

L57 | I Corinthians | God Hath Set Forth | I Cor. 4:8-17

I. Intro/Review:

- The Corinthians core problem is their lusts. Their lusts have culminated to strife, envy, contentions, and divisions. The wisdom of the world caters to their lusts thus the cause of their embrace of it.
- We are made to lust, but not after temporary, fleshly, and worldly things, rather after eternal, spiritual, and godly things - God Himself.
- The past few lessons we have examined this isn't simply a Corinthian problem, but has been an issue to understand throughout time. The riches of the world are deceitful, uncertain, and limited yet the riches of God are true, certain, and everlasting.
 - The riches of this world can be chalked up to three main categories
 - "full"
 - "rich"
 - "reign as kings"

II. Preview:

- With what were the Corinthians "full" and "rich" off of and where were they "reigning".
- See the contrast between them and Paul and those with him to see what God hath set forth.

III. Sermon:

[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."

- In general, we are to understand the kind of riches Paul is speaking of here are not spiritual, but how?
 - The context (the parts of a discourse which precede and follow to that being considered) has contrasted "the wisdom of the world" to "the wisdom of God". They are not the same. Paul has highlighted the Corinthians firm grip to worldly wisdom therefore it is contextually consistent to think of this "fullness", "riches", and "reigning" in a worldly sense.
 - Some indicators:
 - 1 Cor. 1:25-31
 - 1 Cor. 2:6-9
 - 1 Cor. 3:1-3
- **(1) "Now ye are full"** - food, wisdom
 - Acts 27:38 - "eat one's fill"

- **"full"** - having within its limits all that it can contain
 - We are made to be "filled" and to have His "fulness", to be full
 - God made us in His image, after His likeness, that is, vessels to willingly be filled with His knowledge and goodness and thus be "godly".
 - Two issues - two questions we can ask
 1. What are they "full" of?
 1. What are they "full" of?
 - The wisdom of the world (1 Cor. 1:26-29, 2:4)
 - The riches of the world (1 Cor. 3:3)
 - They have taken the vessel that they are and are "full" of the wisdom of the world and contain that which it profits.
 2. Are they full of that which they are to be filled with?
 - They had enough of that which God has given and revealed
 - They have received the preaching of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18)
 - They have not received the hidden wisdom of God (1 Cor. 2:7)
 - They are not "able to bear" the meat (1 Cor. 3:2)
 - **Summary** - The Corinthians are full with that which the world provides and not filled with that which God has provided.
 - The perception is they don't need to know anything more
 - The Corinthians temporal fulness generated a spiritual self-sufficiency.
 - They examined their life how the world does; that is, look at that which I have and possess to evaluate "sufficiency".
 - This was Israel's leaders problem (Matt. 9:9-13; 19:23-26)
 - Therefore, such description serves as a reproof.
- (2) **"now ye are rich"** - raiment, house, land, assets, kind of work
 - Yet, the Corinthians have not learned of all "the glory" that God has for them; how can they be rich. They are rich in this world.
 - The wisdom and glory of the world pale in comparison to the wisdom and glory of God (1 Cor. 2:6-8)
 - 2 Cor. 8:14 - "abundance" (their bowels for earthly things may be restraining them in 2 Corinthians to be willing, but not to perform)

- 1 Cor. 6:1-8 - they would defraud their brethren
- 1 Cor. 10:24 - they sought their own wealth and not others
- 1 Cor. 11:17-22 - they would shame them that have not
- **Summary** - The Corinthians were wealthy and this not only seemed to be a focus, but a main part of their Christianity.
 - The perception is they don't need anything.
- **"ye have reigned as kings"** - noble, honored, highly esteemed, reputable, judgment, authority of others
 - Experiencing a kingdom right now
 - Remember "the princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory"
- **"without us"** - indicates the contrast between the Corinthians and Paul
 - The "full, rich, ruling" position the Corinthians are in is not "with" Paul, but without.
 - The Corinthians seemingly certain provisions that Paul does not have, yet Paul has provided scriptural evidence that although it seems like they are in the better position the spiritual, yet true reality is they are not.
 - Paul has been continually working to enlighten their eyes, even from the very opening of the epistles.
 - **1 Cor. 1:4-5** - "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;"
 - This is not the "enrichment" that Paul is bring up in chapter 4. They are "full" on the wisdom of the world and not full of the wisdom of God because they have only tasted the gospel appetizer and haven't been served the main course of hidden wisdom delight.
 - Rather, they have resorted to wind and are full on vanity.
- **"and I would to God ye did reign"**
 1. Paul wishes they did reign, that they were virtuous and noble, they weren't in the eyes of God
 2. If the Corinthians were really reigning then Paul would be reigning with them and they would be in "the life to come"
 - Paul would be experiencing all the things he would listing
 - **"would to God"** - their reigning isn't "to God" (deceived)

- **"that we also might reign with you."** - Paul attaches his reigning to theirs and that if the Corinthians reign then Paul would be reigning.
 - The Corinthians are the fruit of Paul's message, ministry, and apostleship
 - 1 Cor. 4:15, 9:1-2
 - Paul would be rewarded for their reigning by the Lord
 - Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19

[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
 - "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."

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)
 - **"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

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.