

1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5 – “The Gospel Recap”

Introduction: **Because we seek our glory and blessing in Christ, we can allow him to be the judge, and ourselves to be the servants.**

1) Not Deceiving Themselves

- Paul has made the point before that the wisdom of the world is foolishness to God. The wisdom of the world is the wisdom of self-promotion and power-seeking. This destroys the church. True wisdom is to know God’s wisdom, the crucified Christ.
- We see Paul’s point in the two texts he cites: Job 5:13 and Psalm 94:11. The context of both of these passages speak to the same theme: that God will defend his people from the attacks of the wise of the world. These Corinthian leaders have been destroying the church with their ‘wisdom.’ Paul warns that they are deceiving themselves if they think they will get away with it.
- Instead, they should not deceive themselves, but should embrace Christ, the wisdom of God.

2) Not Boasting

- The foolishness of their boasting is demonstrated in the fact that what they are clinging to is theirs already. Remember, they had slogans: “I am of Paul, I am of Apollos,....” They had things backwards. The leaders belong to them. Even more, Paul is uniting them by stating that all these leaders belong to all the Corinthians. There is no place for factions.
- In fact all of the great mysteries and fears of this life are ours. We will one day rule with Christ over the whole world. We have hope both in life and death. (see Phil. 1:18-26) And we spread his kingdom here, knowing that in the future it will be fully present. These are the benefits of being united with Christ. With that in mind, how can we hope to win for ourselves anything greater than what we are freely given?

3) Not Judging

- The last section begins with a positive command: that the Corinthians need to look at Paul and the rest **as servants** who have been entrusted with the valuables of the master. The most important quality in a steward of that sort is trustworthiness.
- So, is Paul being a faithful steward? Paul certainly makes clear that he is not looking for their esteem. In fact, he will not submit to the opinion of any human court, not even his own judgement. Rather, it is the master who will decide if he is being faithful.
- Doubtless, this is a warning for those untrustworthy stewards in Corinth. They will not be judged by a human court who looks at the outside. Jesus knows and will expose the secret thoughts and motives that no one else can see. Then the master will decide whether they have been faithful.

Conclusion: We need to embrace the wisdom of God in the foolishness of Christ crucified, we need to look for our glory in the glory that Christ gives and we need to serve him, looking to him alone for our reward.