

Greater than - week 4



Discuss: Have you met people who thought they were superior to you or others? Why did they think they were superior and how did they show it? How did you or others react? Have you met any such people in a church context?

Read: 1 Corinthians 4

The issue of the rivalries that had developed in the Corinthian church has been a central theme of Paul's letter to them.

RECAP:

In chapter 1, Paul contrasts God's apparent foolishness with man's wisdom. To many the Christian faith seems weak & foolish but for those being saved, it was the power of God.

In chapter 2, he contrasts the wisdom of God against the wisdom of the world – one is worldly, one is spiritual. Those who focus on possessions and pleasure cannot know the things of the Spirit.

In chapter 3, Paul tackles some of the false thinking that was behind the divisions in the church, where people sought to glory in their own wisdom or attainment.

Now in chapter 4, he directly addresses the way they had reacted to their leaders and the arrogance that they displayed about their own superiority.

QUESTIONS

Q1: In v 1-7 Paul lists 3 truths about spiritual leaders. What are they – see below?

- *They are entrusted servants*
- *They should be faithful (accountable).*
- *Only God knows their hearts.*

Q2: Why then should we not judge them? Why do we so often resort to judging other people?
(*we put ourselves in an undeserved position of superiority. Maybe even above God Himself*)

Q2: V 8-10. How did these followers come to see themselves as sitting above their leaders? Compare the descriptions of their views with those of the apostles.

Q3: In the world's eyes apostles were pitiful. In verses 11-14, list the three callings of a spiritual leader that Paul emphasises?

- *To go without*

- *To work hard*
- *To not defend themselves.*

Q: Contrast these callings with the way the world would see success.

V 18-21. Pastor Andrew noted that, if we think we don't need others and are not learning, we will eventually be exposed. Have you seen that happening?

Q: What does Paul say is the contrast between false and real spirituality?

Q: What does it mean for us to be living in the power of God? How should this be evident – at home, with neighbours, at church?

For prayer and action:

Q: Given what we have found out about leaders, how can we better support our CBC leaders?