# I Corinthians 4:1-21

### Review...

- I Corinthians 1:1-9 The greeting to a troubled chruch...
- I Corinthians 1:10-17 The 1<sup>st</sup> problem Division in the church following men...
  - o When there is division in the church it keeps us from being effective for Jesus...
  - o The solution to division focus on Jesus Christ the one thing we all have in common!
  - o The first cause of the division following men I am of Paul / Apollos / Peter / Jesus...
- I CORINTHIANS 1:18-31 THE 2<sup>ND</sup> PROBLEM DIVISION IN THE CHURCH THE WISDOM OF MEN...
  - o The Wisdom of God's message the cross / the Wisdom of God's messengers the foolish...
- I Corinthians 2:1-16 The simplicity of God's Message...
  - o Paul determined to just preach Christ crucified to the church the simple Gospel...
    - So that the faith of the believers would be based in God's Word not men's words...
  - o Those who received the message of the Gospel are made perfect and understand..
    - Revealed by the Spirit of God within us who knows the mind of God..
    - Unlike those who do not believe cannot know the truths of God no Holy Spirit!
- I Corinthians 2:1-16 The 3<sup>RD</sup> problem division in the chruch spiritual immaturity...
  - o The believers in Corinth had never grown in the Lord still babes in Christ...
    - Shown through their division their focus on denominations...
    - That they were acting like unbelievers missing the unity we should have in Jesus!
    - One plants another waters but God gives the increase!
  - o Paul had built the church on the foundation of Jesus...
    - But those who added to the church needed to be careful...
    - Their work would be tested by fire if it was of God / or a work of men...
  - o Therefore do not cause division do not tear down the church of God!

## THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL & APOLLOS...

- 1<sup>st</sup> Servants of Christ... vs. 1-6
  - o Rather than the saints in Corinth arguing if they were 'of' Paul or 'Apollos'...
  - o Paul commands them to instead follow their example to Jesus!
  - o Look at us (Paul/Apollos) as servants of Christ stewards of the mysteries of God...
  - o 1st Servants of Christ huperetes 'under rower' (only used here by Paul in NT)...
    - A slave who worked a Roman ship under the deck hard working driving an oar...
    - No one would ever see and 'under rower' it was a humbling position no prestige...
    - Paul's point is they were no one special they were called by God to serve...
    - Sad to say the church has lost sight of that today 'Minister' has become a title...
    - Rather than working hard for God it describes one who tells others what to do
  - $\circ$  2<sup>nd</sup> Stewards of the mysteries of God responsible for explaining God's Word...

- Paul/Apollos were simple 'under rowers' no one special or important...
  - But they had been entrusted with the most important of all duties...
  - They were the caretakers of the truths of God's of God's Word!
  - We have all been entrusted with God's Word we know truth of the Gospel...
  - We were not given this honor so we could hold onto (hide it) for ourselves...
  - We're called to tell others to those who don't know/understand about Jesus!
- God looks for stewards who are faithful (Aorist/Passive/Subjunctive)
  - If you had a valuable ring you would not give it to you 2 year old to hold on to...
  - You look for someone who is proven steady faithful and true...
- o This was the question that had arisen in Corinth was Paul faithful... vs. 3-4
  - There were those who questioned Paul's integrity his love for the people!
    - They accused him of using his authority to get money II Corinthians 12:13-17
    - There are many 'preachers' and 'pastors' today who have false motives...
    - Rather than caring for and feeding God's people they take from them!
    - \* Ezekiel 34:2 "Prophesy against the leaders of Israel. Give them this message...

      Destruction is certain for you... who feed yourselves instead of your flocks."
  - But Paul never took anything from Corinth he only gave back to them...
    - \* II Corinthians 12:14-15 "I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved."
    - The true heart of the steward/pastor is to give his life for the sheep!
- o The 'opinion' of the church in Corinth or men in general counted very little to Paul...
  - Men always have their idea their comments about others...
    - You can't give too much credence to them you don't know their motives...
    - More often than not men say things as a means to an end...
    - 'Don't go to church it's useless' when really they're convicted they are not going!
  - Paul did not even trust his judgment of himself because he did not know himself...
    - His conscience was clear but that didn't matter the Lord would examine him!
    - Most of the time we do not fully understand our own actions...
    - We might beat ourselves up over a decision we have made right or wrong...
    - I John 3:20 "If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart."
    - But ultimately it is only the Lord who knows our heart He will judge us...
- $\circ~$  So be careful not to Judge before the time... vs.  $5\,$ 
  - The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness / reveal the heart...
    - God will reveal the inner thoughts of the heart the ulterior motives...
    - Men can fool other men but men cannot fool the Lord He knows the heart...

- Then praise will come from the Lord
  - Paul was not looking for praise from the church in Corinth / from men...
  - He was faithfully serving the Lord waiting for the praises of God...
  - **Galatians 1:10** "Do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."
  - Do we worry about what others think or about what God thinks
  - Too often we seek men's praise/opinion that are fickle & short lived
  - If we are more concerned what others think than what God does
  - We are serving men and not serving God
- o Paul and Apollos were good examples not to depend on men... vs. 6
  - If you pay attention to the Bible you won't brag about one leader over another...
    - The example of God's Word is clear God uses sinners...
    - Moses was a murderer / David was an adulterer / Peter was a coward!
    - These are not men to admire it is God who is the one who deserves all the Glory!
  - So don't put men on a pedestal don't think they are someone special...
    - If men come to us looking for answers and help it's easy to be the answer...
    - If someone needs food, money, or wise counsel... we try to be Jesus
    - And men would much rather look to someone they can touch and see...
    - Therefore they are much more inclined to trust in a man than God
    - The problem is we are limited and can't always help those who look to us
    - Maybe we can help them once but when they come back again and again...
    - We have limited abilities and resources only God has limitless!

#### Don't be prideful... vs. 7-13

- o What makes someone different/better than another person... vs. 7
  - Everything you have you received from God so it is not yours to glory over...
  - So why do you brag as if you have not received it from God...
  - You intellect / your race / your family / your country all were given to you!
  - We have nothing which we have not received so all the credit goes to God!
- The church in Corinth had forgotten... vs. 8-13
  - You think you are already full rich you have reigned as kings without us...
  - The saints in Corinth looked at themselves and thought they had it all...
  - (Paul notes I wish it were true we would be reigning with you **Revelation 3:21**)
  - \* Revelation 3:17 "You say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' – and do not know you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked."

- It is not about having lots of stuff money it is about having Jesus!
- So what do those who have Jesus look like what is the cost of salvation...
- The cost of following Jesus...
  - We are last men condemned to death Luke 9:23...
    - God set the Apostles as an example POWs for the world (& angles) to watch...
    - We say we believe in Jesus but do we really understand what that means
    - Are we looking for a way to have salvation but live our lives our way
    - Believing in Jesus mean following him taking up our cross dying to ourselves!
  - Being scorned by the world...
    - Whereas the church in Corinth was seen as wise / strong / and honored!
    - Their dedication to Jesus made them look like fools / weak / and laughed at...
    - When we are dedicated to the Lord the world does look at like we are crazy...
    - They think we need a crutch in Jesus but they are strong so they don't...
  - Not living for the pleasures of the moment...
    - To this hour we are hungry / thirsty / poorly clothed / beaten / homeless...
    - We labor/toil with our own hands they did not have important jobs...
    - We bless those who curse us / we are patient with those who abuse us...
    - If we are looking for the Gospel/Jesus to give us a better life here...
    - We will likely be sorely disappointed the Gospel is about Eternal life!
    - But the momentary light troubles of this life are nothing compared to heaven!
    - II Corinthians 4:17 "Our present troubles are quite small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever!"
  - We are falsely accused treated like the filth/trash of the world...
    - If the world likes you if they think you are great something is wrong...
    - Following Jesus means the world hates you thinks you trash...
    - **John 15:19** "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

### Follow Me... vs. 14-21

- o Paul did not write to shame them but as little children to warn them... vs. 14-17
  - Paul saw the believers in Corinth as his children in the faith...
    - They might have ten thousand teachers in Christ but only one father...
    - Paul was the one who had first given them the good news of the Gospel!
    - Paul was not upset with the church he was worried for them...
    - When we get our focus off of Jesus when we get caught up in the world...
    - God is not upset with us He is concerned for us He knows where sin leads death!
    - He might be strong on us rebuke us but only because He loves us Hebrews 12:6

- Therefore follow me (*Present/Middle/Imperative*)...
- Paul set the example for the church the model for them to follow in Jesus...
- I Corinthians 11:1 "Follow me, just as I also follow Christ."
- I have sent Timothy (my beloved faithful son in the Lord) to you Acts 19:21-22...
  - Timothy would remind the church of Paul's teachings...
  - The same teachings Paul taught in all the churches of God...
  - **II Timothy 3:10** "You have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance..."
  - When we get caught up in the care of this world and we do forget...
  - We need a 'Timothy' a Godly brother to come along our side and remind us...
  - Point us away from the world wisdom of men and back to Jesus!
- Some of you have become arrogant... 18-21
  - There were some in the church who were confident Paul would never return...
    - But Paul would come and face those who were causing the problems...
    - Not to hear their words but to see 'what they are made of'...
    - The Kingdom of God is not just in word (*logos*) but also in power (*dunamis*)!
    - Like a protective father Paul was going to come and deal with troublemakers...
    - There are many today who don't think Jesus is going to come back...
    - They have become arrogant in their sin thinking there will be no consequence...
    - Matthew 24:44 "Be ready, for [Jesus] is coming at an hour you do not expect."
  - Do you want a rod or love and gentleness...
    - The saints in Corinth could continue in their divisive ways choose the Rod...
    - Or they could humble themselves turn back to Jesus choose love and comfort...
    - Like the church in Corinth we have a choice how will He find us...
    - Will we find ourselves under the judgment of the Lord the Rod...
    - Or do we humble ourselves and find the grace and comfort of God James 4:6