

L54 | I Corinthians | Full, Rich Kings | I Cor. 4:8-17

I. Intro/Review:

- The wisdom of the world has driven a wedge between members of the body of Christ at Corinth.
 - The compact expression, thus manifestation of this wedge - "I am of"
 - The foolishness of such an expression - "I am of ____" a mere man.
- Paul's ploy - to enlighten the understanding of the Corinthians that the glory of this wisdom is that it perishes
 - God will destroy the wisdom of the world in the unbeliever and the believer.
 - Bear the proper judgment of man and the ministers before them
 - Be not deceived
 - All things are yours
 - Have praise of God, not man
 - Glory in the Lord

II. Preview:

- False judgment of men based upon the riches of the world.
- The sufferings of Christ point to the true riches of glory in the world to come.

III. Sermon:

- The Corinthians extolled a prosperous Christianity. They borrowed all the parts of it that could fit into the wisdom of the world and its systems for their own gain. Therefore, they evaluated their faith on the basis of that which they could possess in this life.
- As we have seen the wisdom of the world gives nobility and notoriety, glory upon success. Success according to the stipulations set forth by the world, culture, and society. Thus a pursuit to please men and their whimsical norms and standards is sought after in this life. Truth is subjective therefore and the means are pragmatic. The goal is the riches of the world and God is a means to provide that.
- At the very core of the Corinthians esteem of the wisdom of the world is the ease, comfort, and enjoyment of all this world has to offer and the aversion of suffering, distress, and death.
- We can see such ideas and thoughts, so contrary to God and His wisdom, would produce strife, envy, and contentions.
- This becomes very apparent in our text. Paul up until this point directly accused the Corinthians of their pursuit for earthly things. Instead, he has established the comparison of the wisdom and of the world to that of God and what God will do to the wisdom of the world for the Corinthians to make a godly judgment that is causing their divisions. However, Paul now calls them out.

[8] - "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God

ye did reign, that we also might reign with you."

- Paul provides the analysis of the possible root for their pursuit of the wisdom of the world. What is in it for them? Particularly, what is in it for them in this life?
- They are full, rich, kings
 - These are terms signifying their intended goal and purpose of their Christianity. They changed the glory of God into the glory of men.
 - **"full"** - having within its limits all that it can contain; abounding with; having a large quantity or abundance; utmost extent
 - **Acts 27:38** - "And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea."
 - How can they be full without the fullness of God? Paul has not spoken to them "the hidden wisdom of God". That wisdom revealed in Ephesians.
 - **Eph. 3:19** - "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."
 - Therefore, they are full of something other than that which God has provided.
 - They have had enough of what God has provided for they are full of what they have in this world. When you take in and highly esteem, therefore, glory in the things of this life they will fill your heart leave no room for God's things. In the heart you may have only one treasure.
 - **"rich"** - wealthy; possessing a large portion of land, goods or money that which is more than is common to other men; abundant in materials; possessing that which is costly and valuable.
 - Two kinds of riches
 - Job 37:16; Ps. 37:16, 52:7; Pro. 13:7-8; Luk. 16:11; Heb. 11:26; Jas. 2:5, 5:1-11; Rev. 2:9
 - 2 Cor. 6:10, 8:9
 - Riches determined based upon the value of others; here, determined by God
 - Riches determined first as the means to redeem or not (Ps. 49:6-9; Prov. 11:4)
 - Determined by that which is spiritual (the soul)
 - Determined by how long it provides for or lasts
 - Earthly and heavenly, carnal and spiritual
 - The earthly riches are "deceitful" (trickery, fraudulent, misleading, ensnaring, oppression)
 - Matt. 13:22
 - Luke 8:14

- The Corinthians embrace the wisdom of the world because of that which it gives them in this life. Yet, they are poor and deceived.
 - The earthly riches are "uncertain" in this life and do not last
 - 1 Timothy 6:17
 - Whether by death or the pending day of judgment they will perish and not abide.
- **"kings"** - a chief sovereign over a nation; one invested with supreme authority
 - **Ps. 76:12** - "...He is terrible to the kings of the earth."
 - **Ps. 89:27** - "Also I will make Him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth"
 - **Ps. 135:10** - "Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;"
 - **Ps. 138:4** - "All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth."
 - **Ps. 148:1-13** - "Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: let them praise the name of the LORD: for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven."
 - Christ is "the King of kings" (1 Tim. 6:15)
 - The Corinthians that add the wisdom of the word to the preaching of the cross and make it of none effect.
 - The very thing that reveals His glory, manifests Himself as the worthy King, but is not measured by human norms and standards, is what is so easily compromised.
 - Man thinks it is what they possess (full and riches) that makes them great or what they have done that makes them excellent. Therefore, when they see a poor, uncomely, crucified Christ they change that glory into the glory of man's choosing. Attempting and striving after vain glory, more possessions, more things, more notoriety that perish with the using, do not last forever, uncertain, and will be left behind upon death.
 - Yet, with God it is altogether different. It is who God IS that makes Him great. It is from His inherent greatness that causes His marvelous works. The Corinthians are imperfect in their ability to discern the two systems.

IV. Conclusion:

- At the very heart of the Corinthian contentions and grip upon the wisdom of the world are the riches of the world.
- The deceitful nobility, mightiness, and fulness is pleasant to the flesh; hence, the reason for envy and strife and cause for their divisions.

- The deceitfulness of riches are
 1. Selfish (against another)
 2. Uncertain (in obtainment, maintenance)
 - Perish with the using
 3. Fleeting (will not take with you after death)

- The true riches are
 1. Selfless (one another)
 2. Certain
 - Work for you with the using
 - Merchandise that as you spend you gain
 - (not spend a little to gain)
 3. Abide Forever

- Paul will set himself against them, himself as an apostle and God's appointment of apostles compared to what the Corinthians thinking of God's appointment of them.
 - God's appointment of apostles works the sufferings of Christ from the world.
 - Apparently, God's appointment of the Corinthians works glory from the world.
 - Such comparison will serve as a "warning" for them!