



MESSAGE/SERIES:

Restoration Series_ “The Steward of God”

DATE: September 29, 2019

SCRIPTURE FOR THIS WEEK:

(These verses will help you understand themes within as you read our core text as scripture proves scripture)

1 Corinthians 4:1-13, Isaiah 29:15-16, 1 Peter 4:10, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Job 9:15, Psalms 130:3, 1 John 3:21, Romans 2:1, Matthew 13:27-30, James 1:17, 2 Corinthians 13:9, Acts 17:18-19

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

[1 Corinthians 4:1-13]

*“This is how one should regard us, as **servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.** ² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. ³ 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. ⁴ For I am **not aware** of anything against myself, but I am **not thereby acquitted.** It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ 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.*

⁶ I 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. ⁷ 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?

⁸ *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!* ⁹ *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.* ¹⁰ **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.** ¹¹ *To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless,* ¹² *and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure;* ¹³ *when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things."*

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 4:1–13.

BACKGROUND & OTHER STUDY HELPS:

“Stewards” (“those entrusted”—NIV) “were often servants, as here, or freedmen. These servants and freedmen were trusted to manage the master’s estate, especially his financial affairs, and had great authority and prestige. *Some philosophers saw themselves as stewards or managers of divine truths.*”

Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 1 Co 4:1.

God as the “Judge” “The Old Testament speaks of the day of God’s judgment tribunal. In as “the day of God.” “Day” sometimes meant “court,” as Paul uses it and many translations render it here. Paul uses several legal expressions in these verses. Most philosophers, especially Cynics, expressed disdain for what anyone else thought about them.

Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 1 Co 4:3–4.

“Ancient rhetoric was concerned with **“praise”** for those to be honored; Paul says that the only honor that counts is what God will assign at the final judgment.”

Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 1 Co 4:5.

“Philosophers might beg, charge tuition or be supported by a patron; to them, *manual labor was the least honorable option.* Because wealthy landowners also considered manual labor undignified, well-to-do people in the church would be embarrassed to invite friends of their social circle to hear the teachings of **Paul, who worked as an**

artisan (skilled laborer).”

Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 1 Co 4:12.

OUTLINE:

I. The STANDARD of STEWARDSHIP (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 3-5)

Paul in this text *is contrasting the life of the apostles and the life of the people in Corinth*. The life of a Christian is different than that of the world as we are not only ambassadors of God representing Him, but we are also Stewards of God...managers of the things of God. There is a standard of Christian leadership in the Church...

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.² Moreover, **it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.**”

A. (v1) Servants of Christ

hupēretēs, hoop-ay-ret'-ace; from 5259 and a der. of ἐρέσσω **ērēssō** (to row); an *under-oarsman*, i.e. (gen.) *subordinate (assistant, sexton, constable)*:—minister, officer, servant.

James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 74.

- All believers are **ministers** of Christ
- All believers are **servants** of Christ
- All believers **assist Christ** in His continuing mission here on earth

B. (v1) Stewards of the Mystery of God

oikōnōmōs, oy-kon om'-os; from 3624 and the base of 3551; a house-distributor (i.e. manager), or overseer, i.e. an employee in that capacity; by extens. a fiscal agent (treasurer); fig. a preacher (of the Gospel):—chamberlain, governor, steward.

James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 51.

- All believers are Stewards of God's resources
- The Greek here translates Stewards best as **house manager or estate manager of Christ**
 - *As a Christian you have been given the keys to the kingdom of God because you have been given the Holy Spirit at the point of Salvation*
 - *We have access to heaven's resources*
 - *The Holy Spirit* (the guide)
 - *A new family* (the church of true believers)
 - **Truth** (we understand God's Word)

(v1-2) APPLICATION:

= As a servants and stewards of God's resources, what will we do with these precious resources of God?

=The Steward of God has been **given everything for the purpose of Kingdom Building**

1 Corinthians 4:3-5 "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. ⁴ For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ 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."

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 4:3-5.

THE STANDARD of STEWARDSHIP is GODS

A. THE STANDARD OF STEWARDSHIP IS NOT MANS

(v3) "It is of no importance to me..."

a. -Paul understood the difference between Human Judgment and God's divine judgment

- i. Paul didn't care what others judgment of him was*
- ii. He wasn't in comparison to other men*

iii. *He wasn't on their grading scale*

b. We often get all caught up in what people think (and this drives our decision making)

i. *We start Aiming not to offend*

ii. *We start Aiming to make ourselves look better before men*

iii. *We start Aiming to persuade people for our own agendas*

B. THE STANDARD IS NOT BY MY OWN CONSCIENCE

(v3) *"In fact I do not judge myself..."*

a. *Paul is more **focused on his position in Christ** than in what man thought about him* (Justification as a one-time event and permanent standing in christ)

b. Paul was **Justified in Christ** (made righteous in Christ and looked at by God as if he never sinned.)

c. How many of us get bogged down in what our past says about us (I was rotten)

i. *It's not who I was but who I am today (new creation 2 Corinthians 5:17/Justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ)*

ii. *It's not how good a person I used to be (religiously), but that I stand Justified in Christ (His righteousness)*

(v4) *"I am not aware of anything...but I am not thereby acquitted..."*

d. My judgment can be wrong of my work...

i. *I was once religious like Paul and thought I was all good until christ arrested my soul/opened my eyes (Phil 3:4-7, 1 Cor. 15:9-10)*

e. It is not by my own judgment of my work that is accurate

f. It is not my judgment or assessment that **puts me right with God**, justifies me, vindicates me, or declares me righteous in that act

C. THE STANDARD OF STEWARDSHIP IS GOD'S

(v4) *"It is the Lord who Judges me..."*

a. It is **God has the final judgment on my effectiveness**

b. All prior judgments made of me by men are all negated because God is the final say

- c. My conscience is not reliable guide in accessing my effectiveness in stewardship of the things of God

(v5) *“do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes...”*

- d. People were questioning Paul, Apollos, and Peter’s ministry judging them based on worldly markers
- e. We do this in the church today and judge falsely as we do not know the heart of the minister of that follower of Christ

But, Since it’s God’s Standard
and Since its
God’s Omniscient eyes watching...

(v5) *“[the Lord] will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart...”*

- f. We cannot hide the truth from God
- g. We cannot judge the motives of the heart, but rather God will reveal true motives in the final judgment at His return
 - i. *We are only fruit inspectors not heart knowers*
 - ii. *Only God can judge the heart*

II. The Faithless Steward (1 Corinthians 4:6-8, 10)

Suffering is a center piece to Christian serve and leadership. We cannot escape the fact that we are called to suffer and we cannot escape the fact that God will judge the effectiveness of our service to Him in the end. It appears Paul uses Himself and Apollos and possibly even Peter as examples in calling out the sin within the church...

(v6a) “I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers...”

(v6b) “not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another...”

- A faithless steward will serve God adding to what is written, supplementing Gods words with worldly wisdom in various ways.
- (Deuteronomy 29:29) says, “The Lord our God has secrets known to no one. **We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for all that he has revealed to us,** so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions.

 - We are not to add to the teaching of scripture as we are only accountable for what is revealed
 - The Philosophers were haughty and adding to teaching most likely to appear smart or wise...

(v7) “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?”

- If you have wisdom God has given it to you christian
- if you have wisdom from God **do not marvel or boast in it** but in your God who gives wisdom to you liberally

(v8) (Sarcasm) “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!”

- They acted like they had already arrived at perfection spiritually and knew all that needed to be known
- Here we can see Paul is trying to **show them how foolish their way of thinking was...**
- Paul speaks to them as a spiritual father and guide... he wished that the kingdom of God was already fully here, **but we still have to deal with our flesh**

= The Faithless Steward boast in their own wisdom and their own Strength, *forgetting the Kingdom of God is still at war with sin and satan in a daily sense*

III. The Faithful Steward (1 Corinthians 4:2, 9-13)

(v2) *“Moreover, it is required of **stewards that they be found faithful.**”*

(v9) *“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. ¹⁰ 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.”*

- The Faithful Steward of God will suffer pain & tribulation in this world
- The Faithful Steward of God will suffer the cynical view of the world as we fight for the right
- The Faithful Steward of God will be the focus of the onlookers who are peering into the gladiators ring at the battle
- The angelic world is watching what is transpiring in your life

(v11-13) *“To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, ¹² and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; ¹³ when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.”*

- The faithful steward might have to labor in hard circumstances to accomplish God’s mission (Paul worked with his hands/tent maker)
 - *Those in Corinth thought manual labor was not respectable and looked down on Paul as if he was not good enough*
- But the faithful steward is about the message and is humble when people come against us... so as not to tarnish the witness of God in us
- Yes we are looked down on as useless scum and the waste product of humanity, but God’s faithful minister stays the course and ministers anyway

