- In my head this was one thing, in reality it was another. So many followers of Jesus live this way.
- Examine self, let Jesus be judge, but this does nothing as an intellectual exercise. We are saved by grace, but how we live matters.
- What does faithfulness and fruitfulness look like? (PAUSE)

Self, status, and stuff added to the gospel

6I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, 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. (SELF)

We see ourselves as rightly as we can, by God's help, knowing that we are works in progress and that Jesus is the ultimate judge.
So don't revere us so much! Don't go beyond what is written. Don't use your preferred metrics for judgment for us or yourselves.

7For 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? (STATUS)

What makes you guys so special? (Children bragging about what they have.)
You've been given everything by God (3:21-23) - every gift, every advantage, every blessing is from him.
Why are you bragging as if you've earned it? Gifts do not determine maturity.

8Already 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! (STUFF)

"I have arrived" "Heaven now" In your eyes you've made it! You are satisfied and comfortable with where you are.

Our boasting affects our living and our hope, and leads to a life "mis-lived", sourcing the wrong hope.
Adding self, stuff, and status to the gospel for status, comfort, happiness, peace.
This church is believing the lie that godly living and advancement in cultural esteem go hand in hand, and they do not.
In fact, following Jesus looks like the opposite…

The call of reality

9For 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.

ESVSB - Paul is probably thinking of the Roman triumphal procession in which captured enemy soldiers were paraded through the streets before being publicly executed.

10We 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. 11To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, 12and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

Let's seek clarity - Wealth/Blessing, Poverty/Suffering alone do not determine who you are in God's eyes - only Christ crucified does this.
However, Paul is painting a picture of a life juxtaposed to the way of living in the world.
This is not just the way of the apostle, the servant, the minister, the missionary. It is the way of the disciple.

Paul says it repeatedly:

- ***Philippians 1:29 - 29For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,***
- ***Romans 8:16–17 - 16The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.***
- ***2 Timothy 3:12 - 12Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted…***

Peter also mentions it:

- ***1 Peter 4:12–14 - 12Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.***

Jesus emphasizes it:

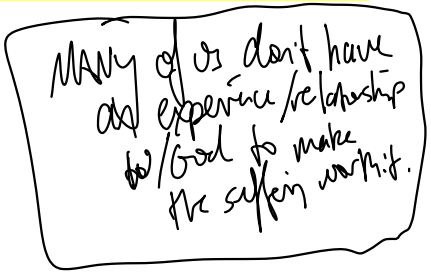
- ***Luke 6:21–23 - 21"Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. 22"Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.***
- ***John 15:18–20 - 18"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.***
- ***Matthew 7:13–14 - 13"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.***

- ***David Garland - The Christian life is not a fast track to glory but an arduous path that takes one through suffering. The suffering so visible in the lives of the apostles is not a tedious detour for a select few but the main highway for all Christians.***

——How do we help people see how they need this? - we must not justify and quality.
Paul is making observations about how their prosperity is forming them more than the gospel.

Don't follow Jesus for what you think it is, follow him for what it really is.
Do not conflate years of faithful attendance, giving, and action with knowing him.
It really is denying yourself, picking up your cross, and following him.
It really is crucifying your old life that the new one may be realized
It really is being a fool in the world to be wise in Jesus.
But he REALLY IS WORTH IT. DO YOU KNOW HIM? It's not behavior modification, it's worship.

- ***2 Corinthians 4:16–18 - [16]So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. [17]For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [18]as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.***



So, are we satisfied with comfort, ease, and routine, or are we willing to be numbered with Christ's sufferings?
Are we posturing in holiness and church life or are we in the game?
The church is supposed to equip us on how to live, but that is in the shadow of preparing us to die.

Lives on display

- Exhibiting - God desires to display, before the world, his power in those who truly live in him.
  - How are we known by those around us?
- Reflex of the heart - you can make your life hurt more on your own, but you can't repay reviling with blessing, persecution with endurance, slandering with gentle rebuking in your own strength.
  - What is the reflex of our heart as we go through life?
- Living as God's kids - 1 Cor 4:14 is the stated goal. We need to be put in our place.
  - Do we see ourselves as students and slaves or as sons and daughters?