

PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

LEARNING HOW TO BE A HEAVENLY CHURCH IN A GODLESS WORLD

1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-14

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THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU – PART 1

HOW TO BE A CHURCH THAT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Maturity, Servanthood, Leadership, Discipleship

On Wednesday morning of last week, Americans woke up to a miracle – the world's longest lasting document of liberty and freedom, when used, operates perfectly... The Constitution

In a national post-election forum on Thursday – a former speaker of the house said “What happened on Tuesday can be summed up in three words”

We The People

is the preamble of the United States Constitution.

(David Barton sited that in the past 26 months there have been more copies of the U.S. Constitution purchased or downloaded than in any other time in American history.

The “We The People” Are The Ones That Are To Be Served By Our Elected Leaders which, Based upon the Constitution, Become Our Servants and Our Ministers.

Here In 1st Corinthians, Paul “Re-educates” the Greek Corinthians about how a real church is supposed to work and who are its servants and ministers.

1 Corinthians 4:1

“Let a man so **consider** us, as **servants** of Christ and **stewards** of the **mysteries** of God.”

servants uɹphre ÷ thβ hupe-retes, hoop-ay-ret'-ace;

a lower level oarsmen. one condemned. the sub-ordinate slave of a roman galley, the lower level oarsman. One who serves the progress of the ship by being under the ship.

2 Timothy 2:3-4

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. :4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

The Christian Minister and Steward has Only One Master - Christ

He must give **account** to God, he must **answer** to God,
He must **serve** his God.

The Context is That of Pastors,
Ministers, and Stewards and the Church

Paul Reminds Them

“I am Christ’s servant, Christ’s steward in the things of life and eternity” for Your Benefit.

HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU

1.) We serve you best by being faithful

v.2-5

Luke 16:10-12

He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much. :11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*? :12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?

The Roman Centurion Meets Jesus Christ

Matthew 8:9

For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, “Go,” and he goes; and to another, “Come,” and he comes; and to my servant, “Do this,” and he does it.”

1a.) Faithful to the Commitment

:2 Moreover it is **required** in stewards that one be found **faithful**. :3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a **human court**. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

When it comes to judging ministers and stewards of God's church,

there is no shortage of volunteers

(we've all done it – we've all sinned in doing it)

“why doesn't he” or If I were him I would” or “it's wrong for him to say”

3 But with me it is a very small thing that **#1 - I should be judged by you** or **#2 - by a human court.** In fact, **#3 - I do not even judge myself.**

Galatians 1:10

For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

The Context is That of Pastors, Ministers, and Stewards and the Church

When a servant of Christ is being criticized for serving Christ,
He should never be afraid of the attack.

**Faithfulness is impossible unless It's Rooted in Obedience
TO JESUS CHRIST - HIS CALLING ON ME TO HIM ALONE.**

- J. Allen Blair writes

“Are you serving the Lord Jesus Christ in the light of His will?

Are you being faithful to the obligations that He has placed before you to do?

Or Are we like the Corinthians? Doing what we want to do in “Jesus name while not doing what He wants us to do in obedience to Him?”

We are guilty of doing what we want to do and not what Jesus wants us to do.

Hebrews 10:7 & John 8:29

*“Behold, I have come - In the volume of the book it is written of Me - **To do Your will, O God.**” ... **John 8:29** And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for ***I always do those things that please Him.***”*

BY BEING FAITHFUL

1b.) Faithful to the Confidence

“To The **Confidence**” = The Confidence of Standing before Jesus in the End”

For I know of nothing **against** myself, yet I am not justified by this;
but **#4 - He who judges me is the Lord.**

God's Pastors Have Only One Message

2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort,
with all longsuffering and teaching.

Acts 20:26-28

Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am innocent of the blood of all men.* :27 For I
have not shunned to declare to you **the whole counsel of God.** :28 Therefore take
heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you
overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

1 Corinthians 2:2-4

For I determined not to know anything among you except **Jesus Christ and Him
crucified.** :3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. :4 And my
speech and my **preaching** were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in
demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

The Confidence

1 Corinthians 1:31

that, as it is written, "*He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.*"

BY BEING FAITHFUL

1c.) Faithful to the Calling

:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both
bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts.
Then each one's praise will come from God.

Our Own Personal Report Card Involvement / Resources / Motives

1 Corinthians 3:11-13

For no other foundation can **anyone** lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
:12 Now if **anyone** builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood,
hay, straw, :13 **each one's** work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because
it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test **each one's** work, of what sort it is.

HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU

WHAT MAKES YOU A TRUE BELIEVER

2.) We serve you best by being humble

v.6-8

What does real, biblical humility look like in our world?

2a.) Humble – knowing who we are in Jesus

:6 Now these things, brethren, I have **figuratively transferred** (*used as an example*) to myself and Apollos for your sakes, **that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.**

The Context is That of Pastors,
Ministers, and Stewards and the Church

Paul is Saying That:

“I’ve used Apollos and myself to illustrate to you Corinthians that If you obey God’s word, you won’t be bragging about any one of us or any one of your Pastors, Ministers or Stewards - Leaders.

Is God Really Using You?

The More God uses a Man or Woman,
The lower they become – the lesser they are – the more invisible

People in Church Sin When They Exalt
a Man of God

A Man of God Sins When He Exalts Himself Before the People.

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

For I am **the least of the apostles**, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. :10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain...

1 Timothy 1:12

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because **He counted me faithful**, putting *me* into the ministry,

BY BEING HUMBLE

2b.) Humble – knowing what we have from Jesus

:7 For who makes you differ from another? (*GOD DOES*) And **what do you have that you did not receive?** (*GOD GIVES*) Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (*ARROGANCE*)

“Please pray for me that I might remain humble” – said a man to his friend.
His friend replied, “what on earth do you have to be proud about?”

- J. Allen Blair

“As Pastors and Christian Servants, We Labor Under The Eye of God”

Each of Us, If a Christian, Have a Calling from the Lord

Hebrews 13:7

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

Hebrews 13:17

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:24

Greet those who rule over you,

BY BEING HUMBLE

2c.) Humble – knowing why it’s all about Jesus

8 You are **already full!** You are **already rich!** You have reigned **as kings** without us - and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!

**Paul is About to Release Some Gas from Their Inflated Heads
SO YOU GUYS HAVE ARRIVED – HOW DOES THAT FEEL?**

COMPLACENCY WAS THEIR COMFORT-ZONE

They were impressed with themselves – smug and self-dependent.

“I’ve arrived and you all should be like me”

You have reigned **as kings** without us.
You don't even need us or anyone – you're the ones, you've arrived
You're the super-church.

We need to be careful here at CCCH – we're known, influential, and blessed.

Revelation 3:14-16

14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: **15** “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. **16** So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

Luke 6:25-26

25 Woe to you who are full, For you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, For you shall mourn and weep. **26** Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

No prosperity doctrine taught here / no kingdom theology doctrine here
No holiness doctrine here / No self-dependent doctrine here.

“LOOK HERE PAUL – WE WANT OUR CORINTHIAN PASTORS TO ENTERTAIN US. TO MAKE US HAPPY, WEALTHY & WISE.

It's not about us guys – it's about Jesus!

Biblical Humility Is not being Weak, Frail, and Wimpy.
Biblical Humility is Having the Will to Follow Jesus.

Matthew 8:19-22

Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” **:20** And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head.” **:21** Then another of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” **:22** But Jesus said to him, “Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU

WHAT MAKES YOU A TRUE BELIEVER!

3.) We serve you best by being Dead

v.9-14

Romans 14:7-8

For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. :8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Time is Running Out for Us in This World

Take a field trip to your refrigerator or pantry.
You'll see suggestions or recommendations by the company.

“For freshness use by...”
“For maximum effectiveness use at bed time”
“Do not take on an empty stomach”

BY BEING DEAD

3a.) Dead men have no plans

:9 For I think that God has (#1) **displayed us**, the apostles, **last**, as men (#2) **condemned to death**; for we have been made a (#3) **spectacle** to the world, both to angels and to men.

Have you ever talked to a dead man?
A man who's received his death-papers?
No longer is he concerned about his favorite store and his golf clubs.
His car no longer takes up two parking spaces at the mall. He's more concerned now about his relationships. He cares more now about how his family will turn out. He surveys his life and makes things ready for the ending.

Listen – each of us should be living and thinking and ordering our lives as though we will be leaving next week or next month.

James 4:13

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; 14 whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. 15 Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

"As a Christian, I get so tired of being treated like the village idiot every time I try to say something about the Bible." Now, that is the treatment you will get, and it will hinder your Christian witness unless you're willing to be called the village idiot for Jesus' sake."

All three of these word usages are Roman terms for acting, a show, or for entertainment:

displayed $\alpha\pi\delta\epsilon\iota\kappa\mu\iota$ *apodeiknumi*, *ap-od-ike'-noo-mee*;
to show off as on exhibit; to use for a demonstration.

condemned to death $\epsilon\pi\iota\theta\alpha\lambda\alpha\tau\iota\sigma\mu\oslash$ *epithanatos*, *ep-ee-than-at'-ee-os*;
from a written off as dead. Status: - dead. man that has been sentenced to death or is as good as dead.

spectacle $\theta\epsilon\alpha\tau\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ *theatron*, *theh'-at-ron*;
a theater. The place of public display or entertainment. An exhibit.

In The Roman Empire There Were "Mini" Coliseums

There would be 3 "episodes" to the **spectacle**.

Episode one was 'The Hunt'

(the Romans would bring out such animals like giraffes, monkeys and hippos and would chain them to the "arena" – the sand. Then they would release lions, bears, wolves, alligators)

Episode two was "The Gladiatorial"

(this was the highlight of the day – manslaughter)

Episode three was "The Conclusion or Determination"

The release of prisoners, criminals, and the poor of the empire with a promise of freedom to the last man standing)

BY BEING DEAD

3b.) Dead men get no respect

:10 We are **fools** for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are **weak**, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are **dishonored!** :11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. :12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; :13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the **filth of the world**, the **offscouring** of all things until now.

It's thru the "sacrifice of self"

fools *mwro/β moros, mo-ros'*;
dull, shut up, absurd, a blockhead,

Sermons, messages, teaching, and preaching
is never for listening enjoyment – it's for your spiritual development.

Matthew 5:11-12

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. :12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

dishonored *α̅ τιμοβ atimos, at'-ee-mos;*
despised, without respect or honor, the least of all.

The Corinthians had become accustomed

to receiving praise, recognition, and honor from human courts and human opinions.
The Christian sees past that.

If you really want to be of Paul or Apollos or Peter

Then you had better count the cost – we are rejects in this world

See, People Confuse the Messenger with the Message and Elevate the Messenger
Because You Can See him – that's not good...

The Messenger is the Loser // The Message is the Winner

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

BY BEING DEAD

3c.) Dead men tell no tales

14 I do not write these things to shame you,
but as **my beloved children** - I warn you.

warn nouqete÷w **noutheteo**, *noo-thet-eh'-o*;
to caution or reprove firmly and gently: — admonish, warn.

Paul recognized his calling as a spiritual parent

“That makes me think of my spiritual family - - I am so spoiled.
Greg Laurie, Chuck Smith, David Hocking
- each of them influenced my life personally”

————— *End of Study* —————