

Paul's Love Letter

1 Corinthians 4:1-13, strong words

1-2: we are simply faithful 'servants.'

3: Paul's least concern.

4-5: our opinions are worthless.

6: 'Not beyond what is written.'

7: shame! Whole world will see their folly.

8-10: sarcasm: Corinthians at top, apostles at bottom.

11-12: apostles are shamed... (poverty; abuse)

13: Paul – we are *filth* . . . *rubbish*

I. Paul admonishes, 14

Paul does not write to shame

- Paul warns them as beloved children (admonish, correct)
 - Warnings hurt, but do not harm.
 - Warnings discipline, but do not destroy.
Ch.5. Ep.6:4. Eli.
- Acts 20:31
 - Paul did not browbeat, humiliate, or judge self-righteously.
 - Warnings imply real danger.

I. Paul admonishes, 14

II. Paul loves, 14

Paul writes to confirm his love for his children

- Beloved, also v.17: dear, prized, valued.
- 2 Co.2⁴ ...out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

Paul writes to confirm his love for his children

- 2 Co.12¹⁴ Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.
¹⁵ And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

Paul writes to confirm his love for his children

- Loving brothers correct brothers. 4:21;
1 Co.5.
- *“A small mistake in the beginning is a big one
in the end”* – Aquinas

I. Paul admonishes, 14

II. Paul loves, 14

III. Paul begets, 15

10,000

- Corinthians had many teachers in Christ (1:12) . . . but only one 'father.'
- U.S. – deluged with advice / information: phones, TV, internet...

Instructors

- Guardian, leader, guide. Pedagogue...
- Hb.12⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.

10,000
Instructors
Father

- Paul speaks of what he did, not of a title by which he should be addressed
 - Phm.¹⁰ I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains.
 - Ja.1¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Father

- Paul probably influenced Timothy more than his own father had.
 - I begot you (emphatic) in Christ, through the gospel
 - Without Christ, Paul could beget nothing
- Spiritual mentor can help us grow.
 - Timothy / Titus – Paul
 - John Mark – Barnabas / Peter
 - Joshua – Moses
 - Elisha – Elijah

I. Paul admonishes, 14

II. Paul loves, 14

III. Paul begets, 15

IV. Paul sets an example, 16

Imitator, 'mimic'

- Paul did not swagger like arrogant parents who bark orders but violate their own rules.

We imitate Paul as he follows Jesus

- He trains by word and by example.
- The conduct proves the parentage.
- The closer the parent-child relationship, the more likely the training will 'take.'

From the larger bull the smaller ones are taught to plow – Ovid

I. Paul admonishes, 14

II. Paul loves, 14

III. Paul begets, 15

IV. Paul sets an example, 16

V. Paul sends Timothy, 17

Timothy could speak for Paul

Timothy would report to Paul

- Timothy is a living example of what the Corinthians should be.
- Timothy would remind them of Paul's ways
 - “Paul's ways” are NOT something that Paul invented.
 - “Paul's ways” are NOT something that a man taught Paul (Gal.1).
 - “Paul's ways” are what LORD taught him (Gal.1).

How do we know what God wants us to do?

- By His ¹commands; ²approved examples; ³forced conclusions.
 - Acts 9² ...if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. **Ac.18:8-11**
 - 1 Co.7:17; 14:33b, 36
 - People tend to forget; society exerts pressure to conform us to its ways.

Timothy would remind of Paul's ways (Ph.4:9)

Paul's ways are in Christ (*His ways*)

- New Testament pattern – ‘as I teach everywhere . . . in every church’
- 2 Tim.1¹³ Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

1 Tim.1:16

1 Cor.15:3

- Corinthians were forgetting: 1 Co.15!

I. Paul admonishes, 14

II. Paul loves, 14

III. Paul begets, 15

IV. Paul sets an example, 16

V. Paul sends Timothy, 17

VI. Paul confronts sin, 17-21

Party spirit, 1:10-13; 3:3

- So focused on '*me*' that they forgot truth

Pride, 4:18

- Puffed up, exaggerated self-conception.

Pride is the enemy of learning and growth

Pretense, posturing, 4:18, 21

- Spiritual leaders must discipline wanderers.
- They choose how Paul will come...

Remember...

- “There is nothing sharper and more penetrating than the rebukes of love” – Starke
- “A good example builds not only with words but also with his life.”
- “He that would be a good man must have either a friend to admonish him or an enemy to watch over him.”
- “Education without religion, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil” – C.S.Lewis