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**Text: (3:16-4:7): Review (V16-20):**

We must never forget these two Know ye not questions posed by Paul;

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God? And, that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

In fact, we ought to ask ourselves these questions daily for our own personal sanctification and spiritual maturity. What we find here being communicated to the Corinthians Church are the truths of personal and pastoral responsibility! To both the people of God and their pastors!

Personally; Christian, you are the habitation of God! You are God's building! If the Spirit of God is in you, that means that you ARE BORN AGAIN by the Spirit of God! That means you are radically different from the world. You're not carnally minded; you're spiritually minded.

Pastors, take heed how you build upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul here warns builders who would intentionally build upon the one true foundation of the church with materials or with teachings other than the truths of the Word of God. (I.e. Worldly wisdom, traditions of men, or false doctrines). Here is the warning and the punishment!

(V17): If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy

God will NOT allow His church to be ruined or destroyed, but he will destroy those that would intentionally corrupt His body with false teachings or the wisdom of this world.

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**Begins with Let no man deceive himself (V18)**

It's terrible to be deceived, it's worse when YOU are the one deceiving YOU; and when you're the one believing a lie! Don't deceive yourself in regard to your own soul; cast away your pride and arrogance and believe the truth of God's Word! Of course, Paul is speaking to and about preachers deceiving themselves and thinking highly of themselves; but again, this applies to anyone and everyone! (READ V18-20)

If any man seems (or thinks himself) to be wise in this world, let him be a fool that he may be wise.

Paul is speaking of ministers, but this applies to all and should be heeded by every Christian! If any (Christian or Pastor) would be truly wise and used of God in the church of Christ; whether as a faithful Christian or a faithful Pastor; he must FIRST become a fool; MEANING; he must cast aside all of his worldly wisdom, doctrines, and philosophies; once he does this, NOW he may be useful in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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**Therefore, let no man glory (boast) in men (V21)**

Don't boast of your minister's gifts/abilities; if they possess any gifts or abilities for use in the church, they are gifts from God! So, don't exalt one preacher over another preacher; because they were called and equipped by God, and on top of that, they are all working in the same field and on the same building, which belongs to God.

To glory means to boast; and I bring you back to Jeremiah 9:23-24.

We OUGHT to be boasters; but ONLY in the Lord! But so often, we boast in things or, as here in context, the Corinthians were boasting in preachers! This is BAD BOASTING; it's glorying in the flesh! Examples:

Acts 5:36, 8:9-10, Romans 1:30

Good boasting: Psalm 34:1-3, 44:1-8, Galatians 6:11-14

Believer, your confidence (your glorying/boasting) must never be in men, but in God! What happens though, when Christians put their confidence in a certain preacher; when that preacher is gone or departs, the people who put their confidence in that preacher rather than in God falter and are stifled in their faith. Jeremiah 17:5-7, Psalm 118:8

**(V21b-23): For all things are yours**

First: All of these pastors/ministers are yours; to be used for the edification and building of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ; whether it's Paul or Apollos or Cephas. They are all yours!

But then Paul continues that same thought by writing; but not only are all of these ministers yours;

So is the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; ALL ARE YOURS. What is Paul saying to us here?

The world, although it rebels against the gospel and the authority of Christ, and although it deliberately attacks the church, it is actually serving the ends to which it was appointed in the eyes of the Lord.

Don't ever forget, CHURCH, that Christ is in complete command of the world; everything that is happening in the world right now, is for the strengthening and sanctification of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Matthew 28:18: All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth

And since the world is subject to Christ, it serves His church; everything in this world is designed for the strengthening and sanctification of His church. Every life and every death in the world; (EVERY DAY) confirms the great truth that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father!

John 17:2: As thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him

NEVER FORGET that the CHURCH is not subject to the world. The governments of the world may THINK they can push the church around, exact their rules upon her, persecute her, and bring her under subjection to their laws, but make no mistake about it, what the world does to the church, Christ is allowing them to do for the good of His church and for her sanctification!

And lastly, (V23); And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's

All things are yours, ministers, and the things happening in the world, all serve the church; BUT Christ is NOT your servant, you are His servants; you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

### **1 Corinthians 4:1-6: Faithful stewards of the mysteries of God:**

Pastors/Gospel Ministers are Christ's servants in His church. Though they are given authority in the church, they are NOT the authority over the church, Christ is! Christ = I will build MY church

Pastors/ministers are Stewards of the mysteries of God. A Steward is defined as a house manager or distributor of his master's goods; one who dispenses the provisions of a great household under the command of a lord or governor to the servants of his house.

Genesis 39:1-6, 15:2, 24:10

The word Minister = #5257 = it means under or beneath, or to be in an inferior position or an under-rower. Ministers of Christ are Under-rowers or Under-oarsmen: The under-rowers must all row the boat with their eyes on one Man. And so, ministers of Christ must do their work in the church with their eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ and His commands.

But aren't we all under-rowers looking to our Lord for His commands!

### **Faithfulness required in gospel ministers: Trustworthiness!**

In the same way that a steward over a great house must be trustworthy with his masters' goods, and to not neglect dispensing them to the masters' household, so, gospel ministers, called in (V1) stewards of the mysteries of God are called to be faithful/trustworthy in the dispensing the truths of Christ in the church. Titus 1:7-9

But we are all (as children of God) called to be faithful gospel witnesses, are we not? Hasn't our Lord given us His goods (His gospel)? Aren't we all called to be faithful stewards of what He has given us? Don't we all want to hear those words; well done, good and faithful servant?

But here, the context is of pastors/ministers of the gospel.

### **(V3-5): The Corinthian's opinion/judgment of Paul's ministry:**

Paul made it clear here that he answered to Christ alone as his judge; he wasn't affected or moved by the negative opinions of men in regard to his calling or ministry. His conscience was clear before the Lord; he knew of no secret sins or behaviors that would disqualify him as a minister or dishonor the Name of Christ, and yet, as written in (V5); the judgment of the great day would reveal everything. (3:13)

End with reading (V6) = Explain!

### **Close: All things are yours:**

God uses ministers of the gospel, whom he has called to be stewards and servants in His church. They are to be faithful ministers, under-rowers; faithful to Christ alone in their calling.

They are to faithfully dispense/explain gospel truths in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. But then; know also that, though it may seem like the furthest thing from the truth; though the world hate Christ and His church; the world is

under His command, and they are serving the church!

*Psalm 24:1: The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein*