



THE CHURCH THE WORLD NEEDS | JUDGE ME! (9)

November 7, 2021

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

PURPOSE

To discover and experience Jesus Christ in our midst
To cultivate mutually encouraging relationships
To participate in God's mission to the world

ICE BREAKER

How do you respond to other's opinions of you?

QUESTION

Is there a time you have been misunderstood and if so, how did you handle it?

10 MIN

How do you respond when someone rightfully calls you out on something?

WORSHIP

10 MIN

OPENING PRAYER

God of righteousness, hear our prayer. We come before you with zeal in our hearts seeking justice for the wronged, hope for the downhearted, and healing for the afflicted. We strain to see your face and to behold the glory of your salvation. Transform us in your image that your grace and mercy may visit us this day. Amen.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER—Psalm 146

¹Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

²**I will praise the Lord as long as I live;**

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³Put not your trust in princes,

in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

⁴**When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;**

on that very day his plans perish.

⁵Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the Lord his God,

⁶**Who made heaven and earth,**

the sea, and all that is in them,

who keeps faith forever;

⁷Who executes justice for the oppressed,

who gives food to the hungry.

the Lord sets the prisoners free.

⁸**The Lord opens the eyes of the blind.**

the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;

the Lord loves the righteous.

⁹The Lord watches over the sojourners;

he upholds the widow and the fatherless,

but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

¹⁰**The Lord will reign forever,**

your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the Lord!

**SCRIPTURE
READING**

¹This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ²Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. ³But 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. ⁴For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵Therefore 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.

**BIBLE STUDY
40 MIN**

Summary and Connection

In 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 Paul is attempting to reign in the striving, self-promotion, and back-biting that plagued the Corinthian church and hindered its ability to embody the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we have seen throughout Paul's letter, Paul is addressing believers, fellow Christians, and not those outside of the church. He is calling them to embrace the power of the cross of Jesus and let the implications of Jesus' death shape who they are as individuals and how they relate to one another. They are called to be a unified witness of the power of the gospel, yet sadly they are caught up in factions and divisions that further divide the church.

Paul, here, begins to speak of God's judgment as a judgment we need. For Paul, God's judgment offers us the hope and courage necessary to be the community of God's people, because it means Christians need not be the primary and ultimate judge of one another as was evident in Paul's time and ours.



1. Looking at the Bible

What does the text say?

- Read the text twice. Each time listen carefully and notice what grabs your attention.
- In your reading and hearing of this passage, does it remind you of any other part of Scripture?
- How does Paul's talk of judgement in v.1-5 serve as a culmination of all that he has talked about up to this point?
- What does it mean to be stewards? What are the 'mysteries' Paul refers to in v.1?



2. Looking at Jesus

Paul has spent much of his time and energy in the first three chapters of Corinthians grounding his identity and encouraging the Corinthians to ground their identity in Christ. Here, because Paul's identity is in Christ. He can rest not in the judgment that others levy against him, but in the hope that the Lord will one day come and judge him and the world.

- Why is Jesus the judge that Paul needs and wants?
- Why should Jesus be the judge that we need and want?
- Why do we tend to avoid the promise that Jesus is our judge?
- How might his death on the cross shape our understanding of God's judgment?



3. Looking at our Hearts

One of the primary reasons we don't like the idea of a God who judges is because we think we are fit to judge others. We think we know better than God how to put the world back to the way it should be, including our own lives. Certainly the Corinthians felt they had been given the right to judge others. But Paul knows the human heart and knows that only God is equipped to judge our world because only he has the power to defeat evil and make all things new.

- Being a servant of Christ (v.1) is an expression of deep humility. How does Paul model humility for us?
- If we are not in the position to ultimately judge others, what place and responsibility do we have to make judgments on others and our world?
- How might the condition of our own hearts, modeled by the Corinthians, give us caution as we make judgments about others and the world?



4. Looking at our World

What are we to hope for?

- How does the Bible hold God's promise of future judgment and our hope together?
- Oftentimes we place our hope in our ability to judge and fix the problems of the world. How does the gospel compel us to place our future hope in Christ and his judgment?

SHARING
15 MIN

Share your prayer requests, thoughts, hopes and fears for the coming week, and as you do consider how this passage might give light to what you are sharing.

KINGDOM PRAYER
15 MIN

Pray that we would see ourselves called by God.
Include other prayer requests.

SENDING
5 MIN

Go forth, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not according to our works, but to God's purpose and grace.