

Letters to the church in...



Corinth

Focus: 1 Corinthians 4:1-21

Lesson 4-Esteem and the Ministry

- **A faithful work and Judgments from the outside (v.1-5)**
 - (v.2) *and so God's ministers must be very faithful and strong in the faith.*
 - (v.4) **"for I know nothing against myself..."** (but that doesn't make me without fault entirely either—the Lord will judge me). Paul always sought to have a "conscience void of any offense towards God or man"—ref. Acts 24:16—we should strive for the same.
 - (v.5) **Everything will be revealed when the Lord comes.** (Jesus spoke of this in other places too—ref. Luke 12:3,4). After Christ returns there will be opportunity to see things in their right light, as the Lord will reveal them truly (ref. also Revelation 20:4 during the 1000 years. That time period begins when God delivers His people—comp. 1 Thes.4:16).
- **Do not over esteem men, but consider that each has his proper place as God has assigned (v.6-10)**
 - (v.6,7) *If God has blessed us with any talent or whatever the case, we have nothing to glory in! All belongs to God and is lent for His service and glory. We are not to praise men or glorify men!!*
 - **"...having men's persons in admiration"** (See **Jude 1:16**) **is not good.**—even as with the "stars" of men. It is sinful and prideful. We are to worship God, not other Creatures!
 - The "fear of man" also "brings a snare" but "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom" (Proverbs 29:25) and "God is no respecter of persons" (ref. Acts 10:34).
 - (v.9) *Paul and the other Apostles knew their coming fate. Many of the Apostles of Christ sealed their testimony in blood. Paul was beheaded in Rome, cir. A.D. 67.*
- **The example of suffering for the sake of the gospel has been set by Christ and His Apostles (v.11-16)**
 - (v.11) **"...having no certain dwelling place."** Even Jesus experienced this in His work and He expressed that we may suffer such things for the gospel's sake at times. **"For the Son of man has not where to lay His head..."** (**Matthew 8:19,20**).
 - Jesus told us: if they have done it to your Lord and Master they will do it unto you. And He also says, **"For the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to give His life a ransom for many"** (**Matthew 20:27,28**). Jesus did not come here to live a cushy life!! The earnest followers of Christ will also **"take up their cross and follow Christ..."** and **"all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution..."** (**Matthew 16:24-26**; 2 Timothy 3:12). Not to be living for this world. Christians are "pilgrims and strangers" to this land of sin and evil (ref. Hebrews 11:13,14).
 - (v.14-16) *Paul was a spiritual parent to the Corinthians (many instructors in Christ, but not many spiritual parents who would have brought us to spiritual birth).*

➤ **Paul's instruction for the Corinthians to amend their ways before he comes (v.16-21)**

- *Paul pleads for them to follow his fatherly example (v.16) as a Christian, spiritual parent to them.*
- *Timothy (v.17), is the same young minister to whom Paul wrote the letters/books of 1st and 2nd Timothy. Timothy was also a spiritual son of Paul. They had first met up with each other at Lystra (ref. Acts 16:1-4), and began working together as Paul was training him for the work of ministry. Timothy would share faithfully Paul's words of counsel—the same as Paul "taught everywhere in all the churches" (the life of an Evangelist/Missionary)*
- *Always, "if the Lord will..." (v.19). Any plans we think to make should be tentative to the Lord's plans for we do not know what a day may bring forth (ref. James 4:13-15).*
- **"For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (v.20).**

Question (s) for the Heart:

Would you like to have a humble and self-sacrificing heart of love for others through the grace of Jesus Christ? _____