

## Church in the Community part 5 Character fit for service 1 Corinthians 4

### 1. The faithful steward v 1-6

- v 1 “mere servants” = in Greek “under-rowers” or common sailors. Not captains but galley slaves under orders.
- Paul & Apollos were stewards of “explaining God’s mysterious.” A truth hidden in the past ages but now revealed to the people of God (see Eph 3:1-13)
- v 2 “Called to be faithful managers.” To please God (Rom 14:4)
- v 3-4 Our evaluation – i. by humans – not to confuse with godly feedback which is important.
  - ii. by self – which Paul didn’t trust either
  - iii. by the Lord – the one who really counts
- v 5 Danger of making judgment on God’s servants:
  - wrong time v 5
  - by wrong standard v 6
  - with wrong motive v 6b

**Question: Am I a faithful steward for God?**

### 2. The Spectacle of humility v 7-13

“Instead, I sometimes think God has put us apostles on display like prisoners of war at the end of a victor’s parade, condemned to die. We have become a spectacle to the entire world – people and angels alike.” v 9

- v 8 “You think you already have everything...you think that you are already rich.”
- v 9 “...spectacle...” apostles the poor relation at the end of the show.
- v 10a Paul a fool (gave up opportunity to be Jewish rabbi of great standing)  
Corinthians wise in their own eyes, but fools in God’s eyes!

\*Jim Elliot “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

- v 10 Paul weak – Corinthians powerful...apparently!

Warren Wiersbe “There is strength only when God gets the glory.”

- v 10 Corinthians honoured – Paul ridiculed
- v 11 Paul recounts the sufferings he has had to endure – sign of his weakness
- v 12-13 Paul’s response to ill treatment – haul marks of greatness (echoes of Jesus)
  - v 12 When cursed – blesses in return
  - v 12 When abused – patient and not retaliate
  - v 13 When slandered – gentle response

\*Warren Wiersbe “**What life does to us depends on what life finds in us.**”

- v 13b The world wanted to be rid of them BUT God was pleased & received glory.

**Question: Am I a demonstration of humility to others?**

### 3. The loving Father v 14-21

- v 15 He was their spiritual father – special relationship  
The local church is God’s family for helping new Christians grow
- v 16 He set an example (1 Cor 11:1 as he followed Christ)  
It takes instruction & example to bring a child to maturity
- v 17b Same standard expected in all Churches  
Not what is the minimum that I can get away with!
- v 18-20 A parent who loves enough to discipline
  - Pride of arrogance is abhorrent to God
  - Paul’s patience was running out – Proud of their sin (5 v 2)
- v 19 Contrast between “talk” & “power”. Words and action  
Paul not only talked the talk BUT backed up by power of God in his actions

**Questions: Who are my spiritual parents?**

**Do I have spiritual children who I need to be a loving parent to?**