

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

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. **11** Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; **12** And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: **13** Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Hunger and Thirst

(1) Hunger and Thirst

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The Apostle Paul speaks concerning the challenge of the gospel work whereby in his travelling and also his ministering, he experiences both hunger and thirst for the gospel's sake. He is not writing in self-pity but rather he is highlighting the work of the gospel is hard work, self-sacrificial work. It has to roll up his sleeves and be about the Lord's business in the nurture and care of God's flock.

God has called him to a pioneering work into modern day Europe in the country of Greece and even to Rome, the capital of the Roman empire. Often, there were oppositions to the gospel work. Because of persecution, he has to be on the run often. That was how the church in Corinth was established. The need for spiritual help was great. Many fumble as they struggle to seek a way out of life's problems.

As Jesus said *Man shall not live by bread alone but by every that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*. Satan challenged Jesus to turn the stone to bread to satisfy His hunger. Jesus replied it is more important to do the will of God. His Father in heaven will take care of His needs.

May the gospel be advanced to the saving of souls for His honour and glory.

(2) Working With Our Own Hands

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When the Apostle Paul and the mission team first came to Corinth, he worked as a tent-maker for his subsistence and preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath. They supported themselves by working with their own hands. The word “labour” (v12) means “engaging in hard work till one is worn out”.

Luke wrote in **Acts 18:1-4** *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.*

That spiritual strength and vitality to be engaged in making a living and yet be engaged in the gospel work is a great challenge. Gill observed well, “As the apostle did at Corinth, Acts 18:3 and elsewhere; partly to minister to his own necessities, and those of others; and partly that he might not be burdensome to the churches; and also to set an example of diligence and industry to others; though he had a right and power to claim a maintenance of those to whom he ministered.”

May God bless His faithful servants.

(3) Reviled and Persecuted!

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

The apostles suffered reproach, scorned, being criticised in an abusive and angrily insulting manner for the gospel’s sake. Yet, retaliated not. This was Christ’ lot on earth. Isaiah’s prophesied of the fierce persecution that came against Jesus in **Isaiah 53:7** *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* The disciples of Christ followed in His footsteps of suffering. Like Christ, the apostles did not fight back but suffered wrong.

The Corinthian church seemed to be at in a self-sufficient ease which the Apostle Paul is observing and he seeks to awaken them out of their lost of love for Christ and the message of salvation. This is sad. But this is also how the church is today. There is a lukewarmness in service for the Lord. Perhaps it is material ease and comfort, but Abraham was rich in material things yet he lived a separated life unto God.

Truly, when one is living the Christian life to its fullest, Christ tells His disciples to expect persecution – **Matthew 5:10-12** *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

May we be walking in the steps of Christ and the apostles in devotion and service.

(4) Being Defamed

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

The apostles were maligned, wrongly accused, framed and suffer shame and yet they continued to bear it and were willing to suffer it. God was with them. They understood the gospel mission. They were willing to go through all suffering that the gospel might be advanced.

The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Philippians while he was in prison in Rome. He wrote, **Philippians 1:12-14** *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; 14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.* He requested the church in Philippi to support him in prayer that God's grace may abide and strengthen him not to give up but to persevere amidst imprisonment.

In the book "A Distant Grief" is recorded this testimony – The president of Uganda was surrounded by ten soldiers with machine guns. They were there to execute him. They asked him for his last word before they finished him off. He paused and said, "I am already dead and my life is hid in Christ but you are dying in your sin I would like to pray for all of you." Upon hearing that, the soldiers lowered their guns one by one and everyone asked him to pray for them. Where did he get the courage and the calmness at gun-point to say those loving words? How is it that he can be more concerned for the souls of his adversaries than his own life? Dear friends, except a ...

Dear friends, except a man live in Christ and for Christ. He cannot do that, it is impossible to display such divine Christ-like disposition. Under this most trying of circumstances, Christ was magnified through this President.

This was the life Christ lived and the apostles followed. It shall be no less for His servants today. May God's kingdom be advanced by the determined resolve of His people. Amen.