

Serving Jesus
1 Corinthians 4:1-5

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.

First: We Each Have a Place in God's Kingdom. 1

Paul has been arguing that the Corinthian church should not be divided over he, Apollos, and Peter because they are, just like the Corinthians, only servants.

1:11-13 – *For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. ¹² What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

3:5 - *What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each.*

Gr/servant = *hyperetes* = subordinate rower

Gr/steward = *oikonomos* = household manager

3:16 - *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*

GR/mysteries = *mysterion* = the secret counsels of God

1 Timothy 3:16 - *Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.*

- 1 – God became human and intervened in human affairs
- 2 – His resurrection vindicated his claims
- 3 – Angels witnessed his birth, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation
- 4 – The apostles preached him everywhere
- 5 – People throughout the world believe on him
- 6 – He is now seated at the right hand of God, watching his glory accumulate

Hebrews 1:3b-13 - After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? ⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." ⁷ Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." ⁸ But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." ¹⁰ And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹ they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹² like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end." ¹³ And to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?

Selah: When we see Jesus as presented in these verses, we understand who he is and who we are. And it gives us great confidence in sharing about Him.

This makes the second point so easy to understand

Second: And must be faithful to those mysteries of God. 2

Why would we consider anything else our priority?

Our faithful stewardship of God's mysteries is the basis of and motivation for all our work – whether fostering children or ministering to orphans in Ukraine.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 - Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Matthew 19:13-15 - Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, ¹⁴ but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." ¹⁵ And he laid his hands on them and went away.

Bulletin insert: We are helping rescue orphans from Ukraine and relocate them to a safe country. For safety's sake on the livestream, we are not sharing more information right now, but that you are directly responsible for rescuing and relocating them.

Picture of Receipt: More, here is a receipt for the new, clean clothes you helped buy them.

Picture of Jay: This is my new friend, Jay.

Members' Meeting: This is going to be a long, ongoing effort. There will be much to be done and we want to pace ourselves. But, at the Members' meeting later this month, the elders will share our hearts about how we would like Heritage to invest in sharing the Gospel with Ukrainian refugees.

Third: A Correct Assessment of God and Our Place in the Kingdom Frees us to Allegiance to Christ. 3

Peer pressure may be beneficial. Peer dependence is bad.

The fear of man can be summarized this way: We replace God with people. Instead of a biblically guided fear of the Lord, we fear others. Of course, the "fear of man" goes by other names. When we are in our teens, it is called "peer pressure." When we are older, it is called "people-pleasing." Recently, it has been called "codependency." With these labels in mind, we can spot the fear of man everywhere.

The problem is clear: People can be too big in our lives and God can be too small. The answer is straightforward: We must learn to know that our God is more loving and more powerful than we ever imagined.

ILL – The difference between a

- Microscope – Makes small things look big
- Telescope – Makes big things look like they really are

The Bible makes God look like he really is!

We should be concerned about what people think about us but, thinking first and most, about what God thinks about us, ensures we live above what the world's judgement.

Fourth: But with the Knowledge that God will judge us. 4

Someone might say, "Well, you're just trying to be your own person, do your own thing..." but this is far from the truth.

The reason that Paul is free from judgment by people or human courts is because he knows that God's court will one day judge him

Romans 14:10b-12 - *For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹ for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." ¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

2 Corinthians 5:10 - *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

The judgment seat of Christ does not determine salvation; that was determined by Christ's sacrifice on our behalf (1 John 2:2). All of our sins are forgiven, and we will never be condemned for them (Romans 8:1). We should not look at the judgment seat of Christ as God judging our sins, but rather as God rewarding us for our lives.

At the judgment seat of Christ, believers are rewarded based on how faithfully we served Christ (1 Corinthians 9:4-27; 2 Timothy 2:5). The various crowns are described as

1 – The Imperishable Crown

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 – *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown*

2 – The Crown of Rejoicing

1 Thessalonians 2:19 - *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*

3 – The Crown of Righteousness

2 Timothy 4:8 - *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

4 – The Crown of Joy

1 Peter 5:4 - *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

5 – The Crown of Life

Revelation 2:10 - *Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

James 1:12 - *Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.*

Five: Let Us Reserve Judgement for God. 5

Many Christian people enjoy judging others. Some Christian ministries exist for this sole purpose.

I want to suggest that you and I, and that Heritage, invest its time, effort and energy, it's heart, mind and finances, in promoting the Gospel rather than judging other ministries.

Do we need to exercise discernment? Absolutely.

Discernment is nothing more than the ability to decide between truth and error, right and wrong. Discernment is the process of making careful distinctions in our thinking about truth. In other words, the ability to think with discernment is synonymous with an ability to think biblically.

– John MacArthur

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 - *...test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.*

1 John 4:1 - *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Philippians 1:9-10 - *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

The point of discernment is to ensure we can -

- Approve what is excellent
- Be pure and blameless
- Be filled with the fruit of righteousness
- For God's glory and praise

Motivation is the key to discernment. It is not about judging someone else as much as it is judging Jesus to be worthy of glory.

Conclusion:

This then, is our great goal in serving Jesus –

V 5 - *Then each one will receive his commendation from God.*

Matthew 25:23 - *'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*

Community Groups:

Read the text

- 1 – How would you define and describe the word 'servant' in this passage?
- 2 – What is a steward and what are a steward's responsibilities?
- 3 – How do you define 'mysteries' in this passage?
- 4 – How would you define 'faithful' in this passage?
- 5 – When you read Hebrews 1:3g-13, how do you see Jesus?
- 6 – How can peer pressure be beneficial?
- 7 – What is wrong with peer dependence?
- 8 – What is 'the fear of man?'
- 9 – What is wrong with it?
- 10 – How do people live if God is small, and people is big?
- 11 – Are there any ways in which you are suffering with 'the fear of man?'
- 12 – How does knowing that God will judge you, free you from the judgemetn of people?
- 13 – How does knowing that God will judge you cause you to live?
- 14 – Review the 5 crowns mentioned in the sermon. What crowns have you won?
- 15 – Why do some people enjoy judging others?
- 16 – Why should we be discerning?
- 17 – What is the great goal in serving Christ?