



CROSS CHURCH

DISPLAY THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL

Scripture | 1 Corinthians 4.6-13

In the previous passage, the emphasis was upon God's evaluation. It is the Lord who judges us. Now, Paul fears the Corinthians are stepping outside the boundary of scripture and moving beyond what had been written. He zeroes in on one major issue; it was their pride. What puffs us up like balloons? Under the pride he also exposes the ingratitude of the church. If we forget what the Lord has done for us and in us, then we tend to become forgetful and unfairly criticize fellow brothers and sisters. Using ironic examples from his own life, Paul challenges selfishness & worldliness. Looking at these paint a bright picture of biblical discipleship.

Observation

READ 1 Cor 4.6-7 | We have no boast because we have only received.

What "things" might Paul have been applying to himself and Apollos? (3:5ff) Why does he say that applying these things to himself and Apollos would be to the Corinthian's benefit?

Why is modeling obedience to Jesus/ the Scriptures educational? How could not going "beyond what is written" be a commentary on what the Corinthians considered wise?

What type of people does Paul envision educating by his and Apollos's example? What effect is Paul hoping for?

How would you explain being "puffed up" to someone who is unfamiliar? If the verb for "puffed up" gets used only 7 times in the New Testament, and 6 of those are in 1 Corinthians, what might that imply about an issue Paul hopes to address with the Corinthians?

What 3 questions does Paul ask the Corinthians that should make them think differently about being "puffed up?" What is the expected answer to each of the questions? Why?

What can tempt us to "go beyond" what is written in the Scriptures? Why might a believer become "puffed up?"

What have you received from the Father because of Jesus? Why? (Rom 8:32, Matt 7:7-11)

Why would our receiving from the Lord cause us to brag/ boast? Why is the issue not the receiving as much as the admitting that we have received?

Why is "pride of virtue" a subtle, insidious temptation for believers? How is virtue "received?"

What kinds of things might help us to remember that we have nothing that we have not received? Why is corporate thanksgiving such an important part of our shared worship together? Why should followers of Jesus have no boast in themselves?

READ 1 Corinthians 4.8-13 | We have no boast because we are meant to be fools and weak for the sake of Jesus and the sake of others.



How is Paul being sarcastic in v8? Why would he be?

If “having all you want” was language often used in the context of being full at a meal, what is Paul saying about the Corinthians? If he is saying that they are rich and are kings “already” what could he be implying?

What errors were the Corinthians making in their thinking about what and when the future for believers would be? How was their vision too small rather than being too big?

Why does Paul begin to speak of himself and the other apostles (including Apollos) in v9ff? How is their example to be a corrective to the self-congratulatory thinking of the Corinthians?

How does Paul’s imagery in v9 fit with the captives of war paraded by the victor? How is that imagery true for those in Christ? (2 Cor 2:14)

What details of the contrast between the Corinthians and Paul/ Apollos does Paul detail in v10? What is his point in listing these?

What details of the day-to-day lives of Paul/ Apollos does Paul list in vv11-13a? Why would he list these?

In what sense were Paul, Apollos, and other faithful believers like “scum” and like “refuse?” Why would the term “off-scouring” be sometimes used here?

Why would the Greco-Roman world consider Paul/ Apollos fools for Christ’s sake? Why would Paul and Apollos being fools for Christ’s sake also be for the sake of the Corinthians?

Why would the Corinthians not be looked at in the same way Paul and Apollos were?

Why would we affirm that we have no boast because we are meant to be fools and weak for the sake of Jesus and the sake of others? (Matt 5:11-12, Heb 11:26, 1 Pet 4:14)

READ 2 Corinthians 11.30-12.10 | Our only boast is in our weakness and Christ’s strength.

In this passage from Paul’s second letter to the Corinthian believers—a letter meant in part to defend his calling and work as an Apostle authorized and sent by Jesus—what does he reluctantly say about boasting? (v30) Why would Paul-like boasting be considered so foolish to someone who does not love and serve Jesus?

What does Paul boast about in 2 Cor 11:32-33? Why is this episode both truthful (v31) and boasting in his weakness?

Why does being truthful so frequently put on display our weaknesses? Why is the contrary approach (neither truthful nor weak) one we are so tempted to take?

How does Paul continue to boast in his weakness in 2 Cor 12:1-10? What things might he have chosen to boast about instead?

Why does Paul choose to make known his weaknesses? (v9) What is the outcome of Paul’s approach? (v10)

How is Paul’s approach different from simply declaring his weaknesses while still working to display his strengths? How does he accept his weaknesses?

Why would you or I accept our weaknesses? What would be different about being content in our weaknesses and being irresponsible or sinful?

In what way is our only boast our own weaknesses and Christ's strength? How does boasting in Jesus's strength help us avoid self-righteousness? Selfish individualism? Fear of others?

How does boasting in our weakness and Jesus' strength make His burden easy and His yoke light?

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. What have you received from the Lord? How can you give God appropriate credit (or glory) for the things he has accomplished through you?
3. How do you measure gratitude in your life? In what ways can we express gratitude to the Lord?
4. How are we tempted to 'go beyond' scripture in behavior and attitudes as the Corinthians? Where is the danger in going beyond the authority of Scripture?
5. How does the Fall of Man (Genesis 3) influence our view of others and ourselves? What is the remedy to this malady?
6. Why is pride such a destructive trait in those who follow Christ?
7. How can you determine whether your service to God is Christ-centered or self-centered? What examples would you use to illustrate this principle?
8. Why is it important that we not see ourselves as being "above" suffering and persecution? What does it look like to join in our suffering, pain, and weakness?
9. How has suffering and weakness been used throughout scripture to bring glory to God and accomplish his purposes? How have these things made you more dependent and focused on Him?
10. If Paul needed to make this point to believers in Corinth, what do you think he would say to American Christians in 2020?
11. How can we model ministry and activity at FMFB after the model of Christ Crucified?
12. What should you be willing to give up to make much of Jesus Christ and his good news?

Prayer

1. Ask the Lord of the harvest to make us more committed to his gospel work.
2. Pray for Ryan, Michelle, & Nathaniel as they fly to Japan on February 23 to begin their work.
3. Pray for those attending the Empower Conference to leave refreshed and refueled.
4. Pray for Robby Mitchell who leads Young Life of Flower Mound.
5. Give thanks for what you have received from the Lord (be specific!). Ask him to help us in recognizing our complete dependence upon him. Pray for the ones being baptized to be disciplined and mature in the faith. Pray for Christian friends who pray for them and encourage them. Pray for more baptisms and new births in our congregation.

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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