

January 28, 2018 WHY DO YOU JUDGE?

1Corinthians 4

Have you ever judged someone as unworthy of your respect? Have you every evaluated a person based solely on their looks, title or abilities? Have you ever silently questioned someone's motives? Of course you have! We all have! Today, Paul reminds us that God's Spirit is not leading us to judge (evaluate, assess) the value of others! In fact, our very motive for doing so is the opposite of the Spirit: it is our flesh!

***ILLUS. To be like Father, we need to be "for" others!**

Have you ever wondered why you judge? Our insecurities & deficiencies drive us to seek validation. One prominent way we do this is by judging others: we find fault with them in order to feel better about ourselves. We need to realize that judging others is God's job; that trying to feel better by comparisons never works; and that our own deficiencies are actually places that make it easier to experience Christ's righteousness thru us!

This morning, Paul challenges us, as he did the believers in Corinth, to cease & desist from assessing the value of others to gain an improved sense of self-worth. God wants us to know that we are not competing for life, value, or love – *at least, not from Him!* We receive them freely in Christ: therefore we must freely give them. But when we judge others based on external factors, we're playing right into the world's trap: a contest no one ever wins! As Paul asks, "*Who are you to Judge?*"

1Cor 4:1-5 – Apollos & I are not in competition for your approval. We are not your servants, but **God's stewards who distribute God's blessings by explaining God's secrets.** We are guides into God's truths, not security guards posted to protect them. Popularity is not a requirement for good stewards; only reliability and accurate knowledge are needed. Good servants do what the Master tells them; they don't concern themselves with impressing people, human affirmation or celebrity status.

In fact, Paul says, "*I don't even trust my own judgment of me; I leave that in God's hands*" – and we should, too! Only God judges truthfully & gives every Christian the praise due!

1Cor 4:8-16 – You seem to think one bite is all the spiritual food you need; you're successful, rich, reigning as kings – *but in which kingdom – God's or the world's?* Religion has made us foolish, *but you are all such wise Christians.* We are weak, *but you are strong.* You are esteemed while we are laughing stocks. You have all you want, but we go hungry and thirsty, without even the clothes we need to stay warm. *You treat us as cursed,* but we bless you; *you disgrace us,* but we're patient with you; we reply courteously even *when you say evil things about us.* You sit on thrones, but we're like the scum of the earth.

Don't you remember how we started together? I am like your father in spiritual things. I was with you when the Spirit opened your eyes to Christ & His kingdom – when you realized that you were nothings and nobodies, yet bizarrely cherished by God. We rejoiced over the truth that God chose us, loves us and will establish us in His glory as kings...*but not now, not in this generation, not in this world – in His coming Kingdom!*

Stop judging others – especially when you're just trying to cover your own deficiencies! People-pleasing will not be rewarded in the Kingdom; only God-pleasing - & He already is!

1Cor 4:20 – The Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk; it is living by God's power (not your own)! Christianity is for the weak, the needy, the nobody's & nothings as estimated by the world. *That's why God's strength is best seen in human weaknesses* (2Cor 12:9)** **ILLUS. bad memory**

In truth, every Believer is rich, *but the world considers us poor!* We are found, but considered to be lost! We are cherished by God who will bring the world to an end, but considered idiots by the world's shifting standards!

So, who will you choose to serve – people or God – the world or the Kingdom – worldly validation or Divine calling?

INVITATION: Are you...

- 1) Doing God's work (ministry) or God's job (judging)?
- 2) Getting validation from Jesus or from others?
- 3) Earning applause of men or experiencing approval of God?

**Christians gain an improved sense of worth from God as we humbly embrace our weaknesses, shortcomings & deficiencies as opportunities to experience God, His character & His power!*

ILLUS. *Bad is Good in the Kingdom!* A bad memory is good place to connect with a God who never forgets!

I've often said, "My mind is like a sieve!" This self-deprecating statement is so often true! I'm not saying it to get your disagreement (false affirmation) or pity: ***I'm reminding myself that I am not the smartest person on the planet and that I don't need to be because I am a vessel of the smartest Being in the galaxy!***

The world would say, "Sign up for a self-help course & improve your memory! But God says, "Depend on Me! I'll remind you!"

There are no heavenly prizes for being the smartest human on earth! *There are only rewards for experiencing God working in/thru you!* When I remember anything, I know it's a gift from God, and I celebrate Spirit giving it to me to act on.

I don't have to have a good memory; I am a vessel of a Living God who never forgets!

****2Cor 12:9-10**

"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. This is the value of preaching for me.

*As for me, Spirit has shown me how often I judge others - based purely on eternal factors - and how critical my mind is - so often pleased to think ill of another for no good reason. I am persuaded that my Father is not at all like this: He always roots "for" people; nothing stops Him from moving toward them in love.

So, I have decided to do the same as my Father's son, I will carry on the family trait of being "for" people and not against them. There are too many traits, not difficult to find if one looks, that give reason to celebrate, not criticize. Now with His power, I am committed to experiencing His joy as we deal with people together.

WORSHIP IN MEDITATION: Exodus 4:8-12 (NLT)

8) The LORD said to Moses, "If they do not believe you and are not convinced by the first miraculous sign, they will be convinced by the second sign. 9) And if they don't believe you or listen to you even after these two signs, then take some water from the Nile River and pour it out on the dry ground. When you do, the water from the Nile will turn to blood on the ground." 10) But Moses pleaded with the LORD, "O Lord, I'm not very good with words. I never have been, and I'm not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled." 11) Then the LORD asked Moses, "Who makes a person's mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD? 12) Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say."

We all have the **"Moses' syndrome!"** We think our own deficiencies disqualify us from serving God. But the scripture tells us that God has chosen the foolish, weak things to shame the wise, strong somethings of this world. ***When will we learn that God is not depending on our abilities to do His work... just our willingness to be the vessels thru which He does it!***

Just like with Moses, God is the One who validates us as His servants. He does so thru His miracles – namely, ***salvation*** NOT our strengths, friends, followers or achievements! All our attempts at self-validation depend on finding fault with others by judging! But we don't need to validate ourselves because ***the only validation that matters forever is as God's child & vessel!***

Sermon in a Sentence: WHY DO YOU JUDGE?