



**PRODIGAL**

**CHURCH**

**SERIES TITLE:** PRODIGAL CHURCH

**DATE:** SUNDAY, AUGUST 2ND 2020

**SPEAKER:** MONICA CAREY

**SCRIPTURE:** 1 CORINTHIANS 4

**Q1. We are 7 weeks into the Prodigal Church series. What has impacted or challenged you the most so far?**

As we continue in our series In 1 Corinthians we will see that in chapter 4, Paul is going to address how the church in Corinth and the Church in general understands, approaches and views their spiritual leaders. We've already seen in the opening chapters that there was some in the church in Corinth that preferred the teachings of Peter, or they preferred the teachings of Apollos much more than the preaching of Paul. Those men were more dynamic than Paul and better speakers than Paul.

Now Paul does not really care if they like someone else's preaching more than his. He knows he is not in this for a popularity contest. But he does have a very important role in this church.

**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-5.**

*"So look at Apollos and me as mere servants of Christ who have been put in charge of explaining God's mysteries. <sup>2</sup> Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful. <sup>3</sup> As for me, it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you or by any human authority. I don't even trust my own judgment on this point. <sup>4</sup> My conscience is clear, but that doesn't prove I'm right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide. <sup>5</sup> So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due."*

**Q2. How does Paul describe him and Apollos?**

**Q3. Using verses 3-5, summarize what Paul believed about being judged and casting judgment. What do think is the difference between sound judgement versus being judgmental? (Check out Romans 14:4.)**

Paul says he isn't concerned with what others think about him. Wow! If I am honest, this is a tough one for me. I've wrestled with people-pleasing my whole life.

**Q4. What about you? How does being reminded that we shouldn't use the approval of human authority as our primary gauge resonate with you?**

## READ CORINTHIANS 4:6-10.

*6 "Dear brothers and sisters, I have used Apollos and myself to illustrate what I've been saying. If you pay attention to what I have quoted from the Scriptures, you won't be proud of one of your leaders at the expense of another. 7 For what gives you the right to make such a judgment? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?"*

**Q5. Identify one or two of God's gifts—whether material things or abilities—that you could have a tendency to get prideful about if you were to forget where they came from.**

## READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:10-13.

*10 "Our dedication to Christ makes us look like fools, but you claim to be so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are so powerful! You are honored, but we are ridiculed. 11 Even now we go hungry and thirsty, and we don't have enough clothes to keep warm. We are often beaten and have no home. 12 We work wearily with our own hands to earn our living. We bless those who curse us. We are patient with those who abuse us. 13 We appeal gently when evil things are said about us. Yet we are treated like the world's garbage, like everybody's trash—right up to the present moment."*

I've heard it said that the true test of a servant is how one responds when he or she is treated like one. It's important to note that Paul wasn't saying we should allow others to treat us harshly and forget all relationship boundaries. He doesn't ask us to enable or excuse abuse. Paul even stood up for himself in court when he had an opportunity (see Acts 22:1, 25). But even so, there are times when we are unable to avoid the mistreatment of others. Sometimes we have no choice except our posture. Paul wasn't commanding the Corinthian believers to allow others to treat them poorly; he was reminding them that following Christ means choosing an attitude of Christlike humility.

**Q6. What has a time of suffering or persecution revealed to you about your spiritual walk with God? How have you responded, internally or externally, when you have been treated like a servant?**

## READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:14-21.

*14 "I am not writing these things to shame you, but to warn you as my beloved children. 15 For even if you had ten thousand others to teach you about Christ, you have only one spiritual father. For I became your father in Christ Jesus when I preached the Good News to you. 16 So I urge you to imitate me.*

*17 That's why I have sent Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of how I follow Christ Jesus, just as I teach in all the churches wherever I go. 18 Some of you have become arrogant, thinking I will not visit you again. 19 But I will come—and soon—if the Lord lets me, and then I'll find out whether these arrogant people just give pretentious speeches or whether they really have God's power. 20 For the Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk; it is living by God's power. 21 Which do you choose? Should I come with a rod to punish you, or should I come with love and a gentle spirit?"*

Paul says, "I urge you, then, be imitators of me."

**Q7. Church, consider this verse for a moment. How comfortable would you be if someone said to you, "I am imitating you - you are the one I am looking to as my model as to what it looks like to follow after Jesus"?**

Paul, in essence is saying, I urge you to be an imitator of me because if you follow and model me you are going to walk more closely with Jesus. Paul is like this is the kind of life I am trying to lead. And I want you to follow me in it. Paul was a leader who was hungry for the mission of Jesus. He had a spirit of humility towards those he served. He was always growing, painfully at times, in holiness. His whole goal in life was to point people to Jesus...Christ and Him crucified. Paul wasn't perfect by any means but he lived to please God rather than man. Hungry, Humble and Holy. That is the kind of leader we can imitate.

**Q8. Who have been the spiritual role models that have inspired or helped you in your walk with Jesus? Who are the spiritual mothers and fathers who have poured into your life personally?**

I want to encourage you to that if you have someone in your life that you've been able to watch, maybe from afar, and sometimes up close, and you are imitating their lifestyle as you follow Christ, and they've been a spiritual mother or father to you - Can I encourage you to write a note to them this week. If you don't have their address send them an email or a text or a phone call... but if you can, go old school and write a note and mail it. Write a note thanking them for being a spiritual influence in your life.

Appreciate you all so much. Have a great week!