

“Big Fish Arrogance”

1 Corinthians Chapter 4

Begin reading Chapter 3:21

1Cr 4:1 1) Servants and Stewards vs 1-2

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

- Paul is telling the Corinthians to consider him and other apostles as servants and stewards.
- Servants (KJV- ministers)
 - The common usage for servant /minister is “*doulos*” = “slave”
give myself wholly to one's needs and service, make myself a bondman
 - This word is “*hyperetas*” It is a particular type of slave; an “under rower”
 - An under rower is a slave in the lower part of a ships galley rowing under the direction and orders of the captain.
 - Under rowers serve “*Christ the master-pilot, helping forward the ship of the Church toward the haven of heaven.*” (Guzak)
- Stewards - Is the manager of the Masters household.
 - “*He manages everything but owns nothing*” (Focht)
 - In this word this servant isn't the lowest but considered the highest slave.
 - Joseph in Potaphar's household.
- Not just any steward of just anything or any house, but he considered himself the steward of the MYSTERIES OF GOD,
 - Paul was a steward
 - The Church (you and me) are stewards of the MYSTERIES OF GOD.
 - Colossians 1:25-29 “*Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.*”
 - Ephesians 3:8-10 “*To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.*”
 - How are you doing with that?



1Cr 4:2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

- Paul's concern is that he is
 - A) Well Liked - lots of people listen
 - B) a Humorous Preacher
 - C) Cool / HIP / Contemporary
 - D) Trustworthy / Faithfulness (KJV) (Hint: “D”)
- IT IS REQUIRED! Not optional.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:3-9 “*For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness—nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.*”

1Cr 4:3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.

1Cr 4:4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

- There are THREE COURTS OF JUDGMENT
 - Examined by OTHERS
 - a. Paul considered this a very small thing. (he doesn't deny this but in comparison it does not have a great priority)
 - b. This is because a minister needs to be trustworthy to the Lord not to People
 - c. Usually God's standard is higher.
 - d. You will not normally hear "It's ok you have done enough already"
 - Examined by SELF
 - a. Paul has examined himself "I am conscious of nothing against myself"
 - b. Paul instructs Christians to examine themselves (1 Cor 11:28; 1 Cor 13:5; Gal 6:4)
 - c. Lamentations 3:40 "Let us examine and probe our ways, And let us return to the LORD."
 - d. Usually our self examination is not perfect. We have the tendency of being either too hard or too soft on ourselves.
 - e. Paul has found nothing against himself but this is not his acquittal.
 - f. **Acquittal** - a setting free from the charge of an offense by verdict, sentence, or other legal process
 - Examined by THE LORD
 - a. Paul rested in a just judge to examine him.
 - b. The Lord was the one who commissioned Paul, you and me any way.
 - c. His examination will be thorough and just (Not too harsh Not too Soft)
 - d. Psalm 26:2 "Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart."
 - e. Jeremiah 12:3 "But You know me, O LORD; You see me; And You examine my heart's attitude toward You."

1Cr 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

- What a wonderful verse.
- Timing
 - Stop Passing Judgment
 - Wait
- The Lord will
 - Bring to Light Hidden Things (the negative things)
 - Disclose motives of the heart (the negative & positive things) **ever experience this?**
- Then God will give the praise to man.

Judge now - receive men's praise for being so just and righteous. Wait for the Lord - receive God's praise

1Cr 4:6 2) Puffed Up People vs 6-13

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

- Paul is stating that he has described himself and Apollos as a UNDER ROWER and a STEWARD for the Corinthian's sake. SO THEY WILL LEARN
 - Not to exceed what is written
 - Not to become arrogant (KJV = "puffed up")
- 1 Corinthians 8:1 "Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies."

- 2 Corinthians 10:12 "For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding."
- You can always look at others in the church and find someone who is weaker or lesser than you. You can also find someone who is stronger or greater. This is not wise.

1Cr 4:7 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

- Answers to the THREE QUESTIONS.
 - QUESTION ONE: some people in church, my employees, children, or others with self esteem problems. What about God? What about Satan?
 - QUESTION TWO: "receive = given" as to granted rather than earned. Nothing John the Baptist said "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven." John 3:27
 - QUESTION THREE: Pride; Fear of man

1Cr 4:8 You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you.

1Cr 4:9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

The Corinthians

- Filled

Ephesians 4:11-13 "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

- Rich

Psalms 50:10 Our Father owns the cattle on a 1000 hills "For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills."

Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

- Kings

Rev 1:6 (KJV & NKJV) "has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

The Apostles

- Last of all (conquered captive)

- Condemned to Death

- A Spectacle (humiliated)

Doesn't it seem the Corinthians are scriptural and the Apostles are not. There is more. Read on.

1Cr 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.

The Corinthians

- Prudent

Matthew 25:1-12 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'"

The Apostles

- Fools

- Strong
Ephesians 6:10 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might"
- Weak
- Distinguished
Romans 2:10 "glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good"
- Without Honor

Definitely the Christianity of the Corinthians looks different than that of the Apostles. Paul goes on to describe the Apostles walk with Christ.

1Cr 4:11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless;

1Cr 4:12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;

1Cr 4:13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even* until now.

- The Apostles were hungry, thirsty, poor, persecuted, homeless, constantly working, (*Working with our own hands was understood to mean manual labor of low class people*) reviled, slandered. This isn't the want ad that I would send my resume to.
- "Scum and Dregs" This is the waste products of a purification process.
- Why this huge of a contrast?
- The Corinthians Ceased to Grow in Christ.
 - 1 Corinthians 3:1 Paul said while he was with them they were "infants in Christ"
 - He told them they should be mature.
 - What Paul has described in verses 8,9, and 10 is a teaching in the church called the "Word of Faith" or called the "Prosperity Doctrine".
 - It seems as we grow in Christ, we start in a position of humility. We are sinners. We are depraved. We are no good in of ourselves. (We are in a very low very teachable state)
 - The things we learn are Who We Are in Christ. We learn about the gifts and blessings that are made available to us in Christ. Our heads are raised up from humility to a place of looking to our God and realizing what He has called us to be.
 - a. I believe much of the church today is in this place.
 - b. I believe this is a God ordained place we all need to pass through on our way to maturity. The true place God wants us to be.
 - c. I believe this is a comfortable place to be and it is easy to stay here.
 - The next place is REAL MATURITY. To take these glorious wonderful benefits and let go of them for the sake of others. Jesus let go of the things of heaven to save mankind Paul, in contrast to the Corinthian Church was the "*off scouring of all things*" for their benefit. Today you know others who are sacrificing benefits of the Kingdom for your sake.
- This is our next Goal. REAL MATURITY. Laying down your own life so others may have a new life.
- John 15:13 Jesus said "*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*"
- 1 John 3:16 "*We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*"

1Cr 4:14 **3) Admonished Children** vs 14-21

I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

1Cr 4:15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet *you would not have* many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

1Cr 4:16 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.

- Paul is now addressing them as a parent. As a father. There are those time when a parent needs to speak to their children a word of correction.
- This correction is not to shame them to accomplish a belittling. It is a word to point out a problem so they may correct a problem. So they may be better.

- “Countless tutors” (instructors) *Gk- paidagogoi* means a hired guardian that watches of children and aid in education. While they have some authority, they do not have the same authority as a parent.
- “Be Imitators of me” - (KJV-followers: mimic) Paul just laid out a fairly unpleasant picture of his ministry to the Corinthians. Then he says “imitate me”. You could imagine the horror that pricked their heart. Those that were of Apollos we probably glad they were of Apollos.
- How about you? You have just heard Paul give a picture of his life. You too have heard the words “Be Imitators of Me”. How does that make you feel? What is your response?

1Cr 4:17 **For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.**

- Paul sends Timothy - loved and faithful and teaches what has already been taught. (REMINDER)
- Paul teaches the same thing “*everywhere in every church*”. He isn’t picking on or expecting something different from the Corinthians.

1Cr 4:18 **Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.**

1Cr 4:19 **But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power.**

1Cr 4:20 **For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.**

- Some of the Corinthians thought Paul was afraid of the Corinthians because they were so knowledgeable in their belief. And his fear was keeping him away.
- Paul lays down the challenge. He says that he is coming and he is challenging their puffed up oratory with the Power of God. Great oratory has its good points but it doesn’t save. The power of God Saves.

1Cr 4:21 **What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?**

- Paul is leaving the choice with the Corinthians. Paul could come with correction or he could come with loving comradery.
- It was up to the people to change, to respond to the written word.

**"Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible[®],
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)**