

The Attitude Toward Pastors

11-26-17

1 Cor 4:1-13

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

Intro: Paul now continues his clarification concerning the spiritual leaders God gave to the Corinthians. He goes into some very clear attitudes that should be present, both with the minister and with the congregation.

The attitude toward the pastor's are extremely important for the church to function properly. It is easy to give too much credit to the pastor and it is just as easy to fail to give the proper honor. When I was in the military, customs and courtesies were stressed constantly. What was said over and over, "you are paying respect for the position or rank, not the person." The Scriptures are clear about this idea, "give honor to whom honor is due," Rom 13:7 ***"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."*** KJV So the challenge is to be able to know how to treat everyone we meet.

I. Servants and Stewards of God (4:1-7).

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

1. First; the pastor is a servant sent by God to care for His sheep.
2. He is also described as a steward. A steward owned nothing; he was a slave who managed his master's wealth.
3. So the pastor is a servant and a steward. The word "minister" in v. 1 is literally "**the slave who rows on the lowest level of a boat.**"
4. A steward's responsibility is to be faithful to the Master, and the pastor's responsibility is to be faithful to teach the things of the Lord, especially those truths that relate to the mystery of the church.
5. He will be judged by his own master (the Lord) according to his faithfulness.
6. We need to avoid what the Corinthians were doing; judging one leader by another.
7. It is so easy to judge different workers and compare one with another.
8. In vv. 3-5, Paul presents three kinds of judgment:
3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.
 - (1) the judgment of people, which he does not fear;
 - (2) self-judgment, and he says he "knows nothing against himself" (not "by" himself); and
 - (3) the judgment of God, which is the only true judgment.
9. The Corinthians were evaluating different servants of God, comparing one with another, and thinking themselves to be very spiritual.
10. As a servant and steward the concern is to fulfill the responsibility the master has given to the servant and as a steward to protect the assets of the master.
11. Paul made it clear that he was not concerned with their judgment only that of the Master.

12. A true servant of God is a steward of God's wealth, and his only concern is pleasing God, not men.
 13. At the judgment seat of Christ, God will reveal the secrets and give out the rewards, and every man will have his own reward (3:8) and his own glory from God (4:5).
 14. To live for the praise of men will only take away the praise of God.

15. **In (vv. 6-7, Paul summarizes the whole matter:**

6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

NKJV

16. They were not to go beyond the Word of God and treat men different than Scripture allowed.
 17. They were to love and honor their spiritual leaders, and obey them as they teach the Word; they needed to avoid comparing one leader with another, or to give glory to one over another.
 18. Remember, it is God who makes one believer differ from another; every gift a believer has comes from God! So no one should boast over the abilities God has given to them.

II. A Spectacle to the World (4:8-13)

8 You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us — and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you! 9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! 11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. 12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

NKJV

1. The world and its wisdom reject Christ and His ministers.
2. Paul uses some "loving sarcasm" here when he says: "You Corinthians brag about one another and compare one man with another, as though you were kings on a throne! How wonderful it must be to reign as kings and look down on others! I wish I could reign with you. But, no, I must be a hated apostle, a spectacle to the world, a fool for Christ's sake."
3. The verbal picture he painted was a familiar one to the people of Paul's day. Whenever a victorious general came home from a war, he was given a glorious parade through the city streets. As a way of boasting, he would display the captured nobles and generals. At the very end of the parade came the soldiers who were to be thrown to the wild beasts in the arena.
4. Paul compared himself and the other apostles to these captured soldiers, "**appointed to death for Christ's sake**," (vv. 9 and 10) while the Corinthian Christians were boasting at the front of the parade!
5. The world is not attracted to the real servant of God. Being a servant and a steward is not what the world is seeking to be; actually the world is seeking the opposite.
6. Paul could have been a great Jewish rabbi, with authority and esteem; yet he gave it up for Christ's sake (Phil 3) to have hunger, nakedness, peril, and death! Paul understood that at some point he was going to die for the sake of the gospel.
7. The world cannot understand this attitude and calls such a person a fool. How convicted these Corinthians should have been when they compared their carnal living to the sacrifices Paul and the other apostles were making.

8. Paul was a fool; they were wise. Paul was weak; but they were strong. Paul was hated by the world, but they were grabbing the world's wisdom. Paul went so far as to call himself the "the scum of the earth - the world's garbage" (v. 13).
9. We need to have the same attitude as Paul; understanding that we are servants and stewards for God.
10. How easy it is to settle down and live like the world, accepting the world's standards and courting the world's honors, when we ought to beware "**when all men speak well of us**" (see Luke 6:26).

III. A Spiritual Father (4:14-21)

14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 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. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me. 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. 18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 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. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. 21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

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1. Jesus warns us that we should call no man on earth "**father**" (**Matt 23:9**), but it is still true that those who lead souls to Christ are, in a sense, "fathering" them. (See 1 Thess. 2:11.)
2. Paul had been - their spiritual father in that he gave them the Gospel and helped to lead them to Christ. A sinner is born into God's family through the Spirit of God (John 3:6) and the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23), but God uses human instruments to bring sinners the Gospel.
3. It had been Paul's "spiritual labor" (Gal 4:19) that had made possible a church in Corinth.
4. The men who followed Paul may have been their instructors, but the Corinthians had only one spiritual father; they should have showed him more respect and listened to his word.
5. Paul had warned them about sin, but they had failed to listen. Now he sent Timothy to help them settle their church problems; if that did not help, Paul intended to come himself.
6. Their own attitude would determine whether he would come with a father's rod of correction, or with a word of commendation and approval. History tells us that they did not listen to Timothy, so it was necessary for Titus to go to Corinth.
7. Several times in this chapter you find the phrase "puffed up," referring to the Corinthians' attitude of superiority and carnal pride (vv. 6, 18, and see 5:2).
8. What made them "puffed up"? Living in sin will destroy your spiritual insight and awareness.
9. As their sin grew, it inflated them into a false spirituality; therefore, Paul found it necessary to warn them.
10. This "puffed up" attitude often reveals itself in a lot of talking.
11. "Paul will never come here!" they were saying (vv. 18-19). "He writes stern letters and tries to scare us, but he will never come back!" "Be careful!" warned the apostle. "Talk is cheap!
12. When I do come, I want to see how much power these Christians have, and not how much they talk.
13. A carnal Christian is often a bragging Christian, but there is no demonstration of God's Spirit in his or her life (see 2:4).
14. This was not pleasant for Paul to deal with this situation. I'm sure Paul was heart broken over the condition of the church.
15. Just as parents must warn and chasten their children, so "**spiritual fathers**" must warn and discipline the children of God in love. This is not an enjoyable experience, but it is a necessary one.

Conclusion: This section illustrates the proper attitude of the church toward its spiritual leaders. When a church has spiritual leaders that love and honor God and his word they should thank God for them, pray for them, love them, honor them, and obey the Word which they teach and follow themselves. There must never be in a church a worldly attitude of exalting men and ministries. The pastor ministers the Word, sows the seed, builds the temple, dispenses the mysteries of God, suffers shame before the world, and lovingly cares for the church family. These are great responsibilities, and only the sufficiency of God enables anyone to fulfill them.