is the ultimate judge. The irony is they didn't see their own issues.

- **Don't judge too prematurely. Just because I'm a follower of Jesus doesn't mean I'm as far along in my journey.**

MY INTENTIONS REVEALED

Paul reminds them that a final judgement is coming. When God judges us, He judges rightly our actions, motives and intentions. This was a reminder to do everything we do for the glory of God, not the praise of man.

- **Friends, we don't need to worry about what others think of us. We live for the day we will receive praise from God.**

FAVORITISM (1 COR. 4:6-7)

I FOLLOW...

There was division in the church about who each should follow, and Paul lets them know this is damaging. He drives the point home that he and Apollos are both leaders in the Church, but they needed to listen to him as their spiritual father. **All pastors and teachers are representatives of Christ**, but loyalty to a specific leader can cause strife.

...SCRIPTURE

Instead of creating dissension and each following their favorite teacher, Paul was asserting they all build on the same foundation. The problem wasn't their preference in a teacher, it was putting one teacher above another.

- **We can't be arrogant in boasting because we're following a specific spiritual leader. We're all building on Jesus.**

"WHO MAKES YOU SUPERIOR?"

They thought they were wise enough to judge the teachings of their leaders. Paul reminds them they haven't earned a thing! You think you have special rights because you've been given a gift? You don't boast in a gift.

They took God's blessings thinking they had anything to do with it. This is the height arrogance.

WE CAN'T EARN ANYTHING

In helping them understand his authority, Paul reminds them they have no basis for pride in their spiritual abilities. Every gift they received was from the Lord. He rebukes this high opinion they have of themselves that is leading to such arrogance.

- **We have no reason to boast. All we have, or are, is because of the grace of God.**

IRONY (1 COR. 4:8-13)

DRIPPING WITH SARCASM

After reminding them they had nothing in and of themselves, Paul uses sarcasm by telling them they're already "rich" and "full" acting as if they were already kings on a throne when they really should repent of their arrogance and respect authority.

- **The life of a Christ follower must be marked by humility and service.**

TRUE SERVANTS

He makes a drastic comparison between what they think an apostle looks like and his own life. He points out the vast differences in his life and theirs. They think him to be a fool, weak, and dishonored but don't understand their desperation. (Rev. 3:17)

- From a worldly perspective they thought they had everything, **but God doesn't operate from a worldly perspective.**

"SPECTACLE TO THE WORLD"

Paul understands he's still undergoing persecution. However, he responds in love, grace, and endurance. This is completely counter-cultural to how the Corinthians were responding.

- **This is not always going to be our "Best Life Now." What does your life look like during suffering?**

WARNING (1 COR. 4:14-21)

A FATHER'S LOVE

He calls them his, "dear children" to help them receive his warning and instruction. This isn't to shame them but to encourage them toward change. Motivated by love, he was willing to point out their sin.

- **As we disciple others we need to be willing to say the hard things in love. Our rebuke is always for their good.**

"IMITATE ME"

Paul's authority over this church is like a father's over his children. A father provides, leads, loves and guards his children. He was trying to teach his "children" to rid themselves of pride and gain some humility. **A father always has his children's best interest at heart.**

- **Humility is the key. Without it we are entitled and self-serving.**

WE HAVE TO ANSWER FOR HOW WE LIVE

The problem is many people don't believe they will ever be held to account. V18 tells us that many of the "Christians" in Corinth had become arrogant and disrespectful, thinking Paul wouldn't be coming back soon.

- **We tend to live like this when it comes to Jesus' return, thinking we can do as we please and never be held accountable.**

"NOT A MATTER OF TALK, BUT OF POWER"

Some people talk a lot about faith, but their lives don't reflect God's power. Too often there is a difference between what we say about our faith and the way we live. **The power of our faith is displayed by the way we live our lives.** The only way to live a life of power is to be completely surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

"WHAT DO YOU WANT?"

Paul asks the Corinthians what they would prefer: him to come angry like Jesus did in the temple (Mt. 21), or in love and gentleness. The answer depended on their **willingness to repent and trust in his leadership.**

- **Our humility or lack thereof will dictate the path our lives will take.** Will we submit to a higher authority?

WATCH WHO YOU FOLLOW

- Multiple people speaking into your life is fine, but they all have to align with Scripture.
- Are we willing to submit to those in authority over us?
- Ultimately, we follow Jesus. He is our example.

WE DIDN'T EARN A THING!

- Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought. (Rom. 12)
- Everything we are is for the glory of Christ alone!
- How can we live in such a way that Christ gets all the glory?
- **You can't earn God's favor.**

WHERE IS YOUR POWER?

- Is your faith journey filled with stories of what happened long ago?
- Talk is cheap, we have to be people who live out our faith.
- Are you still falling into the same traps?
- **God has so much more for you. Why would you return to daily fight a battle in a war that has already been won?**