

L58 | I Corinthians | God Hath Set Forth Pt. 2 | I Cor. 4:8-17

I. Intro/Review:

- Comparison between the riches of the world and God's riches in Christ
- The Corinthians are full, rich, and reign as kings in contrast to Paul

II. Preview:

- Examine the contrast between the impact of the 10,000 instructors they possess to that of their father and his son Timothy.

III. Sermon:

[9] - **"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."**

- **"For I think"** - the Corinthians didn't have a proper and godly thinking concerning themselves and Paul
 - The Corinthians are thinking they are set forth "first", the spectacle to the world and men.
 - They are God's crowning exhibit of Christ
- **"that God hath set forth"** - display, exhibit, to demonstrate
 - **"us the apostles last"** - first in the spoils of Christ resurrection victory, the revelation of Christ, but
 - **"as it were appointed to death"** - last when it comes to this temporary life, last when it comes to death
 - **"appointed to death"** - all one word, only use
 - Romans 8:36; 2 Cor. 4:10
 - "Allusion is made to the cruel spectacles in the Roman games; where men were forced to cut one another to pieces, to divert the people; and where the victor did not escape with his life, though he should destroy his adversary, but was only kept for another combat, and must be killed at last. so that such wretched criminals (for they were ordinarily condemned persons that were thus exposed) might very properly be called "epithanatoi" - persons devoted or appointed to death. They are said to be set forth last, because the meridian gladiators, those who combated one another in the after-part of the day, were most exposed, being obliged to fight naked; so that (as Seneca says, epist. 7) this was perfect butchery, and those exposed to beasts in the morning were treated mercifully in comparison with these. The general meaning is that the apostles were exposed to continual danger of death, and that of the worst kinds, in the faithful discharge of their office. God had set them forth, brought them into view, as the Roman emperors brought their

combatants into the arena, the place of show, though not for the same purposes. They did it to please the populace, and humour their own vanity, and sometimes a much worse principle."

Henry, M., & Scott, T. (1997). Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary (1 Co 4:7). Logos Research Systems.

- Here you have Paul presenting that the Corinthians are in the box seats, the best seats at the games. Seats that reveal they're "full", "rich", "kings" spectating thinking they are the spectacle, yet Paul is in the game, but as in the game he is appointed to death not spectating, but the spectacle.
- In this life the Corinthians are "first", but Paul is "last". (Matt. 19:30, 20:16; Mar. 9:35)
- **"for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."**
 - **"spectacle"** - theatre, a semi-circular stone building, generally open to the sky (Acts 19:29, 31)
 - A major theme in 1 Corinthians leading up to Ephesians
 - Conversation in heaven, etc
 - **"unto the world"** - sum-total of all things
 - **"and to angels"** - heavenly realm (Eph. 3:8-11)
 - The place of our "conversation", God is using us to manifest something to the "angels"
 - **"and to men"** - earthly realm
 - Isaiah 13:11-13
 - 1 John 2:15-17
 - James 4:4
 - 1 Cor. 2:6-8 - princes of this world

[10-13a] - "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; yea are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat:"

- Comparison between Paul and the Corinthians
- The nature of their spectacle
- The sufferings of Christ
 - Matthew 10:24-25; John 15:20

- A period of time prior to Christ entering into His fulness in which His disciples would suffer like He did
 - Romans 8
 - 2 Cor. 1
- The sufferings of Christ are not simply "suffering with Him", but suffering because of Christ
 1. God & Christ
 2. The Gospel
 3. Righteousness & Living Godly
 4. Truth

"we"	"ye"
Fools	Wise
Weak	Strong
Despised - unesteemed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of love • Abhorred 	Honourable
Hunger & Thirst	Full
Naked	Rich
Buffeted - strike with fist; maltreat violently <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt. 26:67 • 1 Pet. 2:20 	Kings
No Certain Dwelling place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 9:58 	
Labour	
Reviled (we bless) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt. 5:11, 27:39 • 1 Pet. 2:23 	
Persecuted (we suffer it)	
Defamed (we intreat)	

- Another kin text of Paul's sufferings - 2 Cor. 10:10, 11:29, 13:3-4, 9
- Examine the fight Paul is in - he is reviled and instead of the naturally response to revile back he blesses, when he is persecuted he doesn't brawl, he isn't quick to anger, rather he suffers it, and when he is defamed we bless, we do good pleading for their salvation and for their comfort of us.
 - The good warfare not for possession and lands, the good fight not for riches or policies
 - The world's warfare, the world's fight manifests their lust for the things of this world our good fight of faith is clinging to Christ in the midst of all that

to shed light on the fight for the soul, to reveal another kingdom - not of this world.

- Matthew 5:10-11

[13b] - "we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

- Just as "full, rich, and reigning" are probably the 3 foremost terms to describe the value of the world, these two expressions, "filth and offscouring" describe that which the world sees no value.
- **"we are made as the filth of the world"**
 - Of all things in this world those in Christ, who live with Christ, for Christ and stand for His things are most filth.
 - A dirty vessel; the refuse, the sweepings or rubbish thrown out after the cleaning; the stubble
 - Nahum 3:1-7
 - That which is disgusting and foul to our senses, vile
 - Repulsive - dare not go near it, unsightly, unpleasant, repugnant
- **"and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."**
 - Scums that form when dirty things are cleaned; reject and throw away; no use, but to be cast away
- **Summary** - These terms are not describing that which is sinful, unrighteous, or wicked, but that which is holy and righteous.
 - This is how Paul is looked upon by society in connection with his ministry of God's grace to the world.
 - Instead of welcomed, embraced, and treated in favor they are looked upon as filth and treated as offscouring. They are treated with contempt and aversion.
 - The world was already drunken in its rejection of God, it was already at a fever pitch when it came to ungodliness, but now in view of God's much & all longsuffering, the revelation of the mystery of Christ the world led by the god of this world became even further infuriated.
 - A message of God's wisdom that directly would impact the realm of his abode, a message that promises nothing in this life, but riches in the heavenly places has been met with both persecution and enticement of earthly freedoms and affections.
 - The Corinthians embraced what the world has to offer - its' wisdom, strength, and honor. They wanted to be accepted by society and please men. All of which is in contrast to God and His gospel.

- 2 Cor. 2:17
- 1 The. 2:4-5
- Gal. 1:10
- Instead this should be their view:
 - 2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 1:29-30; 1 The. 3:3-4; 1 Tim. 4:10; 2 Tim. 2:3

[14] - "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you."

- Similar warning as in Proverbs 7:127
- **"warn"** - give notice of approaching a danger or evil, that it may be avoided

[15] - "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

- He warns them because they are not being warned by the "instructors" in Christ. Their instructors have promised them the world, just as the god of this world promises you the world.
- "instructors" - schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24-25), the elements of the world that cannot provide you that which God does in His grace.
 - Paul has a paternal relationship toward them, he had begotten them through the gospel
 - He laid their foundation - others only could build upon it
 - It is better to have one father than 10,000 instructors

[16] - "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."

- Paul further argumentation to "follow" him. He "warns" them on the basis of his spiritual fatherhood toward them and is now beseeching them to follow his lead.

[17] - "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."

- Timothy is a beloved son whose faithfulness is a pattern to help them and his teaching to jog their memory of Paul's ways for all the churches (for they are one of the many of every church).

IV. Conclusion:

- Are you content, with Him and for Him, to be despised and abused? It is better to be persecuted, mocked, and despitefully used than to have the grand reputation and favor of the world.
- Paul may be vile, the refuse, and filth of the world but he is precious to God. Do we have this same view or do we hold to the worldview of the Corinthians that is essentially no different than the world itself.