

Magnolia Missionary Baptist Church of Beaumont
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Lesson #12 August 15, 2023—August 20, 2023

Unit III: God's Eternal Reign
Subject: Commended!
Text: 1 Corinthians 4: 1-6, 17-21

Key verse:

Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then every man have praise of God (1 Corinthians 4:5, KJV).

Lesson Pointers:

- 1) For the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:1-6)**
- 2) For the Love (1 Corinthians 4:17-21)**

Introduction

Chapter 4 of Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church addresses cliques and division within the church. The people had fallen into a pattern of aligning themselves with their favorite ministers (for example, Paul, Apollos, Peter) God calls His ministers not as groupies with a fan base, but as servants, whose responsibility is to be fruitful, faithful servant. Paul planned to send Timothy ahead of himself to ensure that the church received and implemented His message regarding the factions, divisions and other concerns that had arisen in the congregation. In the meantime, he repeated to the church that ministers of the Gospel are God's servant entrusted by Him with sacred mysteries and worthy of honor for their faithfulness. Unlike, "cancel culture," God is just, he will not cancel you. He sees every human heart and will give to every worker their own rightful share of approval.

Lesson Pointer # 1:

- **For the Lord (1 Corinthians 4: 1-6, KJV)**

1 Corinthians 4: 1--2 Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, He addressed the trend toward rallying like groupies or fans alongside one preferred one church leader over another. He emphasized that believers' loyalties belong to God. Therefore, the church should regard its leaders only as servants, valued only for their faithfulness and integrity before God. Christ must remain as the primary focus. We have an option: slaves to sin or slaves for the Lord. Stewards are managers of something entrusted to one's care. A steward is an overseer, manager, or caretaker for someone or something. We are steward of the gospel. For example, (Matthew 28:19-20), with the great commission, Jesus entrusted His disciple with the responsibility of getting the gospel to the world and multiplying believers for His glory. The purpose of biblical stewardship is the expansion of the Kingdom and to glorify God. Here are a couple of scriptures that speak of stewardship: **1 Thessalonian 2:4, KJV--Titus 1:7, KJV-- Let a man so give an account—The Corinthian church was to view their (Paul, Apollos & Peter) leadership objectively and not by feeling, preference, or casual impression. They were to consider leadership under another image as Servants of Christ: meaning, we should desire to serve and love others. True servants of God should be respected, honored, devoted to pleasing Jesus and committed to spreading the gospel. As servants we must obey God: One that be found faithful: "Faithful" carries the idea of being trustworthy, reliable, and faithful, toward God's truth. Verse 1 speaks of the Mysteries of God which are spiritual truths known only by revelation. God reveals His mysteries to those who are obedient to the gospel. Some of God's mysteries are yet to be revealed. So, in its fullest sense, "the mystery of God," is His plan of salvation through Jesus. Most importantly the Corinthians should focus on the Jesus. 1 Corinthians 4: 3---But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judge by you: Paul does not say that their Corinthian opinion of him amounts to nothing. It amounts to something, but it is a "very small thing" that he would be judge by them. Paul was not responsible for the Corinthians judgment of him; he was only concern of God's judgment. 1 Corinthians 4: 4—Paul says, "For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord." Paul shared knowledge of himself by reading the Word of God and being obedient to the Word, let the word judge me, not man. God will judge Paul in a Divine Court, Not in s Human Court. 1 Corinthians 4: 5---Therefore judge nothing before the time: So you should not decide about things before the time is right. Wait till the Lord comes again. He will show the bad things people have done**

secretly. The Lord will show the secret purpose of people's thoughts. Even God's people (Christian's) are subject to the same judgement and discipline as everyone else. Then God will praise each person in a way that is right for them. 1 Corinthians 4: 6---Paul is saying, my Christian friends I want to help you to understand these things. That is why I have used Apollos and myself as examples. You should learn from us what this means:" Obey what is written in the Bible & quota; None of you should be PROUD of one leader and not respect another leader. Don't think that any of you are better than anyone else. You receive from God everything you have. So you have no reason to be proud of what you have. It is all a gift!!!

Lesson Pointer #2:

- For the Love (1Cotinthians 4:17-21, KJV)

The Corinthians had become divided because of their desire to follow certain preachers. Paul encouraged them to imitate him, his beliefs and conduct that model Christs' way of living (Corinthians 4:7-16). 1 Corinthians 4: 17---To encourage repentance and a commitment to the cause of Christ, Paul wanted the believers to put aside their pride and remember the love they have for Jesus and each other. To accomplish this Paul told the church of Corinth he would send Timothy whom he had mentored in the ministry, a young man who was influenced by godly relatives. His mother, Eunice and his grandmother, Lois helped shape his life and promote his spiritual growth (2 Tim. 1: 5). Timothy was Paul's son in the ministry. He became Paul's protégé, friend, and fellow traveler, his son in the faith and a strong leader in the Christian Church. Paul knew he could count on Timothy to remind the Corinthians of what they already knew..... "It's not about themselves/us, it's all about Jesus!" 1 Corinthians 4: 18---Paul pointed out the sin of pride, which causes division and a lack of respect for authority. Some of the leaders in Corinth were so arrogant that they suggested that Paul would not return to Corinth out of fear. But they underestimated Pastor Paul and his concern for the church. Paul addressed the sin of pride directly and highlighted how it was in direct and unequivocal opposition to spiritual maturity and spiritual leadership. 1 Corinthians 4: 19-20---Paul was very concerned about those arrogant leaders' influence on the church. He informed them of his return and the importance of ministering in the power of God for the advancement of God's Kingdom. Ministry is about more than personality, charisma, and arrogant expectation. We can talk about our faith--we might say all the right words—but does our lives reflect the power of God—Paul says the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk/discussion but of power and love. It is about the power God working to transform lives. Let us, let our lives show that God's Power is working in us. Paul also said, "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will," (1 Cor. 4:19a). We can do nothing in the power of God, unless He allows it. 2 Cor. 2:1, NIV, Paul said, "I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you." This indicates he had already made one difficult trip to Corinth. Acts 18:1-18-- Paul knew the Corinthian Church, during his second missionary journey he went to Corinth preaching and testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. But they opposed him and became abusive. They rejected Jesus as their Messiah-so Paul told them he would go to the Gentiles who would be more receptive. But the Lord spoke to him in a vision saying, "Do not be afraid, keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in the city." So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God (Acts 18: 9-11, NIV). 1 Corinthians 4: 21—Paul was frustrated with their unspiritual attitudes, which was causing division among the believers. Paul encouraged them to repent/adjust their attitudes and remember their goal is to preach Jesus and Love one another. Their willingness and success in doing so would determine whether Paul would minister to them as a stern disciplinarian and confront them aggressively with a rod to punish them or as gentle loving father if they change their ways. What's your Choice? Let us, make God's priorities our priorities!!!