

“FOOLS FOR CHRIST”
1 Corinthians 4:6-21

INTRODUCTION

There has been an ongoing battle is between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. The believers in Corinth were impressed by the world, unfortunately. To reach people like Corinth, we must be like Christ and use His wisdom, the gospel! Their problem was pride, the beginning and the core of all sin. Pride started when Satan was self-absorbed and wanted to be like God. Sin entered the world through man, **Romans 5:12**. Pride leads to conflict and contention, **Prov. 13:10**.

THE CURE

Paul dug down, like a good doctor, to address this core problem of pride, or being “puffed up” (verses 6, 7, 8, 19 and in 5:2). He mentions a few things that will help cure them of this. 1) Paul lived his life as an example of humility, v. 16, 17. **Who are your role models of humility?** 2) Realize that everything we have is a gift, v.7. It all comes from Him, our minds, ability and our appearance are all things we had nothing to do with. This should produce in us a true thankfulness and appreciation!

THE IRONY OF PRIDE

Corinth was a city of commerce, a wealthy city. They “reigned” without the apostles and thought they could live differently. The Corinthians had a distorted view of reality, however. They were carnal, babies in spiritual life, but they were not even aware of it! Because of pride they had a side effect of touchiness. (When someone points out something, there is a nasty reaction. Pride produces touchy, easily offended people).

We need to have the attitude of David in **Psalms 66:10**. David welcomed God’s examination of **Psalms 26:2** and **Psalms 139:23, 24**, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.” **Is this something that we pray about?**

PAUL CLARIFIES THEIR DISTORTED REALITY

Paul pointed out that Christians are appointed to death. In Rome they ended up being part of gruesome, violent entertainment. Public torture became normal, whether through lions, or alligators. Paul was a fool for Christ, but the Corinthians thought themselves wise (through compromise, not godly living), cf. **Luke 17:33**. The Corinthians had a false sense of strength, or peace. They were honored because, wanting respect, they straddled the fence. Jesus said that the world would hate you at some point if you follow Him. Paul, warning the Corinthians, said that in the world’s eyes Christians are really seen as the off scouring, garbage or scum!

WHAT A CONTRAST!

How could there be such a difference between the Corinthians’ experience and Paul’s? The Corinthians were weak in their witness. They were friends with the world. The one thing worse than being hated by the world is being loved and accepted by it! They believed in Jesus, but lived for the pleasures of Corinth! **Luke 6:26**, “Woe unto you when all men speak well of you...”

CONSIDER

Paul has to be admired for his confrontation with the Corinthians because of their spiritual state and lifestyle. He gave them a warning like a father so they wouldn’t remain in their carnal condition. We need to be open and receptive to corrective input from others in the faith!

Are you a Corinthian or a fool for Christ? Some Christians spend week after week with unsaved individuals and never discuss the gospel. They never get to the obstacle of sin. They feel it is too controversial or confrontational. A Christianity that isn’t serious enough to have God’s word confront their own pride and sin is weak. **What kind of Christian do you want to be?** Live in humility. Take a risk in witnessing. The time is now!

PRAY

- that we would purpose to grow spiritually and live godly in this world.
- that we would repent of our own pride!
- o the the Lord would empower us with His Spirit and grant us boldness – Acts 4:29
- for a good response to our church outreach in Canandaigua in August.