

Judgment Test

Session 5:

1 CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER 4

In this world, who is the one that judges your character most?

If you were considered as the new manager of God's created world, how would you change how it is managed today?

1 Corinthian 4:1-5, *"This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. ² Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. ³ I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God."*

Paul urges the Corinthians not to think of Apollos, Cephas, or himself as leaders of parties (factions); but to think of them all as "servants" of Christ.

Paul also speaks of themselves as stewards...ones who have been entrusted with the secret things of God.

A steward had control of the administration of the house or the estate; he controlled the staff; he issued the supplies; but...no matter how much he controlled the household staff, he himself was still a slave where the master was concerned.

Remember..... whatever a man's position in the Church, and whatever power he may yield there or whatever prestige he may enjoy, he still remains the servant of Jesus Christ.

One thing a steward must be is reliable. The very fact that he enjoys so much independence and responsibility makes it all the more necessary that his master should be able to depend absolutely upon him.

The Corinthians...with their choice of putting one leader over the other, have exercised judgments on the other leaders.

So Paul speaks of three judgments that every man must face:

(1) He must face the judgment of his fellow men.....

- Very important...because of our occasional radical mistakes, the judgment from fellow men is often right.
- "There are only two people who can tell you the truth about yourself—an enemy who has lost his temper and a friend who loves you dearly."

However, it is true also that we should never let the judgment of men deflect us from what we believe to be right; but it is also true that the judgment of men is often more accurate than we would like to think.

(2) He must face the judgment of himself.....

- Paul knew very well that a man's judgment can be clouded by self-satisfaction, by pride and conceit.
- Man...however, must at sometime face his own judgment. A basic Greek ethical law was, "Man, know thyself."
- A man cannot get away from himself and if he loses his self-respect, life becomes an intolerable thing.

(3) He must face the judgment of God.

- **This is the only real judgment. For Paul, the judgment he awaited was not that of any human being, but the judgment of the Lord God (the Day of the Lord).**
- **God's judgment is the final judgment...the one that means the most...for two reasons:**

(1) Only God knows all circumstances.

- ✓ He knows the struggles a man has had;
- ✓ He knows the secrets that a man can tell to no one;
- ✓ He knows what a man might have sunk to;
- ✓ He knows what a man might have climbed to....

(2) Only God knows all motives.

"Man sees the deed but God sees the intention."

- ✓ Many a deed that looks noble may have been done from the most selfish and ignoble motives;
- ✓ Many a deed which looks base (inferior) may have been done from the highest motives.
- ✓ He who made the human heart alone knows it and can judge it.

Concerning Judgments:

We would do well to remember two (2) things:

- (1) Even if we escape all other judgments or shut our eyes to them, we cannot escape the judgment of God.**
 - (2) Judgment belongs to God and we do well not to judge any man.**
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1 Corinthians 4:6 – 21, *"Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other. ⁷ For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? ⁸ Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have begun to reign—and that without us! How I wish that you really had begun to reign so that we also might reign with you! ⁹ For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of*

the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings. ¹⁰ We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored! ¹¹ To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. ¹² We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; ¹³ when we are slandered, we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment. ¹⁴ I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as my dear children. ¹⁵ Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. ¹⁶ Therefore I urge you to imitate me. ¹⁷ For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. ¹⁸ Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. ²¹ What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

Are Pride & Rebellion Synonymous?

All that Paul has been saying about himself and about Apollos is true...not only for them but also for the Corinthians. It is not only he and Apollos who must be kept humble by the thought that it is not the judgment of men they are facing, but the judgment of God; the Corinthians must walk in a like humility....

Paul had a wonderfully courteous way of including himself in his own warnings and his own condemnations.

Notes:

The true preacher seldom uses the word “you” and always uses the word “we”; he does not speak down to men; he speaks as one who sits where they sit and who is a man of like passions with them.

Remember...it is the Word of God, which condemns all pride.

Man only has to look at himself to know that he is not just to criticize another man's sin....but to understand that it is only through God's grace and mercy that keeps us from stooping to sin's lowest level.

Paul then asks the Corinthians the most pertinent and basic of all questions...

“What do you possess that you did not receive?”

The whole doctrine of grace is seen in this sentence.

- ✓ No man could ever have known God unless God had revealed Himself;
- ✓ No man could ever have won his own salvation;
- ✓ A man does not save himself, he is saved.

When we think of what we have done and think of what God has done for us, pride is ruled out and only humble gratitude remains.

The basic fault of the Corinthians was that they had “forgotten” that they owed their souls to God. Remember this...they had forgotten!

Paul....not prideful... pointed out that the true servant is treated like a slave every day. Paul stated... “When we are insulted, we bless.”

Hard times is nothing in comparison to what our savior went through...we must serve this humble, contrite, compassionate and giving Son of God.

Paul writes the last few verses like a father would to his son (child);

a child might have many tutors...but only one father.

“I call upon my children to take after their father,” Paul is saying.

Instead of like most fathers...“Do as I say...not as I do”....

Paul, not with pride, but with complete unself-consciousness, can call upon his children in the faith to copy him.

Paul states that their pride and self indulgence is not due to deliberate rebellion, but to the fact that they have forgotten....

Why do you think that Jesus states at the communion table, “Remember Me.”?

One of the things about man....is that our other side tries to take control...the flesh....and we forget who we are in Christ Jesus...and forget who we might be without Him.

In the end, Paul moves on to a challenge!

These Corinthians can talk enough; but it is not their high-sounding words that matter; it is their deeds.

Jesus never said, “By their words you shall know them,”

He said, “By their fruits you shall know them.”

The world is full of talk about Christianity, but one deed is worth a thousand words.