

Fools on Parade

1 Corinthians 4.8-21

Paul continues to attack the pervasive condition of pride in the Corinthians' lives. This portion of the text is the most vicious assault yet. What we see is the cutting down of superficial reasons for pride (i.e., all those reasons they/we would feel superior) in view of the actual experience of where following Jesus may lead. But the conclusion of chapter 4 is where it all comes together in one word: power.

Thinking It Through (agree/disagree, consider/contemplate)

"Thus Paul's actual ethical instruction as it appears in his Epistles rarely uses the language of Jesus as it is recorded in the Gospels; but on every page it reflects his example and his teaching..." - Gordon Fee

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power. - Paul, 1 Cor 2.4-5

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? - Paul, 1 Cor 6.19

Working It Out

1. Read aloud 1 Corinthians 4.9-13. What is your initial gut-level response to this? Why does this feel so foreign to us?
2. Paul speaks of the importance of imitation and having leaders to follow. Who are the spiritual mothers or fathers you've had in life? Maybe that language is too strong, but you could say you've had guardians or guides.
3. Churchgoers often treat Paul's letters as somehow more important than the Gospels themselves. But what does the Fee quote get at in regards to how we need to think differently about Paul's writings? How, if at all, does this change the lens through which you view Paul?
4. Paul concludes in v.20 saying, *the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power*. 1 Corinthians 2.4-5 above is another place Paul speaks about this power. What are some implications for believers in regard to evangelism and the witness our lives have to those around us?
5. How does 1 Corinthians 6.19 revolutionize the way you think about God's presence and God's power, as well as your particular role in demonstrating that power?

Prayer Points

- Pray that every individual who calls GFC home (beginning with yourself) would ruthlessly identify the sources of pride in their lives and lay them bare before God.
- Pray that our lives, specifically our relationships, would be radical demonstrations of the power of God.
