



PREACHING THE CROSS
God's Remedy for a Troubled Church

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LAKE ORION

The Measure of Ministers

Sunday, April 17, 2016

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TEXT: 1 Cor. 4:1-5

I. HOW ARE MINISTERS TO BE REGARDED?

A. Ministers Are Servants of Christ, 4:1a.

1. The Concept of a *Servant* Defined.

- a. The Greek for “servant” used in 4:1 (*huperetes*) is different from the Greek word for “servant” used in 3:5 (*diakonos*).
- b. The word “servant” (*huperetes*) originally meant a rower— one who was on a lower deck of a trireme war ship. It came to mean an *under rower, galley slave, or underling*.

Other usages include: attendant, helper, minister, officer, officers, servants. Hence, it refers to *anyone who is in service to another person*.

2. The Concept of *Servant* Applied.

Paul saw himself as a galley slave in service to the Lord Jesus. He saw himself— not as the captain of the ship, but as an under rower helping to propel the vessel.

**B. Ministers Are Stewards of the Manifold Mysteries of God,
4:1b.**

1. The Concept of a *Steward* Defined.

A *steward* is a superintendent or a *manager of a household*. The role of a *steward* is beautifully illustrated in the Old Testament account of Abraham and Eliezer of Damascus in Genesis. 24:1ff.

As a steward:

- a. Eliezer was entrusted with his master's possession, Gen. 24:1-2.
- b. Eliezer made Abraham's desire his desire, Gen. 24:4; Gen. 24:12-14.
- c. Eliezer treated Abraham's mission with urgency, Gen. 24:25.

2. In Concept of *Stewardship* Applied.

Paul saw himself as a trusted manager of the manifold mysteries of God.

What are the manifold mysteries of God?

- a. The teachings which were previously hidden and unknown, but now divinely revealed.
- b. The disclosures of revelation or information directly from God in his timing to his chosen servant, cf., Eph. 3:8-12.
- c. The *timely revealed secrets* to those intended to know, but concealed to those not intended to know, 1 Cor 2:7-8.

To expand on the idea of stewardship, Paul saw himself as a trusted manager and custodian of New Testament truths.

II. HOW ARE MINISTERS TO BE EVALUATED?

A. The False Standards for Evaluations, 4:3-4.

- 1. The Church, 4:3a.**
- 2. The Government, 4:3b.**
- 3. The Conscience, 4:3c-4a.**

B. The True Standard for Evaluation, 4:2, 4:4b.

- 1. Christ alone is the One who determines which ministers have been truly trustworthy, 4:5b.**
- 2. Christ alone is the One who can discern the motives of men's hearts, 4:5c.**
- 3. Christ's evaluation alone is the one that matters, 4:5d.**

III. APPLICATION:

A. Seek to Please Christ NOT People.

B. Strive to be a Faithful Steward focusing on your stewardship NOT a Critical Judge Constantly Evaluating the Motives of Others.

C. Serve with a Renewed Commitment to Make Christ's Mission and Desires Yours.

God is not looking for servants who are talented, brilliant, intelligent, athletic, articulate, handsome, pretty, eloquent or charismatic. God is looking for servants who are *faithful* to their stewardship.