

Leaders: Servants of Christ and fathers of the church

1 Corinthians 4: 1 – 21

1) Servants of Christ (vs. 1 – 7)

- ⌘ Entrusted with the secret things of God
 - Abraham's servant was entrusted with the task of getting a wife for Isaac
 - Jesus told a parable about a man who entrusted his possessions to his servants
- ⌘ It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful
 - Leadership is not about position but rather about responsibility. Leaders are responsible to carry out all that they have been entrusted with. They are to be trustworthy.
- ⌘ As servants of Christ leaders aren't perfect but a secure leader finds his security in the Lord – it is the Lord who will judge the leader who has messed - thus is unconcerned about judgments made by believers or any other human institution.
 - It is the person who is insecure in the Lord who has to constantly try and justify his/her life and actions. Such a person makes excuses or gives long explanations for everything he does.
- ⌘ Paul exhorts the Corinthian church not to judge anything before the appointed time.
 - It is easy to judge a leader but we should refrain from doing so. Unless it is a moral issue that is subject to church discipline.
 - Saul stopped walking with the Lord but David never judged him or tried to overthrow him or pressurise him to abdicate his leadership. He waited for the Lord's timing and judgement on Saul. When it was God's time God removed Saul from leadership and put David in his place.
 - Don't do God's work in our way. Be patient to do it His way.
- ⌘ A servant leader doesn't do things to get the praise of people but to do his duty in serving Christ.
 - If his motive is otherwise then that will be exposed by God in due time.
- ⌘ v. 6 The Message “All I'm doing now my friends, is showing how these things pertain to Apollos and me so that you will learn restraint and not rush into making judgments without know all the facts. It's important to look at things from God's point of view. I would rather not see you inflating or deflating reputations based on mere hearsay.”

2) Fools for Christ (vs. 8 – 13)

- ⌘ Paul brings out the stark contrast through the use of irony to show what the Corinthian church has considered itself to have become in comparison to what they were as apostles.
 - You have become kings without us – God has put us on display condemned to die in the arena. Made a spectacle to the whole universe
 - We are fools for Christ – you are wise in Christ
 - We are weak – you are strong
 - You are honoured – we are dishonoured
 - We are hungry and thirsty, in rags, brutally treated, homeless.
 - We work hard with our own hands
 - When cursed we bless
 - When persecuted we endure it
 - When slandered we answer kindly
 - We have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world
- ⌘ Paul wasn't giving an option of lifestyles. He was pointing out a heresy that had crept into the Corinthian church through some previous leaders and teachers that said that they had made it. They can have all that Christ came to give and be comfortable.
- ⌘ Paul was highlighting in the apostolic lifestyle the life that Christ expects of his disciples – the lifestyle of carrying the cross with the godly attitudes that go along with it. They were imitating the life of Christ and were expecting the church to do the same.

3) Fathers of the church (vs. 14 – 21)

- ⌘ Paul wasn't trying to shame the Corinthian Christians, but to warn them as “his dear children”
- ⌘ As a father in the Lord he treated them as his spiritual children. A father goes beyond the responsibilities of a guardian.

⌘ A father:

- Feeds his children
- Protects
- Warns
- Teaches
- Sets the example
- encourages
- Nurtures
- Loves his children

⌘ A Guardian:

- Gives the children the bare necessities of life

⌘ A father disciplines

- With love and gentleness
- With the whip (sternly) if necessary

⌘ The need to discipline:

- Some have become proud and arrogant
- Some know a lot and talk a lot but have no power – the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power
- To lead the believers into the power of the kingdom of God – the power to live godly Christ like lives.