

We will begin our 4<sup>th</sup> lecture on 1 Corinthians. /We will be studying chapter 4 at this time. /The title of chapter 4 is “Faithfulness.” /First, servants of Christ. Verses 1-5. /Second, rebuking arrogance and showing the footsteps of the apostles. Verses 6-13. /Third, the teacher’s admonishment. Verses 14-21.

/First, we will learn about the servants of Christ.

/Verse 1. Let us read. /This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

/Those who spread God’s gospel are servants of Christ. /Therefore we must not look at their human flaws and despise them. /We need to respect them because God holds onto them and uses them.

/Christ himself holds onto his servants and intervenes in their lives. /If Christ’s servants walk on the wrong path, God himself punishes them. /Christ’s servants are stewards of the mysteries of God. / “Mysteries of God” refers to the gospel of Christ.

/Whoever understands the mysteries of God has the right to be a true servant of Christ. /Colossians 2:2 says, “That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ.”

/God’s mystery is Christ. /Christ is the mystery. /Colossians 4:3 also says this. /Colossians 4:3 reads, / “At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—

/The verse says, “To declare the mystery of Christ.” /Why is this a mystery? /It is a mystery that Jesus is the Son of God. /It is a mystery that he died on the cross and resurrected in three days.

/It is also a mystery that whoever believes in Jesus Christ is forgiven of his sins and is saved. /Therefore, even if we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, and touch with our hands, we cannot know this mystery.

/However, the Holy Spirit opens the ears of God’s chosen people. /The Holy Spirit opens their spiritual eyes to bring them to believe in Jesus and receive salvation. /It says that Christ is the mystery of God. /The movement of heaven and the movement of life are both God’s mysteries.

/The reason is the movement of life, which is God bringing souls to life, cannot be known with the wisdom of man. /Matthew 13:11. /Also, our souls believing in Jesus and coming to life /and the work of life and the growing of souls /are mysteries of God that is unknown by the unbelieving world.

/Furthermore, when Jesus returns in the future, believers who have died in the past will resurrect from the dead. /Believers who are alive will suddenly change. All of this is the

mystery of God. /1 Corinthians 15:51 says, / “Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.”

/In this verse, it says, “Behold! I tell you a mystery. /We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” /Only those whose ears and eyes of their spirits have been opened by God will know this mystery.

/Servants of Christ must be people who have fully understood the mystery of the gospel. / Verse 2 says, “Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” /Faithfulness is pouring out one’s heart into one place to fulfill something.

/A heart of faithfulness does not serve two kings. Believers too must pour out their hearts for God and no one else and live for him alone. /In order to carry out our mission of spreading the gospel as servants of Christ, we must offer our strength, heart, and will.

/Our God calls on those who are like children rather than calling on the wise. /1 Timothy 1:12 reads, / “I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service.”

/Paul, though he is not worthy, says Christ Jesus, who has given him strength, judged him faithful to appoint him to his service. /Through those who are faithful, God fulfills his works. /Hebrews 3:5; Nehemiah 7:2,3.

/Jesus thought more highly of the widow’s two coins than he did the insincere offerings of the rich. /He also complimented the faithful servants who were each given five talents and two talents.

/God’s compliments and rewards do not depend on the amount of work, but it depends on a person’s faithfulness. /If we faithfully do what we are called to do, whether it is small or large, Jesus will compliment us. /He will compliment us by saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

/A servant who is unfaithful is called a wicked and slothful servant. Matthew 25:15. /Additionally, “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” /Revelation 2:10.

/God delights in those who are faithful unto death. /He gives them the crown of life. /The crown of life refers to our lives growing. /In heaven, we are rewarded according to the growth of our spirits.

/Verse 3. /But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

/Believers must not be worried about what others think about them, how others judge them. /The important thing is being judged by God. /The judgment of man is not

important. /We also must not judge ourselves as being righteous. /The Lord is the only who can judge us.

/Verse 4. /For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

/Paul was not aware of anything against himself. /It means he didn't think he was not faithful. /Paul was faithful, but he did not think himself to be acquitted. /The reason is the Lord is the one who judges him.

/Verse 5. /Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

/Because human judgment cannot be true judgment, we must not be judged by others nor must we judge others. /Jesus will judge us when he returns, and that is when we will receive proper judgment.

/At that time, the things now hidden in darkness will be revealed. /When the Lord comes, the thoughts of our hearts will be disclosed, and we will be judged according to our actions.

/Here, the verse says, "And will disclose the purposes of the heart." /It means the sins of our hearts will be disclosed, and we will be judged for them. /Some will be rebuked by God while others will be rewarded.

/The Lord judges according to the Bible, so if we are consistent with the Bible, the Lord will judge us as righteous. But if we are not consistent with the Bible, the Lord will rebuke us. /Therefore it is important to know if we live as the Bible says or if we do not live as the Bible says.

/Verses 6-13 are about rebuking pride and showing the footsteps of the apostles.

/Verse 6. /I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you maybe puffed up in favor of one against another.

/The verse says, "I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit." /During this period, the people of the church of Corinth created factions and boasted in the people of their factions. /They overly judged and despised those who were not members of their faction.

/Paul says that he and Apollos set an example for them regarding this issue. /In 1 Corinthians 3:4-9, when Paul speaks of himself and Apollos, he is telling the people not to create factions. /Verse 6 says, "Not to go beyond what is written."

/This verse points back to the Old Testament. /The main point of the Old Testament Bible is that we must boast in God alone and give glory to God alone, not boast in people. /However, the members of the church of Corinth created factions and boasted in men.

/They had gone astray from the lessons of the Old Testament. /They had gone beyond the Old Testament lessons. /Thus Paul is urging them to return to the Bible.

/Creating factions and going against each other is an act of pride. /Paul admonishes them to repent of this pride and learn humility as a servant. /We need to be at a place where we sacrifice for the kingdom of God. /Making factions for one's self and boasting in men is a wicked and prideful act.

/Verse 7. /For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

/If we have become something, even something very small, it is because of the grace of God. /In 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul confesses that he is what he is because of the grace of God. /Also, everything we have comes from God. /Deuteronomy 8:18. /1 Chronicles 29:14. /Therefore everything comes from God and is God's grace. Thinking that these things are the result of our personal efforts is being prideful and wicked.

/Verse 8. /Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!

/The believers in Corinth no longer were poor in spirit, but their hearts became full and rich. Because this happened, they lost the heart that longed for grace and truth. /They did not serve others. /They also elevated themselves, pushed Paul aside, and acted as kings. / They departed from the truth and from spiritual life.

/The verse says, "and would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!" /True kingship in Christ comes from obeying God's commands. /It is gained by dying with Jesus and being patient with him. /2 Timothy 2:11,12.

/For the kingship to grow, we must participate in Jesus' suffering. /We need to take part in Jesus' life of resurrection. /Philippians 3:10,11 says, / "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

/The world in which we become kings is the spiritual world, the world of truth. /Because Paul was already a part of that world, /the world in which Paul isn't present is not the world of Christ. /Paul wanted the souls of the believers in Corinth to grow, /that their authority of the truth would grow and that they would become kings.

/This is the world in which they become kings like Paul. /This is the spiritual world in which all believers become kings. /The kings of this world are humble, and they are poor in spirit. They love others and sacrifice themselves to serve.

/Verse 9. /For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.

/Paul says, “God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death.” /It means Paul was severely mistreated as if he were someone sentenced to death. /He said that he became a spectacle to angels and to men.

/In Paul’s time, men sentenced to death were given to lions to be torn apart and killed. /Many people watched these men become food for beasts. /Paul suffered in similar ways for the preaching of the gospel.

/It says, “We have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.” /Angels belong to the spiritual world. /People belong to the human world. /Paul suffering for the gospel was a spectacle to the spiritual world and to the human world.

/However, the angels watched Paul with adoration and with hearts and attitudes that longed to help him. /Paul may have suffered physically for the gospel, /but his spirit was glad and new strength arose.

/Verse 10. /We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.

/The verse says, “We are fools for Christ’s sake.” /Because Paul preached about the cross, people thought him to be a fool. /They saw Paul as foolish because he sacrificed himself to spread the word of Jesus.

/But the verse also says, “But you are wise in Christ.” /The members of the church in Corinth tried to know God with human wisdom and knowledge, /and they did everything of the church in human wisdom and ways.

/Paul rebukes the church of Corinth. /He says, “We are weak, but you are strong.” /Paul is saying he has become weak for Christ. /He didn’t fight what he could have fought because he didn’t want to cover the glory of the Lord.

/He definitely did not speak what he could say. /He patiently moved forward as he was despised and humiliated. /But the believers in Corinth didn’t think about Christ or God’s glory, but they created factions and quarreled with each other.

/They fought as they wished, /and they said what they wanted to say without reservation. /This is what it means when it says that they are strong. /Paul also says, “You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.”

/In verse 9, Paul says that he is disrepute and that he is a spectacle to the angels and the world. /However, the believers in Corinth judged others, boasted in themselves, and acted as kings.

/Verse 11 reads, / “To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless.” /For Paul, this type of lifestyle is spiritual success. /Hungering, thirsting, being poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless is spiritual success.

/Worldly success is eating and dressing well, being comfortable, and being treated well. /Spiritual success is sacrificing one’s self, suffering, building up righteousness, and helping the salvation movement. /It also includes applying one’s conscience, keeping morals, and helping others. /Spiritual success means wandering about like Abraham did. /In these aspects, worldly success and spiritual success are very different.

/Verse 12. /and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure;

/Paul worked to earn his own money as he preached instead of troubling others. /When he was reviled, he didn’t fight back, but he pitied them and blessed them. /Paul only looked to Jesus Christ, trusting in God and being patient.

/Verse 13. /when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

/When believers are slandered, we must not slander others, but must act with a gentle heart. /It is good for believers to teach slanderers the truth and to entreat them with soft words.

/The verse says, “When slandered, we entreat.” /It is telling believers who are slandered to kindly entreat. /Paul also says, “We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.” /Here, “refuse” means “garbage.” /Paul, for the Lord and the gospel, was treated like garbage of all things.

/Third, the teacher’s admonishment. Verses 14-21.

/Verse 14. /I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

/Previously, Paul rebuked the believers in Corinth for their pride and for acting like kings. /But Paul did not say these things to shame them. /He said these things to admonish them as his beloved children. /He spoke with the heart of a parent wishing for their children to stand upright.

/Verse 15. /For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

/The guides referred to in the verse are private teachers. /Private teachers educate children and guide them. /Thus the term refers to servants or teachers that serve in a family with children. /Paul is saying they have many teachers that educate and guide them but don't have many fathers.

/Paul says it this way. "For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel."  
/Paul, with the gospel, brought them to life. /It means Paul preached the gospel to the believers in Corinth to bring them to believe in Jesus.

/But the more important fact is that Paul brought their souls to life. /Their souls came to life when Paul taught them the word of God. /That is how Paul became the father of the Corinthians through the gospel.

/He became their father through the gospel. /We are born again of water and the Holy Spirit, /and water refers to the word of God. /Therefore the Holy Spirit worked so that the believers of the Corinthian church would believe in the gospel of truth and be reborn.

/In this aspect, Paul is claiming to be their father. /The relationship between Paul and the church of Corinth is like that of parents and their children. /He admonishes them and rebukes them with the love of a father.

/Verse 16 says, / "I urge you, then, be imitators of me." /Paul tells them to be imitators of him, and this is something great. /Can the average person tell others to imitate them?

/Normally, people are ashamed of themselves. /Paul endured difficulties, was weak, beaten, hungry, and persecuted. /Even under persecution, Paul blessed when he was cursed, and he entreated when he was slandered. We need to imitate Paul in these things.

/We need to imitate Paul, who was not proud but humbled himself and served others. /Because Paul is human, he may have flaws and may have made mistakes. /But we need to learn from him because he toiled for the Lord and was faithful even when he faced trouble.

/Verse 17. /That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

/Timothy was Paul's son in faith who followed Paul and was faithful. /Timothy received the gospel during Paul's second missionary journey, and he converted. /Afterwards, Timothy followed Paul and grew to be a faithful son of faith.

/Philippians 2:21-22 says, / "For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.

/The verse says, “But you know Timothy’s proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.” /Everyone else sought their own interests. /However, Timothy did not seek his own interests.

/This is the position of a true servant. /Because of this, Timothy was a precious servant used by God, /a precious disciple who was like a son to Paul. /By sending Timothy, Paul wanted to remind believers of the lessons that he had taught to the churches.

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/Paul taught Timothy his ways and his teachings to the churches.

/Verse 18 says, / “Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.” /The word “some” refers to the people of the Corinthian church who were against Paul. /They relentlessly slandered Paul and acted in arrogance. /They told Paul that he didn’t need to ever come back to the church of Corinth.

/Verse 19. /But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.

/If the Lord wills, Paul will soon go to the church in Corinth to find out about the power of the arrogant people. /He won’t find out the talk of these arrogant people but their power.

/Arrogant people are good with words, but they do not stand in faith. /The kingdom of God does not consist in talk, but in the power of God. /Arrogant people defend themselves and boast in themselves with beautiful words.

/However, power does not form according to one’s wishes. /Power is God’s gift of grace to those who are humble. /James 4:6. /Isaiah 57:15.

/Whoever is arrogant drifts further away from power and eventually loses it. /Anyone can talk, /but power remains with those who are humble and obedient. /Why must we Christians be humble?

/We need to be humble because we are created beings before God. /Also, we are believers who have been saved by the blood of Christ. /We are Adam’s descendants, which makes us sinners. /Because the merciful God, with his great grace, has saved us sinners, we need to be humble.

/Verses 20-21. /For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

/The kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. /Thus it is power that brings life. /No matter how well we talk, we cannot build the kingdom of God. /1 Corinthians 2:4-5.



/Paul's preaching is characterized by three things. /First, it is preaching in the Holy Spirit, /preaching in power, /and preaching in certainty. /In order to preach with the power of the gospel, we must deny ourselves and rid ourselves of selfishness. /We also must repent and pray frequently.

/When we pray, we need to go deep into the word. /We must be held by the power of Christ when we pray. /God's kingdom is the kingdom of spiritual life. /It is a kingdom where spiritual life matures.

/The verse says, "What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?" /Here, "a rod" refers to discipline. /It refers to chastening.

/Paul is asking the church of Corinth if they want to be chastened /or if they want to be approached with love in a spirit of gentleness. /The believers of the church of Corinth get to decide which approach they want Paul to take.

/Paul is asking them to repent. /If the believers in Corinth behave in a way that deserves chastening, Paul will go and discipline them. /However, if they sincerely repent for creating factions and habitually having disputes, Paul will go with love in a spirit of gentleness.

/Therefore he is telling the Corinthian Christians to repent and stand upright. /Believers! How do you think Paul felt? /He surely wanted to meet them with love in a spirit of gentleness.

/This concludes our 4<sup>th</sup> lecture on 1 Corinthians. /Thank you.