

1 Corinthians 4:6-13

The Marks of a True Apostle

Pastor Eric Douma
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The Simple Structure of 4:6-13

1. The pride of the Corinthians 4:6-8, 10
2. The humility of Paul 4:9, 11-13

Irony:

- Paul – apostle of Jesus Christ is hated, and suffers for the true gospel.
- Corinthians – selfish and boastful, neglect the gospel and elevate themselves.

Paul Teaches Corinthians Not To Boast

1 Cor 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

These things = Paul and Apollos are fellow workers:
Farming analogy – 1 Cor 3:6
Master builder – 1 Cor 3:10
Head servants – 1 Cor 4:1-3

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Two purpose statements:

Not to exceed what is written. ἄ γέγραπτα

1. Common saying of the day: "treat me within the rules."
2. What is written = what Paul had written up to that point.
3. What is written = not to exceed the Scriptures in general.

Scriptures Paul Had Used

1 Cor 1:19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." **Isaiah 29:14**

1 Cor 1:31 ...just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." **Jeremiah 9:23**

1 Cor 2:9 ...as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him. **Isaiah 64:4; 65:17**

1 Cor 3:19-20 ...it is written, "He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The LORD knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless." **Job 5:13; Psalm 94:11**

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Two purpose statements:

Not to become arrogant...

- Paul now focuses on this second purpose statement all the way through verse 13.

People of Grace Must Not Boast

1 Cor 4:7 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

- τίς γάρ σε διακρίνει; = "For who judges you?"

(Play on words)

1 Cor 4:3...it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you...

1 Cor 4:5...do not go on judging before the time...

- Note the three rhetorical questions:

**The Corinthians' Over Realized
Eschatology**

1 Cor 4:8 You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you.

- Already and without us – emphatic position:
ἤδη κεκορεσμένοι ἐστέ, ἤδη ἐπλουτήσατε, χωρὶς ἡμῶν ἐβασιλεύσατε
- Possibly still rhetorical questions: "Already are you filled? Already have you become rich? Without us have you become kings? Indeed I wish that you had become kings so that we might reign with you."

**The Corinthians' Over Realized
Eschatology**

1 Cor 4:8 You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you.

- Already not yet: Paul grants that they really do have the Spirit, but they have not yet seen the consummation.
- Without us: Not that the Corinthians became Christians apart from Paul, but the fact that they are excluding Paul from their fellowship.
- Paul wishes the consummation had occurred so that his suffering would be replaced with reigning! (Last sentence sets contrast for verses 9-13)

The Corinthians Sit With The Scornful!

1 Cor 4:9-10 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.

- Better translated: "For it seems to me that God has appointed us the apostles to be last, as those condemned to die." Referring to the Roman triumphal parades where the booty was at the end of the procession (cf. 2 Cor 2:14).

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φρονιμος = synonym of Sophia – always used as a pejorative by Paul (cf. Cor. 11:19; Rom. 11:25; 12:16).

The Apostles Bear Their Cross

1 Cor 4:11-13 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

- Present hour...until now: Paul is taking on the over realized eschatology of the Corinthians. How is it the personal spokesman for God is so hated by the world, yet they are exalted and self congratulatory?

Application

We as believers must remember that suffering is the rule, not the exception for following Christ in this world and during this age. We must have doctrine that leads us to pick up our cross daily and to follow Christ with those who are shamed in the eyes of the world.
