

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

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

MANAGERS (1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-5)

THE PROPER ROLE OF CHURCH LEADERS

Paul concluded that the church should consider him and all other ministers as **servants** and **"managers of the mysteries of God."**

- **Christian ministry should take on the nature of Christ who came "to serve, not be served"** (Mt. 20:28). Christ also came to distribute the truth of His Kingdom. Similarly, **we are to teach the gospel.**

SUCH RESPONSIBILITY REQUIRES FAITHFULNESS

"Managers" of the gospel **must be cautious and faithful when presenting the truth.** This means we are to rely on God's wisdom not the tactics of culture.

- We must also have a high level of **integrity** in how we live and how we communicate the Word. **This "faithfulness" should increase with knowledge and responsibility.**

NOT TO PROVE OURSELVES TO OTHERS, BUT GOD

We must be faithful with how we serve others and manage the resources and knowledge God gives us because ultimately we answer to Him.

- Paul says, **"It is of little importance to me that I should be judged by you."** This means **though we're not above criticism and correction, ultimately God will be the Judge of our character and actions.**

MAKING SOME JUDGEMENTS

We're to make righteous judgements in life (Jn. 7:24) and **use judgement within the Christian community** as to how we function as a body (5:3), **but we cannot make the ultimate judgement on one's eternal destiny.**

- Jesus will "bring to light what is hidden" and "reveal the intentions of the heart" when He returns and takes the position of Judge.

TRUSTING IN A FAIR AND PERFECT JUDGE

We have to trust that **God will reward the seen and unseen things in our lives. He will also hold into account evil people, especially those who've done evil in the name of Jesus.** Paul was teaching this to the Corinthians so they would trust his leadership.

- **We must be wise, but we must also learn to trust God sees and knows all.**

HUMILITY & SARCASM (1 CORINTHIANS 4:6-13)

"I APPLIED THESE THINGS TO MYSELF"

Paul says that he and Apollos have applied the previous statements to their lives. He also commands the church to not go "beyond what is written." At the time, this referred to the principles of the OT.

- Paul knew that the principles of the Word would prevent future struggles in the church.

THIS IS AMPLIFIED US FOR TODAY

The command to conduct ourselves in the ways of the Bible are even more imperative today because we have the complete New Testament that includes the example of Christ.

- **The clarity of the Word and the example of the authors should keep us from "arrogance" and "favoring one person over another," which is usually ourselves.**

THERE'S NO ROOM FOR PRIDE

Paul challenged the fact that they felt "superior" to others and were boasting about their giftings because anything good they had was a result of God, not themselves.

- Paul also sarcastically accuses them of thinking they're "full," "rich," and "reign." Meaning they thought they'd already reached the pinnacle of maturity and success.

HAVE WE TAKEN OUR BLESSINGS FOR GRANTED?

Are we not seeing the results of taking for granted the provisions and giftings of God? Do we feel like we have all the knowledge we need? How often do we act entitled, or like we "reign" over everything in our lives?

- This thinking destroys respect for earthly and heavenly authority. **When respect and authority are compromised, it all falls apart.**

"A SPECTACLE TO THE WORLD"

Paul made it clear that his example, and the ultimate example of Jesus was not power, comfort, and wisdom by the world's standards, but by God's.

- **If we're to be "spectacles," in terms of the world's culture, we must submit to God, live in obedience to His Word, and follow Christ's example.**

TRUE WISDOM DEMANDS A SACRIFICE

If the Corinthians wanted true strength, wisdom, and honor, they would have to seek to be weak, foolish, and dishonored by the world's standards.

- The same goes for us. **If we're to possess the attributes of God we must shed the attributes of the world.** Though temporary, **IT IS A HUGE SACRIFICE.**
- **Matthew 6:24 (CSB)**

IT MAY BE MORE THAN A SACRIFICE...

Paul goes further to describe some of the suffering he and the other apostles endured. Not just physical beatings, but being looked at as "everyone's garbage."

- In Paul's sarcasm he paints the sobering picture that **following Christ may require more than just sacrifice, it may include harsh persecution.**

FATHERLY (1 CORINTHIANS 4:14-21)

THE INTENTION WAS GOOD

Paul was not using sarcasm and mentioning his trials as a Christian to shame the Corinthians. Paul loved this church, and he wanted to correct and guide them in the way they should go.

- Tough love is something many of us struggle with, but **we must love people in such a way that they are elevated, not enabled.**

YOU'LL HAVE OTHERS, BUT NOT LIKE ME

Though many people will aid in the development of the church, Paul made it clear that he was unique in that he introduced the gospel and lead them like a father.

- This is a subtle lesson in **honor and respect for our elders in the faith. We must submit to proper godly authority. In this we honor God.**

"I URGE YOU TO IMITATE ME"

This isn't arrogance, but the logical instruction from a parental figure to their children. Paul had experience and a deep relationship with Jesus that gave him insight few others had.

- **Not only should mature Christians be making disciples, we should be releasing others** ("I have sent Timothy") **to lead. This takes humility.**

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"

Paul is essentially saying "talk is cheap, our actions dictate who we are."

- **The power of our faith doesn't come from what we call ourselves or even by what we say. The power of the Spirit is demonstrated in how we live and treat others.** The only way to live in this power is by wholeheartedly following Jesus.

"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?

WHO WE FOLLOW MATTERS!

- We're to not only follow God and His Word, we're to also let more mature believers help us as we grow in our faith.
- And since we claim to ultimately follow the example of Jesus, we should not be entitled or arrogant.
- **If we are honest, who or what is the loudest influence in our lives?**

WE HAVE A CLEAR AND HIGH CALLING

- **If we claim to be Christians,** we are to be living by the principles and teachings of Jesus. **This should be evident in our lives.**
- We must not only be willing to sacrifice our desires and comforts, we must also be willing to suffer for His name's sake.
- This is vital because **we're witnesses to the world around us!** What are they seeing?

"WHAT DO [WE] WANT?"

- Jesus will return and hold to account how we've lived (Mt. 12, Rm. 14). On that day we will encounter one of two sides of Jesus as a result of our decisions; a gentle and loving Savior, or a righteous Judge.
- **Will we humble ourselves and trust God, His Word, and those He has placed in our lives to guide us?**