



Sunday September 15, 2019
1 Corinthians chapters 4 & 5

CHAPTER FOUR

Having placed before the Corinthian church in chapter three, instructions on how to relate with ministers of God, in chapter four Paul continues to focus on what consists true Christian ministry and how the Lord will judge His ministers.

We divide this chapter into four sections for our study:

Servants And Stewards (4:1-2)

Judging And Honoring Servants Of God (4:3-6)

The Challenges Of Apostleship (4:7-13)

The Heart Of A Spiritual Father (4:14-21)

Servants And Stewards (4:1-6)

1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

vs 1:

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

servants Greek '*hupēretēs*' meaning a subordinate servant functioning as a free man. An under-rower on a big galley ship who acts on the direction of the captain. Used of the attendants of kings, the attendants of magistrates, anyone who aids another in any work. It is interesting that Paul chose not to use the word '*doulos*' meaning a slave.

stewards Greek '*oikonomos*' referring to a manager who is put in charge of a household to take care of it on behalf of the owner.

Paul invites the believers to see them (Paul, Peter, Apollos) as servants and stewards of the mysteries (revealed wisdom) of God.

vs 2:

Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

What is really required of us is for us to be faithful to the one who called us. This is what God requires of us and what God will judge us for.



We recall the parable of the talent that Jesus taught. The master rewarded the two servants referring to them as "good and faithful". God rewards faithfulness.

Judging And Honoring Servants Of God (4:3-6)

vs 3-5:

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

In the light of this, Paul says, I am not concerned how people or even a human court would judge me. In fact, I am not even evaluating myself.

Although, Paul does check up on himself and sees everything clear, He is leaving all judgment to the Lord Himself.

So Paul instructs the believers to let the Lord do the judging of His own ministers. The Lord will bring everything to light, and reveal the counsels (motives) of the hearts, and each one will receive his reward.

This is so important. **The Lord will judge us according to the motives of our hearts,** not the significance, or size, or fame, etc. we have attained. It is not how many sermons you preached, but "why" did you preach those sermons, or what was the motive of your heart as you preached those sermons.

vs 6

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

Paul states that he has mentioned all this in relation to himself and Apollos so that the Corinthian believers will get a clear and proper understanding of things. He urges them not to become divisive by taking sides with one minister to another.

(Contemporary English Version) ...I want you to stop saying that one of us is better than the other.

(Easy to Read Version) ...Then you will not brag about one person and criticize another.

(Good News Bible) ...None of you should be proud of one person and despise another.



This is an important lesson for us as believers. We recognize God's ministers as servants and stewards. We realize that ultimately the Lord Himself will judge and reward His servants. We as believers must not take sides and promote one servant of God above another.

The Challenges Of Apostleship (4:7-13)

7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

8 You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!

9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both 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 distinguished, but we are dishonored!

11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.

12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

vs 7-8:

Paul rebukes the Corinthian believers for their wrong divisive behavior, and especially the pride with which they exalted their own favorite ministers. He challenges them with three questions:

Who makes you differ from another? - putting this in context, what makes one group centered around one minister, superior to the other? In essence, nothing. We are one, as Paul has explained in chapter 3.

What do you have that you did not receive? - each minister (Paul, Apollos, Peter, etc.) and each group that identifies by that minister cannot boast of anything of their own. Everything we have comes from God. We have only received what God has given to us.

If you did indeed receive it, then why boast as though you did not receive it? - Why do we pretend as though we have gained what we have through our own accomplishments or our own selves?

These three questions are important for us today. We must recognize that though God has imparted into our lives through ministers He has sent to us, this does not in any way make us superior to other believers. Everything we have has come from God though He may have used different ones to impart into our lives.



In verse 8, Paul is using sarcasm and rebukes the attitude of the Corinthians - them thinking that they are full, rich, and reigning as kings and have no need of Paul or the apostles. Paul says 'I wish you were really reigning, then we could have also reigned with you'.

vs 9-13:

9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both 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 distinguished, but we are dishonored!

11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.

12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

Paul outlines the challenges and hardships the apostles have endured in order to enrich the lives of those they were serving.

This helps us understand the other side of Christian ministry. We must be willing to sacrifice, go through challenges and hardships in serving people, so that they can be enriched, and strengthened. Some of the challenges we face today, is nothing compared to what the apostles went through in serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Heart Of A Spiritual Father (4:14-21)

14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.

15 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

17 For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

18 Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.

20 For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.

21 What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

Paul expresses His heart as a true spiritual father, referring to the Corinthians as his "beloved children". He can call them his "beloved children" because God used Paul to bring them to the faith, and "birth them" so to speak into God's Kingdom.



From this passage we gain few insights on what it means to be a true spiritual father (or spiritual mother):

#1) A spiritual father is one who not only births people into the Kingdom through the Gospel, but takes them from immaturity to maturity, which includes warning/exhorting them when their conduct or motives are wrong (vs 14-15).

#2) A spiritual father recognizes and allows sons and daughters to receive instruction, nurture, training and equipping through other true ministers of God (vs 15).

#3) A spiritual father sets the examples and call his sons and daughters to imitate him (vs 16).

#4) A spiritual father raises up sons and daughters who are able to carry out what they have received from their spiritual father, as Timothy did (vs 17).

#5) A spiritual father knows when to use the rod for loving correction, and when to deal with love and gentleness with his spiritual sons and daughters (vs 21).

The apostle Paul states that he is willing to come to Corinth again, not with words, but in the power of the Kingdom, which he carried and walked in. However, he leaves the choice to the Corinthian believers, whether he should come with a rod to bring correction or with gentleness.

CHAPTER FIVE

The apostle Paul now begins addressing the second issue that was troubling the Corinthian church. There was sexual sin in the church. While the entire chapter addresses this matter, for the purpose of our study, we divide this chapter into three sections:

Action Against Sin In The Local Church (5:1-5)

The Unleavened Bread And The Passover Lamb (5:6-8)

Relating To Those In Willful Sin (5:9-13)

We then ask the important question about God's grace in this context:

What About Grace?

Action Against Sin In The Local Church (5:1-5)



1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!

2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

vs 1:

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!

sexual immorality Greek '*porneia*' refers to all types of sexual activity outside of marriage (including homosexuality, lesbianism, etc.); all kinds of sexual impurity.

The word "has" implies an ongoing relationship between this man and the woman.

The Christians at Corinth, those who were familiar with Jewish Scripture would have recognized that such kind of sexual conduct was not approved (Leviticus 18:8; Deuteronomy 22:30; Deuteronomy 27:20). Further even those in the world would not have approved of such conduct.

vs 2:

And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

For some reason the Corinthian Christians seemed indifferent, complacent towards this.

The Corinthian Christians were puffed up (Greek '*phusioō*' means to be arrogant, proud, lofty) of their "tolerance" towards this man in sexual sin, for which, Paul rebuked them sharply.

They should have been deeply grieved (mourned) about such sin and acted so that the man in this conduct would have been removed from the local church community. But they did not do so.

vs 3-5:

3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,



5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The apostle Paul recognizes that the Lord has given him spiritual authority over the Corinthian church (2 Corinthians 10:8; 2 Corinthians 13:10) to handle this matter.

2 Corinthians 10:8

For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—

2 Corinthians 13:10

Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

The apostle judged (condemned, sentenced, decreed) the man living in this sin, even though he was physically not present at Corinth. He did this "*in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*", meaning with the authority and acting on behalf of the Head of the church, Jesus Christ. He did it as being present in spirit, when the church was gathered together with the power (Greek '*dunamis*' miraculous power) of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Important side note here, Paul mentions that as the local church gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the power of the Lord Jesus Christ was present among them. This is true even today, as we gather together in the name of Jesus Christ. We must expect the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to be manifested and demonstrated when we gather together (regardless of the numbers).

What was Paul's sentence on this man? Paul delivered (surrender, yield up, cast, hand over, turn him over) to satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved.

What does "deliver such a one to Satan" mean?

This means that the person living in sin, is sent out of the fellowship and spiritual protection of the local church body. Because of his sin and rebellion (unwillingness to repent) he now becomes vulnerable to how satan would work in his life. The ultimate objective is the destruction (brought to ruin, punished) of his flesh so that he would come to repentance and he would be saved.

The word 'flesh' Greek '*sarx*' is used in different ways in the New Testament. It is used to represent:

(A) people in general Acts 2:17; Luke 3:6;

(B) the physical body Luke 24:39; John 1:13-14;



(C)what is natural, earthly, human e.g. Matthew 16:17; Romans 9:3,5,8; 1 Corinthians 1:26; 1 Corinthians 7:28

(D)food, as a source of life and nourishment , e.g. John 6:51-55; 1 Corinthians 8:13

(E)the sinful, carnal appetites, passion and desires as mentioned in Romans 8, Galatians 5, and other places.

For example, later on in 1 Corinthians 7:28, Paul states that the married person will have "*trouble in the flesh*". This would not mean that they would have some form of sickness or disease in their body! He is referring to troubles and challenges in living their natural, earthly, daily life.

So what did Paul have mean when referring to the "*destruction of the flesh*" by delivering this person to satan? This meant that the individual being put out of the spiritual protection of the local body, because of their own ongoing unrepentant sinful lifestyle would become vulnerable to the evil satan would do to them in the natural, earthly human life. What evil or trouble is not specified. Keep in mind that the punishment was a removal of spiritual protection over the person and not an infliction of evil on the person. The ultimate hope was that this person would repent.

All Christian discipline must be done with repentance, restoration and edification as the goal.

Side Note: The apostle Paul dealt similarly with two other men at the church in Ephesus, Hymenaeus and Alexander. Hymenaeus, was a man who fell away and made shipwreck of his faith, becoming a blasphemer (1 Timothy 1:19-20) and a false teacher, overthrowing the faith of others (2 Timothy 2:16-18). Alexander, was another man who fell away and made shipwreck of his faith (1 Timothy 1:19-20) and who became an enemy of the gospel (2 Timothy 4:14-15; Acts 19:33). Both of these men had at one point walked in the faith with a good conscience before making shipwreck of their faith. Paul delivered these men to satan "*that they may learn not to blaspheme*" (1 Timothy 1:20). So from this incident the understanding is that when they are delivered to satan, they would experience things that will cause them to realize the truth that they should not speak against Jesus and His servants.

Please note that we do not have a record of Paul going about passing such judgment on any and every person who sinned in the local churches he established. There are only two recorded instances where Paul makes mention of such action.



Side Note : The Christian's Attitude Towards The Local Church

We see here in New Testament times that being part of a local church was really considered a privilege and a place of spiritual safety. Remember the Corinthian church was not perfect. Throughout First and Second Corinthians, we see Paul addressing numerous issues within the Corinthian church. Yet, this imperfect church, because it was Christ's body, the Temple of the Spirit, the dwelling place of God was a place of safety to everyone in right relationship with the Lord and His body. What is our attitude toward the local church?

One cannot be in the local church, continue in sin and rebellion and expect to be protected, either.

When you are in right relationship with the Lord and in right relationship with His people (the local church) you are in a place of spiritual protection and spiritual fellowship that comes from the Lord and through His body.

The Unleavened Bread And The Passover Lamb (5:6-8)

6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

vs 6:

Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

Paul rebukes them for their boasting. Their boasting was about the ministers of God they were associated with (Paul, Peter, Apollos). Could also have been about the way in which God was at work in their midst through the gifts of the Spirit.

He points them to a saying they were familiar with: "*Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise.*" (Easy to read version). The implication here is that if they tolerate this sin amongst them, then the whole church could potentially be affected with similar sins of sexual impurity. Hence there is urgency in dealing with such a matter.

vs 7-8:

7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.



The apostle Paul now draws from the Old Testament Feast of the Passover (Exodus 12:1-14,43-48; Leviticus 23:4-5) and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:15-20,34,39; Exodus 13:3-7; Leviticus 23:6-8). The Feast of the Passover happened on the fourteenth day of the first month, the Hebrew month of Nisan. Leavened bread was not eaten on the 14th day on the Feast of the Passover. Then for the next seven days, from the fifteenth day till the twenty first day, was the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. So before the Feast of the Passover, all leaven (fermented bread) was taken out of the house. The whole house was thoroughly cleaned in preparation for these two feasts. To the Hebrews/Jews people it represented their separation from their old life of bondage and oppression in Egypt.

In New Testament we see leaven (yeast) representing sin (2 Corinthians 5:6-8) and false doctrines (Matthew 13:33; Matthew 16:6-12; Galatians 5:9).

7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump,...

The apostle refers to the cleaning process before the fest of Passover and feast of Unleavened bread, and urges the Corinthian church to remove sin from among them, so they can be a new lump of dough without any leaven in it.

7 since you truly are unleavened...

This is who we really are as believers. We are "unleavened", separated from sin. This is what God has made us because we are born again. Paul calls the Corinthian believers to live in what God has made them to be.

7 ... For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Paul points to Christ as our Passover Lamb. He is the true fulfillment of the Feast of the Passover. His blood and sacrifice does for us in reality, what the passover lamb in the Old Testament was a symbol of. The Passover Lamb has been sacrificed, so now we have to keep the feast of the unleavened bread, do to speak, that is, we keep all leaven out.

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

As believers we live in an ongoing, continuous Feast of the Unleavened bread, that is we are to keep all leaven of hatred and wickedness out, and maintain sincerity, truth, purity - all that is represented by the unleavened bread.



Relating To Those In Willful Sin (5:9-13)

9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "PUT AWAY FROM YOURSELVES THE EVIL PERSON."

vs 9:

I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

Paul was referring to an earlier letter he had written. There is no record of this.

"to keep company" Greek '*sunanamignumi*' meaning to mix up together, mingle with, associate with, be intimate with.

Paul warns us not to mingle with sexually immoral people. Later on in 1 Corinthians 15:33 Paul writes: "*Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*

vs 10-13:

If a fellow believer is living in continuous, rebellious, unrepentant sin, the Scriptures teach us not to keep company with this person. We understand that this list is not just limited to the specific kinds of sin that Paul mentions here: sexually immoral, covetous (greedy), idolater, reviler (abusive, curses others, slanderer), drunkard, extortioner (cheats people, swindler, thief);...but would also include similar sins (Galatians 5:22).

Here again, we need to understand why and how we deal with such people. Perhaps, what Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 will help clarify this:

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

15 Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Our goal is to help him see his wrongdoing, turn from it so that he can be restored.



What About Grace?

The apostle Paul is also the one who shares with us the revelation of God's abundant grace in many of his epistles. However, in dealing with sin, Paul is firm.

Can we be tolerant of sin in the name of love, grace and being open-minded? No! The apostle Paul clearly shows us that sin has to be addressed and dealt with. The local church must address the issue of sin and not turn a "blind eye" towards it.

Question : If a person is living in sexual sin (adultery, homosexuality, sex trade, e.g. prostitution, etc.), how would the local church work with such an individual?

Answer : While we love the individual, we call sin as sin. If such an individual desires to be part of the local church and in fellowship with believers, they must abide by the Word of God, be willing to receive help to remove sin out of their lives. We work with them patiently, so long as they are repentant and desiring for God to help remove sin from their lives. If however, they desire to be part of the local church and in fellowship with believers, but are unwilling to submit to God's Word and the work of the Spirit to remove sin from their lives, we cannot have them in ongoing fellowship.

MINISTRY TIME | SALVATION CALL



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday September 15, 2019
1 Corinthians chapters 4 & 5

The is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons . Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *1 Corinthians chapters 4 & 5*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1, Reflect on being a "servant" and a "steward" of what Jesus has entrusted to you? How would you go about everyday life as a faithful servant and steward of the Lord?

2, The Lord will judges us according to the motives of our hearts. What change in perspective/attitude does this bring as we do what we do in life and ministry?

3, Being a servant of Christ is a life of sacrifice in order to see others enriched and strengthened. What would motivate us to move from a place of self-centeredness to a place of sacrifice to enrich and strengthen others?

4, How can you develop the heart of a true spiritual father/mother towards other new believers, perhaps those whom you lead to Christ or those who may connect with you for spiritual nurture?



5, What if the Corinthian church had not acted on Paul's instruction in chapter 5, to deal with the person who was living in sexual sin? What would have happened to the local church?

If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

- 1, *families to be protected and strengthened*
- 2, *a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.*
- 3, *for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.*

Close by thanking God together.