



CROSS CHURCH

DISPLAY THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL

Scripture | 1 Corinthians 4.1-5

Unfortunately, it appears churches and believers have tried to ascertain, 'Who is the greatest?' The disciples tried to do it around Jesus. Now, the Corinthians are advocating apostles against one another. Nothing has changed. Pastors, thinkers, and members judge the credibility and health of another ministry based on budgets, bodies, and buildings. In 1 Corinthians 4.1-5, Paul is clear. None of that matters. Men and women have not been equipped to judge. God calls and equips. Therefore, servants will be held accountable above all by him. It doesn't mean we can live carelessly. Quite the opposite actually! We must live every day to please the Lord above family, friends, etc.

Observation

READ 1 Cor 4.1-5 | Those in our church are servants and stewards answerable to Jesus.

How does v1 add to Paul's command to "let no one boast in men" in 3:21? What are the two roles Paul described for himself, Apollos, and Peter in v1?

How might the two roles he describes be true for leaders in a church? How might they be true for followers in a church? (1 Pet 4:10-11)

Why might the role of a servant be especially distasteful to a culture where rhetoric and intellectual achievement are prized? How might Paul's insistence on being a servant provoke criticism by those under his leadership?

What is a steward? What might the idea of "household overseer" emphasize in the role of a steward?

What does Paul point out as the primary requirement for a steward? What could it mean for someone to be faithful in overseeing the things of another?

How do the twin ideas of servant and faithful steward describe so vividly life as a follower of Jesus? How do they help us to understand to whom we answer?

What does Paul say about being judged? (vv3-4) Why would he not judge himself?

Why would Paul NOT consider himself acquitted even if he could not think of anything he had done wrong? How should that prompt caution when relying on our conscience?

What does Paul caution against in v5? Why? Why might that caution be important for us?

When the Lord comes, what will judgment look like? What will be the outcome?

What does Paul presume about the Corinthians in order to say that each one will receive his commendation from God? Why is our faithfulness as servants and stewards critical?

What might it look like for us at FMFB to be focused less on our condemnation of others and more on God's commendation of us?



READ Luke 12.35-48 | If we faithfully manage what the Lord has entrusted to us we will be rewarded.

What is Jesus emphasizing in these first two parables from Luke 12? (vv35-40) How is “staying awake” another way of describing being faithful?

What time frame does Jesus seem to be describing? How do Paul’s words in 1 Cor 4:5 fit with Jesus’ words in vv35-40?

Who is the master in this parable? How is the master’s assessment/ judgment at work here?

What is so surprising about the change in the roles of the servants and the master here? Why are the roles reversed?

How is that role reversal blessing? (v38) How is commendation? (1 Cor 4:5)

What question does Peter ask in v41? What do you think is the implied answer?

In what sense are Jesus’ followers to be faithful and wise managers? In what sense are we to “manage” the Master’s household?

How does Jesus paint a contrasting picture of faithfulness and unfaithfulness in vv41-48? (42, 46) What is the outcome of each?

What principle does Jesus lay out that is vital to remember? How can we think about faithfully managing what the Lord has entrusted to us so that we can be rewarded?

READ Titus 1.5-6 | Pastors are God’s stewards charged with teaching and confronting.

In these verses in Paul’s letter to Titus, whom Paul had left as leader over the churches in Crete, what specific task does he instruct Titus about? What does he call the elders/ pastors he was to appoint? (v7)

In what sense are pastors overseer’s and stewards? What is significant about whose stewards they are?

What is to be the character of these pastors? Why would such character be necessary in faithful stewards?

What task must God’s steward attend to? (v9) What two reasons does Paul give for why he must be about that task?

In vv10-16, how does Paul display why instructing and rebuking would be necessary? From the description of those to be instructed and rebuked, what might the pastors anticipate? Pray for?

In what sense are our pastors at FMFB instructors and confronters? Why must they be faithful stewards?

What difficulties might you anticipate if someone were charged by God with instructing and confronting you so that you would not be detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work?

Why is it important for us to remember that our pastors, like us, are servants and stewards entrusted by Jesus and answerable to Jesus, and who want to be rewarded by Jesus? What should that make us do or not do? (1 Cor 4:3, 5)

Application

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text? How did the Spirit move you to respond?
2. How do we determine if a ministry is successful?
3. Why should our fondness or preferences for certain leaders, pastors, or teachers in the church never lead us to criticize or compare them to other leaders? How does favoritism hurt God's purpose in appointing leadership in the local church?
4. Why should we be careful about the criticism we lodge against others? What or who can help us discern how to evaluate criticism of ourselves or those in church leadership?
5. Does this mean we can be indifferent about how well we serve God? Why or why not?
6. What standards do we often use to evaluate God's servant-leaders today? What qualities does scripture suggest?
7. In practice, how can you go about not judging yourself, while at the same time being careful how you build? Why is being connected to local body so important in this area?
8. How does leadership affect every member of the church? Why is maintaining a biblical view of church leadership vitally important to the health of a church?
9. Why should Christian leaders remain loyal to Christ above all?
10. How can we prepare for the judgment of the Lord?
11. Why is the praise of God better than the praise of man?

Prayer

- Thank God for the Holy Spirit coming and giving birth to the church. Thank God for allowing us to be a part of His kingdom's work through the local church. Pray that we would give ourselves wholly to the Lord's service by serving one another together.
- Pray that our leaders would exhibit lives of discipline and be above reproach. Pray that they would be full of the Holy Spirit to do the work of ministry. Pray that the Lord would guard them from temptation, and allow them to be leaders in their home. Pray for their families when they must take time away from them to serve our faith family.

Observations & Prayer Requests

- **MY THOUGHTS** | Record insights and questions from the group experience.

- **MY RESPONSE** | Note specific ways you'll put into practice the truth explored this week.


- **MY PRAYERS** | List specific prayer needs and answers to remember this week.



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