

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 6TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

FAITHFUL MANAGERS (1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-5)

VIEW OF LEADERS

On the heels of telling the Corinthians not to boast in human leaders (1 Cor. 3:21), Paul tells this young church how he and the other Apostles are supposed to be regarded.

- Apparently there may have been those that doubted Paul's Apostleship and may have lowered their opinion of him while elevating opinions of other leaders.

"SERVANTS OF CHRIST"

Paul uses the word "hyperetas" which describes a subordinate servant functioning as a free man. **It is a chosen servitude not forced.**

- This literally means "under-rower," giving the impression of someone rowing to help propel a big galley ship. The "under-rower" is **one who acts under the direction of captain without question or hesitation.**

"MANAGERS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD"

The implications of being a "manager" is that Paul is working on behalf of God, not as an owner but as a steward.

- This simply means being entrusted to manage the things of God pertaining to salvation. As stewards, **we preserve and protect the integrity of the Gospel, as well as distribute the message to the masses.**

MANAGERS ARE TO BE FOUND FAITHFUL

We do not own the property or resources we are managing, but because of who the owner is and what he has entrusted us with, we must operate faithfully.

- **Jesus has chosen us to be his hands and feet to deliver the good news to his people and we must faithfully fulfill the Great Commission.**

JUDGEMENT FROM MEN

Paul says, "it is of little importance that I should be judged by you," because he gave no attention to the court of popular opinion.

- What the Corinthians thought of him was not something he spent time and effort on. Instead, he only concerned himself with what God thought of him. **Paul sought to please God and not men.**

UNABLE TO RIGHTLY JUDGE HIMSELF

Paul takes it a step further by saying, "I don't even judge myself."

- He recognizes the propensity to be too easy or too hard on himself. In addition, he is unable to judge rightly and there will inevitably be blind spots in his perception of self. However, Paul knows he is not justified just because he is not aware of wrongs.

DO NOT JUDGE PREMATURELY

Paul then warns against judging prematurely. Since God does not judge anything before the appointed time of final judgement, we too should not rush to judgement.

- We can only judge external actions. Christ is the righteous judge, and there will be a time when he will expose what is hidden, even the motives of men's hearts.

EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY (1 CORINTHIANS 4:6-13)

"FOR YOUR BENEFIT"

Paul was able to call the Corinthians to a standard that he and the Apostles upheld. He was not hypocritical with a "do as I say not as I do" mentality but they set the example to be followed.

- The Corinthians benefited from the Apostle's willingness to serve, and they benefited in seeing the example of how to manage the things of God.

"NOTHING BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN"

Paul wanted to make sure the Corinthian Christians learned to keep their thinking "biblical" and not to use the standards and understanding of men to judge him or the other Apostles.

- It was through these unbiblical standards that the Corinthians began to take sides behind certain leaders (Cor. 3:4).

PAUL'S SARCASTIC REBUKE

Paul would address the **very evident issue of pride** amongst the Corinthians by asking three questions.

- First, Paul asks, **"What makes you so superior?"** Second, he asks, **"What do you have that you did not receive?"** As a follow-up he asks, **"Why do you boast as if you had not received it?"**

1ST QUESTION

In asking what makes the Corinthians different or superior, Paul is trying to get them to see that any difference between them is only by what God has done in them.

- **If someone found themselves further along spiritually, it was God who did that work inside of them,** so there is no reason for anyone to boast in themselves.

2ND AND 3RD QUESTION

In asking what do they have that they did not receive and why do they boast as if they had not received it. Paul is trying to get the Corinthians to see that **everything they have came from God.**

- Since everything we have is given to us, **what right do we have to boast as if we earned or deserved what we have received from God.**

SARCASM ENSUES

Paul rebukes the Corinthians by sarcastically saying, "You are already full, you are already rich, and you have reigned as kings without us."

- Though he was trying to chip away at their pride, **he did wish that they did reign, because that would mean Christ had returned and they were all reigning together with Jesus.**
- Paul then attempts to draw a comparison to how the Apostles were viewed and treated against the self inflated view the Corinthians had of themselves.
- Paul flips the Corinthians pride on its head by proudly embracing the things they viewed as humiliating, weak, and offensive, even claiming to be "everyone's garbage."

FATHERLY CARE (1 CORINTHIANS 4:14-21)

CORRECTING THOSE YOU LOVE

Paul wanted the Corinthians to know his purpose was not to shame them but to bring to light a very significant spiritual issue – pride!

- He brought this warning not as an instructor, supervising their conduct, but as a father, who birthed the church and had an obligation to correct in love (Heb. 12:6; Proverbs 3:12)

"I URGE YOU TO IMITATE ME"

Paul urged the Corinthians to imitate him as a father would ask a child to follow in their example.

- In requesting that they follow his example, he is pleading with them to **forsake their prideful tendencies and gain the same kind of humility that he displayed amongst them.**

SENDING MY CHILD IN THE LORD

Paul, in another fatherly act, told the Corinthians that he was sending Timothy to them so he could remind them of the way of life in Jesus Christ.

- Timothy was sent in confidence as Paul knew, through discipling him, that Timothy would be reliable in conveying the message that Paul taught.

TALK IS CHEAP

Paul addresses a group that was "talking a big game" in Corinth by saying, "The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but power."

- There were those who opposed the message Paul taught and he planned on exposing them as being all talk and lacking the power of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION FOR THOSE WHO ARE "PUFFED UP"

Paul then addresses the arrogance of a few in Corinth by asking, "How do you want me to come to you? Should I come with a rod or in a spirit of gentleness?"

- Apparently there were some people who believed Paul would not come back to address these issues and became "puffed up" in the process.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

The first option Paul offered was him coming back with a rod. A rod signified correction and was used by shepherds to smack disobedient sheep.

- Paul hoped they would choose the later; him coming back in love with a spirit of gentleness because they had responded to his warnings and changed their ways.

SERVANTS AND MANAGERS

- "Neither **the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything,** but God who gives the growth." (1 Cor. 3:7)
- Just as a seed planted in the soil, the laborer does not see evidence of their work until it sprouts. We may not even know if the seed will take root, but **we have no control over the growth.**
- We may never see the fruits of our labor here, but one day **"praise will come to each one from God (v.5)."**
- **It is not just about results if our motives are not pure!** God will **"both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the heart."** **Whose kingdom are we growing?**

PAUL'S QUESTIONS

- We also should consider the questions Paul asked the people of Corinth. **"Who makes you so superior?" "What do you have that you did not receive?" "Why do you boast as if you had not received it?"**
- **When our depravity is matched up against a good and gracious God, we can only "boast in the Lord."** (1 Cor. 1:31)