

**Let me ask you a question as we begin this morning: Do you like being scolded?** No one does. But, aren't there times we need it? After all, Jesus said: “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.” A good father or mother chastens their children when they get out of line.

The Corinthian Church had gotten out of line. The entire church had broken up into groups, factions, cliques and the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul is scolding them for being so immature. He's told them that they're still on the milk...they're following the pagan culture and have adopted the culture's worldview and thus, the culture was having more of an impact on them than the word of God. The Apostle has had to once again, point them back to their foundation...which is Jesus Christ, and he reminded them that they're to be building on Him and not the stuff of this world, which will one day burn in a pile of rubbish.

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Church family...I believe we can sum up this entire, sordid mess in Corinth with just one word: PRIDE! I believe PRIDE is behind every issue the Corinthian church was dealing with...particularly these little groups they'd broken into, and so, today we're going to about “Pride versus Humility.” You've made your way to 1 Cor. 3. Look at verse 18.

### **1 Corinthians 3:18-23**

<sup>18</sup> Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. <sup>19</sup> For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,”<sup>20</sup> and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.” <sup>21</sup> So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, <sup>22</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours,<sup>23</sup> and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

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Can you see the pride the Corinthians had in their intellect and in their position in the world? They're continuing to boast about which leader they're following. Such pride, such boasting, but it continues...

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### **1 Corinthians 4:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. <sup>3</sup> But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup> For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup> Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. <sup>6</sup> I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. <sup>7</sup> For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? <sup>8</sup> Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! <sup>9</sup> For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. <sup>10</sup> We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. <sup>11</sup> To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, <sup>12</sup> and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we

bless; when persecuted, we endure; <sup>13</sup> when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

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Church family, what we just saw in those 14 verses can be summed up in one word: PRIDE. In fact, throughout 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, pride is mentioned again and again and again. The Corinthians gloried in their pride...they were puffed up, they were boastful, and they were vain.

Now, if you know anything about the Bible and you've studied it for any time at all, you know that **really** the basis of all sin really can be summed up in one word. Again...Pride. Pride is thinking that we know better than God. In fact, all sin is rebellion against God, and rebellion against God amounts to me setting my will against His will, and that's an act of pride. I know better than God.

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Isn't that what happened to Lucifer? Remember, in heaven, the angel Lucifer led a rebellion because he was full of himself. And Satan's pride created a division in heaven, right? He persuaded 2/3rds of the angels to follow him... Division. Just like in Corinth. Pride does that. **I'm better than YOU! I know more than YOU!** So, the Apostle Paul is tasked with dealing with the prideful Corinthians, and he doesn't shy away from it...in fact, he scolds them sternly...and he begins to do so by reminding them of who they are and how they are supposed to be acting: Like SERVANTS...

**1 Corinthians 4:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

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That word "servant" in verse 1 is a unique word. It's the word for a "galley slave." Do you know what that is? Take a look...



Did you ever see the movie: Ben Hur? Charlton Heston played Ben Hur and he was pictured as a galley slave... Those were the guys stuck in the bottom of the boat that rowed the thing forward. If you didn't row, you died. You were killed... It was terrible. Cramped...stunk...you were the low of the low. Paul saw himself as a galley slave... no one special...just someone who simply wants to be found faithful. Is that you? Are you willing row? Do the hard work for Christ?

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**Let me ask you something if you are an employer...** What's the hardest kind of employee to find? A faithful one, right? Someone who is trustworthy. Do you know what God wants out of us?

Someone He can trust...someone He can hand something to and know that they will take care of it and use it rightly. We saw that last week.

So, can God trust you? Can He trust you to live for Him and use the talents and abilities He's given you for His glory? Remember, if you live for His kingdom, you will be building with gold, silver and precious stones and they will last. If not, you're building with wood, hay and straw...you're not living for the kingdom of God...but, the kingdom of ME and those works will burn. And Paul reminds us we'll one day stand before Jesus the Judge...and not anyone else.

#### **1 Corinthians 4:3-4**

**<sup>3</sup> But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup> For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.**

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Listen, Jesus is the Judge and Paul in essence says, "I know you have been talking me about me, evaluating me...critiquing me and you know what it means to me? NOTHING! Zero." Church can I be honest with you, I'm one of the most critiqued people around. Being a pastor is almost as bad as being a politician. When you are in the public eye and you speak a lot, you're going to get critiqued a lot...and the truth is...a lot of times it's unfair. You're judged on a different scale than the person who is judging you is often willing to use to judge themselves.

It's true and it's hard, I'll have to admit it...that I do want you to judge me as doing a good job. You see, in my flesh, when I stand up here and try to teach and do my very best...well, I hope you'll say good things about me. Oh, I can say, "I don't care what people think about me?" But, in our flesh, don't we all want to be told we're doing a good job and we want people to like us? Sure we do... But, we can't allow that innate desire "to be liked" to keep us from being faithful and true to Jesus and His Kingdom work. When you speak the from the Word of God to a pagan culture...they don't like that and you have to get okay with that.

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Paul goes even one step further... He says, "I don't even try to judge myself, because my evaluation of myself is likely just as off as yours." What does that mean? It means he knows he can deceive himself into thinking that he's better than he is. Paul said, "I'm the chief of sinners, right?" But before we go to far, let's not think that we shouldn't speak truth into one another's lives either. There is a place for honest, loving encouragement when we're off base...living in sin or have strayed from the path. But we're to admonish in a spirit of love, not judgment.

The point is this: Paul is reminding the Corinthians that the Judge, Jesus, is coming back and one day we're all going to stand before Him:

#### **1 Corinthians 4:5-6**

**<sup>5</sup> Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.**

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Church, one day, everything is going to be brought out into the light. Everything that people have tried to hide and conceal, cover-up and seek to deceive...well...it will all be brought into the light. We can't deceive the Lord. He sees and knows it all. And PLEASE...that shouldn't scare you or intimidate you...it should encourage you that He is always watching to care for you and protect you and never forsake you...but, because of that SECURITY...yes...He is always watching...and because of that fact, we should seek to honor Him in humble service!

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Now Paul is going to make a personal application...

**1 Corinthians 4:6**

<sup>6</sup>I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup>that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.

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Remember, the Corinthians were pitting Paul's abilities against the abilities of Apollos...and Paul says, Apollos and I are not taking the bait. He said, "Your only judgment should be based on the Word of God." You say, "Where does it say that?" Right there in verse 6... It says, "do not go beyond what is written." Listen...our lives are to be guided by the Word of God, not one another's opinions. The Word of God is our guide... It's a lamp to our feet and light to our path. And you need to be reading it our you are going to go off the path! So listen, when you and I are making assessments of something...we should use the Bible as our guide...not the world. Because if we don't, we'll be in danger of getting like this:



Like a big ole blow-frog! That's what the word "puffed up" means in verse 6. It's actually in the present tense, so it means: "Stop being puffed up."

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Listen church family, it's okay to be thankful for your pastors or your church... That's much appreciate! But, please don't pit your church against someone else's or one of your pastors against someone else's. That's pride and that's wrong! **I met with some wonderful pastors this week...and there's going to be an announcement next week.** Tune back in next week.

You see the Corinthians were puffed up like big ole frogs and Paul says, No...you're to be thankful, not boastful and you are to remember WHERE all of your gifts and blessings come from.

**1 Corinthians 4:7**

<sup>7</sup>For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

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Church family, right here are three (3) simple questions there in verse 7 and they have three simple answers: #1 "Who made you better than anyone else?" Answer: No one. Question #2: "What do you have that you didn't get from somebody else?" Answer: nothing. You say, "What are you talking about." Did you come into this world with anything? No you didn't. You were born and you actually had nothing to do with that. You didn't even choose to whom you were to be born. You had nothing to say about that either.

But, I know...there may be those watching who say, "I've earned everything I've got." Okay...that's actually question #3 and it works this way. **Who gave you that next breath you just took?** You? No...God did. Who gave you your intelligence? You? God did. Who gave you your talents and abilities? (SEE A PATTERN HERE?) ☺ God did! The Bible says in Deut. 8:18 "You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth." The Bibles says in James...

**James 1:17a**

**<sup>17</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights**

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The Lord has blessed us all tremendously...wouldn't you say? There's no reason for boasting. We should simply look to heaven and give Him praise! Isn't that what we were singing:

**You are good, good, oh... You are good, good, oh...**

**You're never gonna let me down!**

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Do you see what the Holy Spirit is doing through Paul? He's stripping away all the excuses and leaving them bare...naked...with nothing...so that they can face their pride! So, they can admit it! So you say, "The act is done. Paul is finished. They're naked before God." Well, we're done yet...

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The Holy Spirit isn't finished. He's got to finish the job. Truth is: more big-time chastisement is coming. Remember Jesus said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chastise." Remember when Jesus got out the whip in the Temple? The whip is coming and so are the exclamation points... This is not being said in a whisper, believe me...and it's dripping in sarcasm...

**1 Corinthians 4:8**

**<sup>8</sup> Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!**

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See the sarcasm! He says, "You have all you want." In the Greek that literally means that you have become gorged because of a huge meal and you can't hold another bite. It means that you believe you've gotten it all. You have need of nothing! You are like a King! You are filthy rich! But, instead, you're immature and you're fighting like cats... You're carnal and worldly and you're acting like babies. It reminds me of what Jesus said to the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3. (Vomit)

**Revelation 3:17**

**<sup>17</sup> For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.**

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It's been said: "There's nobody as poor as the man who thinks he has it all." There's more fuel to the fire...watch verse 9

**1 Corinthians 4:9**

**<sup>9</sup> For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.**

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Take a look at this painting...





The artist has painted the Roman army coming back into Rome after a military victory. It's called the "Triumph." A Triumph is where a Roman general would lead his army into the city and he would parade his victorious soldiers through the streets as the people cheered. It was much like a ticker-tape parade in our day...after a sports team wins a championship. It was a way in which the General could show off his troops and bask in the glory of victory!

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But, way in the back of the parade...all the way at the end of the columns and columns of troops would be the captives, being dragged along...bound in chains. They were actually the best of the captives...the weak and wounded had already been killed. These captives were still alive and could walk...but, they too, would eventually die. They would likely be fed to the lions or offered up to fight lions or other beasts in the Coliseum. Because you see, following the great Triumph in the streets, the Roman people would move to the Coliseum and see the spectacle of the captives, as they died.

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Paul was saying to the Corinthians, **"We're the guys in the back...and y'all are the General and the elite soldiers in front. You're the heroes, we're the spectacles. You flaunt your pride, your privileges, your achievements to one another, while we simply serve and are willing to die for our leader."** Folks, that's sharp, sharp language. Keep reading...verse 10...

### **1 Corinthians 4:10-13**

**<sup>10</sup>We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. <sup>11</sup>To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, <sup>12</sup>and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; <sup>13</sup>when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.**

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Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: "We are to bless people when we are cursed, endure it when we are persecuted, and be kind when we are slandered." That's what Paul did. And Paul said, "And because of it, we're the scum of the world!"

That phrase "scum of the world" is a compound phrase in the Greek made up of the preposition "around" and the verb "to wipe." It refers to the absolute, most filthy thing you can think of. Maybe like the scum and the crust under the rim of a truck-stop toilet. That's how the world sees us as you know...the crust, the scum...the offscouring of something filthy...

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Are you okay with being seen like that? That takes humility doesn't it? It's easy to get along in the world if you don't speak the truth. But, boy, when you start hitting the world with the truth, you're going to get a reaction that isn't pleasant...because the world doesn't want to hear the truth. And since Satan is the god of this world, the prince of the age, he's got the world system to the place where it won't tolerate the Word of truth from Scripture. And thus, somebody who boldly proclaims the Word of truth is going to be set apart and they're going to be considered as only those worthy to walk in the back of the parade...those who are the scum of the earth and need to be destroyed!

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Pride versus humility. As we close this morning...remember what Jesus said? He said...

**Matthew 11:29**

<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Philippians 2 says...that Jesus...

**Philippians 2:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,<sup>[c]</sup> being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

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Think of that...Jesus, the King of Kings choosing to take off His royal robes...choosing to leave heaven and come down to us...into the muck and mire and the sin of humanity and what did WE do? We forsook Him, denied Him, spit on Him and mocked Him and whipped Him and nailed Him with iron spikes to pieces of wood. Jesus, took on our nature...was born in a cave, not a palace...laid on...NO...not a satin pillow, but AS WE WERE SINGING EARLIER ...to cradle in the dirt.

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Listen, Jesus had nothing in this life. At the end of his life He was basically homeless, He was poor, He was despised and rejected of men...a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief... And yet, in total humility, He was willing to stoop with a towel and a basin and wash our feet...oh and most of all...He was willing to die...like a common criminal...suffering our reproach, suffering for our sins...the One who was sinless...taking what should have been our separation from God on His shoulders.

Why? Why would He do that? Because He loves you and me! And He was willing to take our spot in the back of the parade, He took my chains...so I could ride up front in the parade! I don't deserve that...but, that's mercy! That's grace! That's the kindness of Jesus. And I don't know about you, but that humbles me...and that's the point of this entire message...

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We're NOT to be proud...we're to be humble...and to realize we're nothing except for the kindness and goodness of Jesus... And that's why we sing:

**“Praise the Father, Praise the Son, Praise the Spirit, three in one. God of glory, majesty, praise forever to the King of Kings.”**

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