

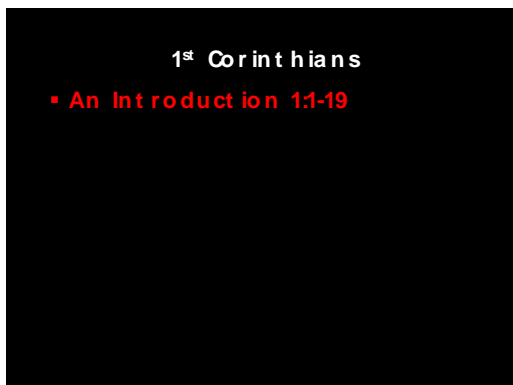


A Study of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians

Lesson 7: Like Men In the Arena... 1 Corinthians 4:6-21

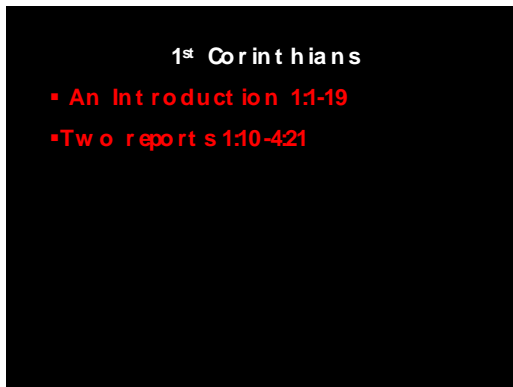
Now, this morning we have come to end of one of the natural divisions to Paul's letter to the Corinthians. You see 1 Corinthians is divided up into four sections. I mentioned this early on in our study but I think it might be helpful to remind you again of the book's structure. The letter starts off with a fairly typical Pauline introduction. He wasn't writing to a church that he didn't know...like he had with the Epistle to the Romans. No, he was writing to a church that he knew very well. He had spent over a year and a half living with the Corinthians.

Now he begins the letter with a commendation...commending the Corinthians for their faith and their knowledge and their giftedness.



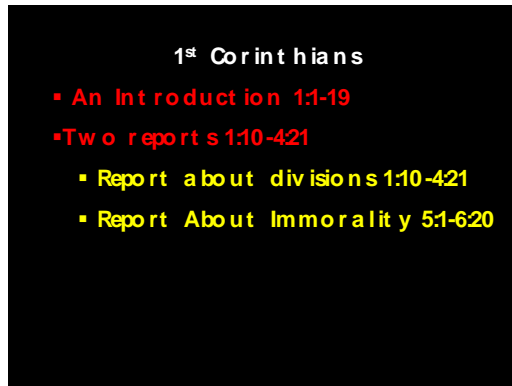
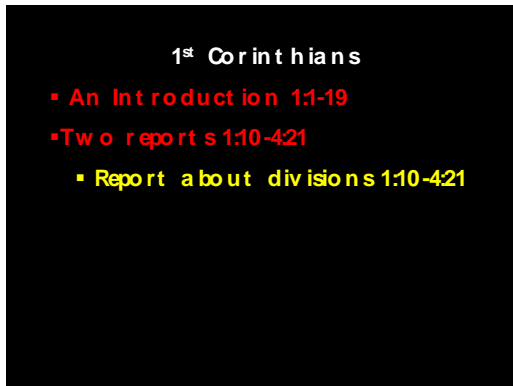
And I don't think Paul says those things sarcastically. Now he will certainly use sarcasm later on. Still, the introduction does include some of the same phrases that will come up later in some of the rebukes he directs toward the Corinthians.

Now after the introduction, Paul turns to the topic of the two reports that he had received about the Corinthian church.



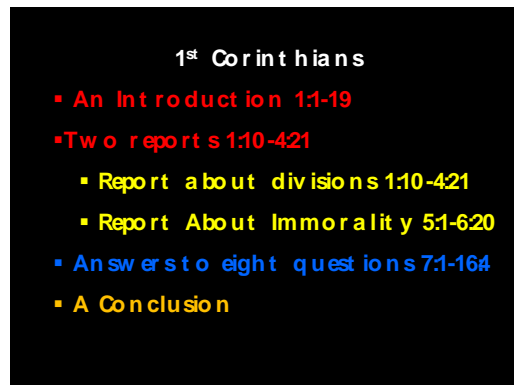
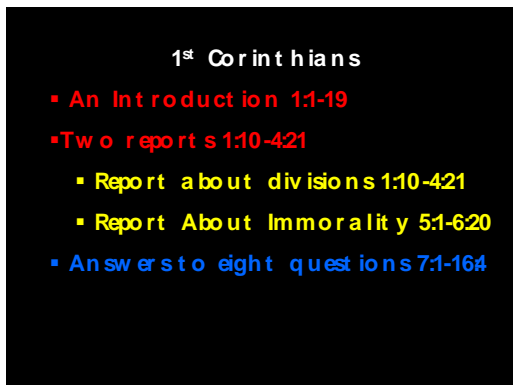
The first report concerned the divisions at the church in Corinth. That section extends from 1 Corinthians 1:10 all the way to the end of chapter four.

The second report, the place where we will pick up next week concerns a case of notorious immorality in the church. Paul deals with that report in chapters five and six.



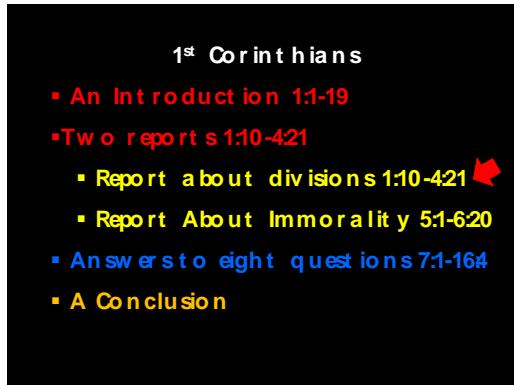
After that Paul begins to address eight specific questions put to him by the Corinthians. Those questions had apparently come to him in the form of a letter and his answers to their questions really constitute the bulk of his letter.

Now those questions deal with a wide range of topics covering things as diverse spiritual gifts and head coverings for women all the way to their collection for the beleaguered saints at Rome and the importance of the resurrection. Paul's answers to their questions start at the beginning of chapter seven and extend to the last chapter of the book.



And then finally the last twelve verses of the book make up Paul's conclusion to his letter.

Now this morning we are right here at the end of the section about the divisions in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 4:21. I think you can see it is sort of a natural division.



Now in this section, Paul has been arguing that the Corinthian's dividing up into "preacher cults" and favoring one individual teacher to the exclusion of all the others was both wrong-headed and idiotic.

He frames his concern for what they had done by asking them three separate questions and then answering those three questions in reverse order. Now, we have talked about this many times already but since we are going to be stopping for awhile I thought I might go over the verse one more time just to firmly plant it in your minds.

Now here are the three questions.

ESV 1 Corinthians 1:13...Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Now Paul disposes of the first question, the one about whether they were baptized in his name rather quickly...with just a few verses.

Chiasm and S. Paul

A. Has Christ been divided? (13a)

B. Was Paul crucified for you? (13b)

C. Were you baptized in the name of Paul? (13c)

C. I did not come to baptize. (14-17)

B. I preached Christ and him Crucified (1:18-34)

A. Christ's ministers are not divided (35-47)

He takes a bit longer to answer the second question...the one about whether he was crucified on behalf of the Corinthians. He answers the question, by reminding the Corinthians that while he was in their midst he only preached **“Christ and Him crucified”** to them and he did so because it was the wisdom of God.

And then starting in chapter three, Paul begins to seriously rebuke the Corinthians for being divided. He points out that they are immature babies and have completely misunderstood the wisdom of God and that their immaturity is evident by the fact that they have broken up into factions or **“preacher cults”**. Now as he does that he begins to use both himself and Apollos to illustrate his point.

ESV 1 Corinthians 3:4...For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 3:4**...For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

You see, he is pointing out that men like himself and Apollos are merely servants serving a common Master and because they are they are not divided. In fact, Paul goes on to say that none of Christ's ministers are divided....that they all have their function and should be rightly regarded by the Corinthians as stewards of the mysteries of God...that is, the gospel.

Now some scholars think that Paul was really after Apollos but I don't think that is true at all. In fact, Paul tells us why he has used himself and Apollos as examples. Look at what he says in 1 Corinthians 4:6.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 4:6**...I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.

Now I have to tell you this verse...1 Corinthians 4:6...takes up an inordinate amount of space in the commentaries...now when I say "**inordinate**"...I do not mean that you can ever spend too much time on a single verse or that the verse is unimportant. It is very important...but the commentaries spend page after page after page trying to explain what Paul means here and they do that in an inordinate manner compared to how they discuss the rest of the book. Now part of that is related to the whole nature of scholarship and part of it is related to the fact that scholars like to try to find the answers to difficult questions even when the answer to the question doesn't help to understand the passage all that much better.

Still, it is what it is.

Now the central question concerns what Paul means when he uses the phrase, **'Do not go beyond what is written?'** In Greek there is no verb in the phrase so translators usually supply one to make the phrase make sense. Usually they supply words like "to go" or "to exceed" or something of that nature.

Now literally the Greek says, **"not beyond what is written."** To make matters even more difficult there is a little article or word right before the phrase that is usually used to introduce a quote.¹ In fact, the little article almost certainly means that the phrase was something both Paul and the Corinthians would have recognized immediately. You know something like, **"Better to let sleeping dogs"** or **"the grass is always..."** That is, some scholars think that the Corinthians would have known what Paul meant but that the force is lost on anyone who was not there.

In fact, one commentator says that Paul here is incomprehensible.² That seems to me to be a really ridiculous thing to say because the general sense of the passage is clear enough. Still, some scholars want to emend the text, which means they want to get rid of the difficult words in the text and replace them with something more understandable even if they have to make up or guess what that more understandable thing might be.³ Some simply say that this is one of those places Peter talked about when he referred to Paul being hard to understand in 2 Peter 3.15-16.⁴

It seems to me that there are three possible or preferred explanations.⁵

Least likely is that is referring to the manner in which small children were trained to write letters of the alphabet. You see kids were often given boards with letters etched into them and they required to trace the letters with a stylus until they got the hang of forming the letters themselves. **“To go beyond what is written”** then would mean something like don’t color beyond the lines.

Ronald Tyler writes this:

Using such imagery, immediately recognizable to the Corinthians, Paul is telling the Corinthians to follow Apollos and himself as models: **“Copy us, imitate us, being careful, just as you were as children learning to write letters, not to write above or below the lines.”** While Paul stresses a parity between Apollos and himself, he makes it clear that he is their one and only father and that his work is earlier than that of Apollos (I planted, Apollos watered) and thus, is greater in importance.⁶

Now Tyler gives lots of examples where the idea of not going beyond what is written is used in ancient Greek...and I like the idea simply because it is so novel but I don’t think that is what Paul had in mind and I’ll tell you why in a minute.

A second possibility is that it might refer to some of Paul’s earlier writings. Calvin, for example, thought that Paul may have been referring to what he had already written or even to some of earlier letter...and if not that then the Old Testament as a whole. This is what he says:

The clause *above what is written* may be explained in two ways — either as referring to Paul’s writings, or to the proofs from Scripture which he has brought forward. As this, however, is a matter of small moment, my readers may be left at liberty to take whichever they may prefer.⁷

A third possibility, and the one that makes the most sense to me and Calvin himself alluded to it in the quote I read is that Paul was referring to the various Old Testament passages he has quoted already in his letter.⁸ You see when ever the words “**it is written**” occur in the New Testament they almost invariably refer to some Old Testament passage. Paul has already quoted six different Old Testament passages. In chapter three alone he quoted two separate.

That means that his point is simply not to go beyond what the specific Old Testament quotes warn...that is, do not think yourselves to be so wise so that you put too much stock in one man over another.

Calvin writes this:

“Now, there is no man that has anything of *excellence* from himself; therefore the man that extols himself is a fool and an idiot. The true foundation of Christian modesty is this — not to be self-complacent, as knowing that we are empty and void of everything good — that, if God has implanted in us anything that is good, we are so much the more debtors to his grace; and in fine, that, as Cyprian says, we must glory in nothing, because there is nothing that is our own.”⁹

That seems to me to hit the nail directly on the head. I think you can see how well that fits when you look at verse 7.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 4:7**...For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

You see the problem with the Corinthians was pride...a pride that manifested itself in their alignment with certain teachers. The teachers themselves were secondary...the problem with the Corinthians was that they viewed themselves

individually as the repositories of wisdom and thus gloried in their own ability to pick or choose the wiser or more spiritual preachers among them.

It would a little like you and I having a conversation and me saying, **“You know I love that R.C. Sproul”** and you saying, **“Yeah, well...he’s...he’s O.K...but Me...I’m a Piper man.”** And then once I walked off, you turning to someone and saying, **“You know that Browning is just not as spiritual as I thought he was. He still likes Sproul...imagine that...someone liking Sproul when they could like Piper instead. I am just fortunate, that God has granted me insight into such things that people like Browning do not have.”**

You see the pride is not in Sproul or Piper...it is not even in Christ Himself or the message of the gospel or of sovereign grace...the truth is the pride rests in the blackened heart of the man who thinks he is something special in and of himself.

Gordon Fee writes this:

If the first question marks the Corinthian conceit as *presumptuous*, the second marks it as *ungrateful* and is singularly devastating: **“What do you have that you did not it receive?”** This is an invitation to experience one at those rare, unguarded moments of total honesty where in the presence of the eternal God one recognizes that everything, absolutely everything that one has is a gift. All is of grace: nothing is deserved, nothing earned. Those who so experience grace also live from a posture of unbounded gratitude. Those, such as the Corinthians who think of themselves as especially gifted with the Spirit and wisdom, thereby enabling them to judge another, reflect a total misunderstanding of grace, and quite miss the **“humility of God”** expressed in the crucified One.¹⁰

Most commentators think the Corinthians were guilty of an over-realized eschatology. Now that is a technical way of saying that they thought they had

already received all that God had to give. They were thinking to themselves, rather they were saying to one another, we have all the wisdom we need...we have all of the gifts we need...and we have it quite apart from you. Later in the book, Paul will address the idea that the resurrection has already taken place and he will do so in response to the same kind of thinking. But here they are saying that the final state has occurred...that they are as far along as they can get in their maturity and that they are there quite apart from Paul's rather rustic teaching and preaching.

Now in verse 8, Paul turns quite sarcastic.¹¹ I think people are sometimes surprised that happens...they are surprised that Paul can get so passionate. But really, as strong as he is here, it is still fairly mild in comparison to some of what he says in his Epistle to the Galatians.

You see Paul sees at stake the very cause of the gospel...the Corinthians with all of their pride and spiritual self-assurance are tearing apart the very temple of God that Paul worked so hard to build in their midst.

Now I made the point that the Corinthians had an over-realized eschatology. You can that in what Paul says to them in verse 8.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:8...Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!

Now the phrase **“you have all you want”** is a translation of a Greek word that means to be full of wine or food...it means to be satiated. I think Paul has the

idea of being satiated with spiritual gifts or with the Spirit. And the second verb **“you have become rich”** has the same idea...that they view themselves as treasure troves of spiritual maturity and wisdom. It is the same word that Paul used early on in the letter when he said...

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 1:5**...that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge--

...except here, his use of the word is filled with biting sarcasm. You can tell that from the third verb he uses...the one that is translated **“you have become kings.”** You see the Greek word *evbasileu*, *sate* would be better translated **“you have already begun your reign.”** It is not that they are kings nearly so much as they are pretenders. The Corinthians had already begun their exalted reign in the kingdom of Christ...to them there was only the **“now”** of Christianity...a **“now”** that focused on their exalted status and standing before God as spiritually mature and gifted. To them there was no **“not yet.”** They wanted everything now...they wanted the spiritual respect that they thought went along with their spiritual wisdom and maturity.

And you know Paul says, **“I wish that had happened...because if that had actually happened... because that would mean that Christ had come in judgment and had properly evaluated things as they truly are and we would be ruling with you in exaltation.”** But, of course, it had not happened...the Corinthians were living self-absorbed lives...puffed up lives...lives focusing on their wisdom and giftedness and exalted status...but Paul was experiencing something a lot different than that. His life was not one that involved much reigning. He endured things for the hope set before but the present reality...the **“now”** was filled with suffering and pain.

Look at what he says in verse 9.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 4:9**...For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.

What Paul says here is that he and the apostles are like the poor prisoners at the end of a triumphal procession...you know a triumphal procession like when a Roman conqueror brought his enemies in chains back to Rome. Paul is saying that he and the apostles are like the men at the very end of the procession...in chains. Not only are they condemned to die in the arena but they are condemned to die as a spectacle to both men and angels. And the point he is making is a painful one...the Corinthians want to exalt in their superior wisdom and maturity because they are ruling and reigning...but Paul is experiencing something quite different...something not quite so triumphant. I love what Gordon Fee writes here when he says Paul's sentiment is that he and the apostles are like men condemned in the arena...not like the Corinthians who hold places of honor and sit in box seats.¹²

You see Paul is trying to get them to come down to earth and to cleave to one another...to encourage one another...as pilgrims and suffering servants...and he is willing to use biting sarcasm to get their attention.

As I prepared this lesson this week, I thought of two particular stories. The first I heard told by J. Oswald Sanders (late Director of Overseas Missionary Fellowship) once in a mission's conference over at McKinney Memorial Bible Church. Sanders said that once when he was very young and full of himself he had the opportunity to preach at a conference...it was in Scotland I think.

Anyway after he had preached and was quite pleased with himself...he went to change clothes and he heard two women talking about his sermon in the little room next to the one he was in. One woman said, **“What did you think of young Mr. Sanders’ sermon?”** The other lady replied, **“Oh, it was alright. He’ll get better after he has had a chance to suffer a bit.”**

You see that is in a sense what Paul is trying to get the Corinthians to see. They are not really **“spiritually mature.”** They are not really **“spiritually gifted”** and the reason they are not is because they are pointed completely inward. They want to enjoy the show rather than to be participants in the fellowship of suffering that Paul knows so much about.

Then I thought back to a wonderful little book by Don Kistler called *A Spectacle to God: the Life and Death of Christopher Love*. Love was a Presbyterian minister in England in that period bear the end of Cromwell’s life before Charles II ascended to the throne. He was falsely accused by some of Cromwell’s followers along Thomas Watson and four other Presbyterian ministers of plotting to bring back the king. Eventually the other five men were released but Cromwell’s followers decided to make an example of Love.

At the last minute Cromwell changed his mind wrote Love a pardon...however, the men that were assigned the task of delivering Cromwell’s letter hated him so much that they decided not to deliver the pardon tear it up tore up. As a result, Christopher Love was beheaded but just prior to his execution this is what he had to say...

“I am made this day a spectacle unto God, angels, and men; and among men I

am made a grief to the godly, a laughing stock to the wicked, and a gazing stock to all, yet, blessed be my God, not a terror to myself. Although there is but little between me and death, yet this bears up my heart: there is but little between me and heaven. It comforted Dr. Taylor, the martyr, when he was going to execution, that there were but two stiles between him and his Father's house. There is a lesser way between me and my Father's house, but two steps between me and glory. It is but lying down upon the block, and I shall ascend upon a throne.

"Beloved, I am this day making a double exchange. I am changing a pulpit for a scaffold and a scaffold for a throne; and I might add a third: I am changing this numerous multitude, the presence of this numerous multitude on Tower Hill, for the innumerable company of saints and angels in heaven, the holy hill of Zion; and I am changing a guard of soldiers for a guard of angels which will receive and carry me into Abraham's bosom. This scaffold is the best pulpit that ever I preached in. In my church pulpit, God, through His grace, made me an instrument to bring others to heaven, but in this pulpit He will bring me to heaven. These are the last words that I shall speak in this world, and it may be I shall bring more glory to God by this one speech on a scaffold than I have done by many sermons in a pulpit.¹³

You see Love understood the difference between the "**now**" and the "**not yet**" as did the Apostle Paul. Still the Corinthians did not understand. That is why he hammers home the point so forcefully in the rest of the chapter. He does that by comparing the Corinthians with the apostles.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 4:10**...We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 4:11**...To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, ¹² and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; ¹³ when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of a

Now that imagery is extraordinary. **“He is saying you know what our lives are like. They are like the shavings that are swept up in a wood shop after a day of working wood...they are like the scrapings that are scraped out of pots and pans after cooking a meal. We are expendable...we are castoffs...we are rubbish. That is the kind of over-realized eschatology we have...and we have up to this very moment.”**

And Paul’s implication is...that the Corinthians are contributing to the harsh treatment Paul and the other apostles receive by the manner in which they view themselves.

Then in verse 14, Paul drops all of his sarcasm and turns to speak tenderly to the Corinthians...like a father does to a son.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 4:14...** I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. ¹⁵ For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ¹⁶ I urge you, then, be imitators of me. ¹⁷ That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

Do you see what he is saying? He is saying, “I want you like aside this self-absorption and divisiveness and to imitate me...to join me in my sufferings...and to help that happen...I am going to send to you one of faithful sons...to demonstrate for you in a practical way how to live and to remind you again of the sort of things I have always taught.

And then he concludes the whole section by giving them a choice. He reminds them he is not simply going to let them go...rather, he is going to insist that they

do right...he does that by reminding them that he is going to come to them as soon as he can and he is going to do so in one of two ways and the way he comes to them is entirely up to them.

Look at how he ends his appeal in verse 18.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 4:18**...Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. ²¹ What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

You the Corinthian problem was divisiveness and that divisiveness was the result of self-absorption...of pride...of taking themselves too seriously and others not seriously enough. It is something we are to avoid like the plague because living that way leads to idolatry...to the worship of ourselves. Let me close with a brief illustration taken from Chuck Swindoll's *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*.

Not far from Lincoln, Kansas, stands a strange group of gravestones. A *man* named Davis, a farmer and self-made man, had them erected. He began as a lowly hired hand and by sheer determination and frugality he managed to amass a considerable fortune in his lifetime. In the process, however, the farmer did not make many friends. Nor was he close to his wife's family, since they thought she had married beneath her dignity. Embittered, he vowed never to leave his in-laws a thin dime.

When his wife died, Davis erected an elaborate statue in her memory. He hired a sculptor to design a monument, which showed both her and him at opposite ends of a love seat. He was so pleased with the result that he commissioned another statue—this time of himself, kneeling at her grave, placing a wreath on it. That impressed him so greatly that he planned a third monument, this time of his wife kneeling at *his* future gravesite, depositing a wreath. He had the sculptor

add a pair of wings on her back, since she was no longer alive, giving her the appearance of an angel. One idea led to another until he'd spent no less than a quarter million dollars on the monuments to himself and his wife!

Whenever someone from the town would suggest he might be interested in a community project (a hospital, a park and swimming pool for the children, a municipal building, etc.), the old miser would frown, set his jaw, and shout back, **"What's this town ever done for me? I don't owe this town nothin'!"**

After using up all his resources on stone statues and selfish pursuits, John Davis died at 92 a grim-faced resident of the poorhouse. But the monuments...it's strange...each one is slowly sinking into the Kansas soil, fast becoming victims of time vandalism, and neglect. *They were* monuments of spite, *sad* reminders of a self-centered unsympathetic life. There is a certain poetic justice in the fact that within a few years, they will all be gone.¹⁴

Don't you think that is about the saddest thing you have ever heard? How sad to spend one's whole life building monuments so people will remember you when you're dead...and to have that cause you to live your life in such a way that no one really cares that you ever even lived.

Let's build our monuments with living stones...and let the dead take care of the dead.

Let's pray.

¹ David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Raids: Baker Books, 2003), 134. See also Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* in the NIGTC series. (William B. Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, 2000), 353. Thiselton quotes an article by Ross in *Expository Times* 82, 1971. 215-217.

² L.L., Welborn. "A Conciliatory Principle in 1 Corinthians 4:6." *Novum Testamentum*, 29 no 4 O 1987, p 320-346. Welborn is talking about Hans Conzelmann.

³ John Strugnell, "Plea for Conjectural Emendation in the New Testament, with a coda on 1 Cor 4:6." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 36 O 1974, p 543-558.

⁴ NIV **2 Peter 3:16**...He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

⁵ Garland lists 5 possible solutions....Thiselton 7.

⁶ Ronald L. Tyler, "First Corinthians 4:6 and Hellenistic Pedagogy." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 60 Ja 1998, p 97-103. He gets the idea from other ancient, Greek writers. He quotes for example Quintilian as follows: "As soon as the child has begun to know the shapes of the various letters, it will be no bad thing to have them cut as accurately as possible upon a board, so that the pen may be guided along the grooves. Thus mistakes such as occur with wax tablets will be rendered impossible; for the pen will be confined between the edges of the letters and will be prevented from going astray. Further by increasing the frequency and speed with which they follow these fixed outlines we shall give steadiness to the fingers, and there will be no need to guide the child's hand with their own. The art of writing well and quickly is not unimportant for our purpose, though it is generally disregarded by persons of quality. Writing is of the utmost importance in the study which we have wider consideration and by its means alone can true and deeply rooted proficiency be obtained. But a sluggish pen delays our thoughts, while an uninformed and illiterate hand cannot be deciphered, a circumstance which necessitates another wearisome task; namely, the dictation of what we have written to a copyist. We shall therefore at all times and in all places, and above all when we are writing private letters to our friends find a gratification in the thought that we have not neglected even this accomplishment. (Quintilian *Inst* 1.1.27-29)"

He also adds, "The Corinthians translate this into life by recalling the religious ABC's which they learned from Paul and Apollos. Those teachings provide a theocentric emphasis which should correct the Corinthians' anthropocentric view of Christianity. They should cease to be puffed in favor of one missionary over another, and divisions in the church should not occur.

This interpretation of 1 Corinthians 4:6 fits the context and the moment of the relationship between teacher and student just *as* it does in the passages quoted from Seneca, Plato, and Quintilian. The familiar image of not going above or below the line when writing was available to them. It fits the theological, ethical, and rhetorical context in which Paul develops his argument within the total context of childhood language of I Corinthians. Finally, this *interpretation* satisfies."

⁷ Calvin, *1 Corinthians*...4:6.

⁸ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 4.6. Hodge thought that it referred to the Old Testament in general and not any particular passage. He says this: "He did this, he says, that they might learn *in us*, i.e. by what I have said of Apollos and myself, *not to think above that which is written*. That is, not to estimate ministers above the scriptural standard. As Paul had been treating of this subject, *above that which is written*, might seem naturally to refer to what he himself had just written. But as the phrase always elsewhere refers to the Old Testament, which were the *writings* recognized as of divine authority, such is probably the reference here. He does not appeal to any one passage, but to the doctrine taught in the Scriptures concerning ministers of religion. The

Corinthians were not to think of their ministers more highly than the Bible authorized them to think...as in Jeremiah 9:23, 24."

^{NIV} **Jeremiah 9:23**...This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.

⁹ Calvin, *1 Corinthians*...4:7.

¹⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians NICNT*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, 1987), 171.

¹¹ Hodge, *Commentary on First Corinthians*, 4.8. "That the passage is ironical, and even sarcastic, cannot be denied."

¹² Fee, 174.

¹³ Don Kistler, *A Spectacle unto God: the Life and Death of Christopher Love*, (Soli Deo Gloria Publications: Morgan, Pennsylvania, 1994), excerpted from pages 108-110.

¹⁴ Charles Swindoll, "Monuments" from *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*, (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1983), 317.