

Blessed Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church
Adult Sunday School
12 June 2022
1 Corinthians 4:10, 13-15

10 We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but ye *are* wise in Christ; we *are* weak, but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable, but we *are* despised... **13** Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day. **14** I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*. **15** For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many father: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

My Beloved Sons

(1) Filth of the World

4:13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day.

This word "filth" means "dirt, garbage, rubbish". The Greek word describes "*the most abject and despicable men*". This was how the apostles were treated by those whom they sought to win for Christ and others who opposed their good work.

Elizabeth Elliot together with her husband Jim Elliot and daughter were sent as missionaries to Ecuador in Latin America among the Quito tribes in the 1950s. There was a carnivorous tribe called the Aucas until then were unreached by the gospel (these people literally eat humans). Her husband was killed by members of this carnivorous tribe when he attempted to evangelize them. Instead of resenting and blaming them, Elizabeth Elliot decided to stay put to continue the gospel work. Eventually many were converted including the man who laid hand on the life of her husband. She suffered the loss of her husband! How could she still love her enemy so much? It was a divine love, God's love that she manifested that enabled her to magnify Christ. Her strength to endure such afflictions was supernatural. Her resolve to stay put in her grief was supernaturally enabled.

Indeed, the Apostle Paul testifies of God's grace enabling him to endure the rigours of the gospel work in **2 Timothy 3:10-12** *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

May God's people be willing to trust God and to press on with the gospel work.

(2) My Beloved Sons

10 *We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised...* **13** *Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.* **14** *I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.*

The Apostle Paul addresses the church in Corinth as his beloved sons. It was a term of endearment, a loving entreaty, giving his care for their welfare. He understood the tender care of a loving father in his Lord and he expresses that love likewise to his spiritual children. He rebukes them by warning them that they may have a correct perspective of their Christian stewardship. Hendricksen said well, "He wants the Corinthians to listen to him for their own benefit." He seeks in them a humble, patient and teachable heart for their good. Not a conceited heart!

The Apostle Paul's desire is that the church continues to prosper spiritually. And he brings them to be mindful of his apostolic authority and that they should be willing to submit to it. The Corinthians sought to divide the church by creating factions. He has to address their rebellion quickly so that the peace in the church will not be undermined. He does so by this needful admonishment. He was careful to explain that his admonition was out of love, it was not to shame them but to restore order in God's house and to rid them of their self-sufficiency. The heart of Christ's disciples is characterised by a poverty of spirit and a willingness to mourn for their sins. He sought in them a right spirit.

May the Lord bless His church with His peace.

(3) Begotten You Through the Gospel

15 *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*

Many in the church in Corinth were saved under the ministry of the Apostle Paul. He is a spiritual father to them. However, it seemed they have forgotten what God has done for them through this man.

The church in Corinth began after God saved men and women through the preaching of the gospel by the Apostle Paul. The Corinthian church over time has forgotten the source of their blessings and he is reminding them not to be ungrateful. He is as a father to them. Honour has not been accorded as it should be.

Acts 18:1-11 After these things Paul departed from Athens and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; because that (Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came

unto them. 3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when — Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

The Apostle Paul spoke with a taint of sadness. Like the natural father whose grown up children who may have benefited in their lifetime from the help and nurture of others who may be friends or close relatives. But the father is the one who has imparted life to them. And the Apostle Paul painstakingly took time over a period of year and six months to teach them the doctrines of life. Having been blessed, it seemed they have forgotten their father. He reminded them not to be ungrateful. Just like children who disregard their parents after they are grown up. Parents who have sacrificed much to bring them to what they are today. I met one who is so sad that he sought to end his life. He was restrained by a Christian woman who brought him to a destitute home.

May God help us not to forget those who have begotten us. Amen.