

# Servants and Stewards

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 05 January 2025

Preacher: Colin Horne

[ 0 : 01 ] Pastor Colin will be continuing the series on 1 Corinthians. We'll be reading from chapter 1, verses 10 through 17 tonight.

1 Corinthians 1, 10 through 17. This is God's Word. I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and have the same judgment.

For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, I follow Paul, or I follow Apollos, or I follow Cephas, or I follow Christ.

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name.

I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

[ 1 : 31 ] Well, we are back. Four months and four days, to be precise, since we've been in 1 Corinthians.

Maybe you were thinking we're never coming back, but we made it. And we're not going backwards in the book of 1 Corinthians, so don't think that the sermon will be from chapter 1. But that was a good reminder of what we've seen so far in chapter 1.

Now, we are in 1 Corinthians chapter 4. And when I first sat down to prepare for this sermon, I was thinking, given how long it's been since we've been in 1 Corinthians, maybe we need to do a recap. Not like a five-minute recap, but maybe something more thorough. Maybe we needed to cover chapters 1 to 3 again because we've been away for so long. And then I read chapter 4, and I realized, oh, God has given us that very recap that we needed.

Here in chapter 4, Paul is going to review, and he's going to wrap up this first section of the letter. So this is better than any recap that I could give.

[ 2 : 48 ] This is God's inspired recap that is given to us tonight. So Paul here is going to cover some of the same points that he's already made, and then he's going to conclude this section of the letter.

So what is it that Paul is reviewing and wrapping up here? Well, we heard something of it read just now from chapter 1. These divisions that are in the church, divisions over different leaders, factions that were forming around different personalities.

And this is very personal to Paul himself because he's being included in the church leaders that the Corinthians are dividing over. Now, Paul is not causing the division.

He wasn't asking them to elevate him like they were. The people in the church were just doing this themselves, but they're using his name. And so as we read, they're saying things like, I follow Paul, or I follow Apollos, or I follow Cephas, or even in a not humble way, I follow Christ.

So what's causing these divisions, these fractures that are in the church? Well, it's caused by the Corinthians thinking according to the wisdom of the world rather than the wisdom of God.

[ 4 : 08 ] So we have a very practical reminder here. If we're thinking big picture overview so far of 1 Corinthians, we've seen in these first four chapters, or first three that we've covered, how we think influences how we then live.

Our worldview, our system of thought, it affects how we live out our lives. So it was with the Corinthians. Their wrong thinking had led to a mess within the church.

So here they are, elevating the names of others. But at the heart of this was an attempt to elevate themselves. This was first century name dropping.

Look who I'm associating myself with. I'm somebody because of who I've associated myself with. So Paul is saying all of that, that is rooted in worldly wisdom, which is ultimately no wisdom at all. It is foolishness. You're thinking like the world. You have the mind of the world rather than the mind of God. And the mind of the world is puffed up with pride, whereas the mind of God is filled with humility.

[ 5 : 15 ] So we come to chapter 4. And Paul is now helping the Corinthians to see properly who he is and to see properly who these other church leaders are.

He's correcting their thinking about himself and other church leaders. And in doing that, guess what? He's also correcting their thinking about themselves. So we see in chapter 4 what Paul says to the Corinthians.

But we also need to see in chapter 4 what God has to say to us. This is not as though we are merely eavesdropping on another person's conversation or opening the mail of our next-door neighbor by accident and reading it.

It's tempting to think maybe that's all that we're doing. We read 1 Corinthians 4 and we could easily think, well, that's just what Paul had to say to the Corinthians. They had some serious problems. They had some sinful ways of thinking that needed to be addressed. And we would be right, partially. Yes, they did. And so do we, perhaps, need to have those same sinful ways of thinking addressed.

[ 6 : 22 ] So God included in His Word these very words, written to the Corinthians thousands of years ago. But what is God's Word? It is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword.

And so we need to hear these words as well, and we need to take them to heart. So here is what Paul says to the Corinthians in chapter 4. I'm going to give you all that he says in chapter 4, three relationships that he defines in chapter 4.

And I set out this week to cover all of chapter 4, but we made it through five verses. So we're going to look at the first relationship that Paul defines and unpack that together this evening. But let me give you all three.

Here's what Paul is saying. As it relates to Christ, I am a servant and a steward. As it relates to the world, I am the scum of the earth.

And as it relates to you, I am your spiritual father. So simple enough if we think servant, scum, and spiritual father. So Paul says to the Corinthians, just in the first five verses, as it relates to Christ, I am a servant and steward.

[ 7 : 32 ] Let's read those five verses. 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 1. This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

Then each one will receive his commendation from God. So this is review here. Paul is reiterating something of what he said back in chapter 3.

He's calling himself and these church leaders servants. Something he's already done once before. Giving himself and these leaders this lowly title of being a servant.

[ 8 : 36 ] Someone who is subordinate to an authority. Someone who answers to another. The word that's translated servant here, it's used in Greek literature to describe the priest's helpers.

It's used to describe the assistants in the courts or the synagogue attendants. So it's not a flashy position. The priest is known by name, but not as helpers.

Those who are on the court, they are known, but not the assistants. The rabbi, also known, but not the attendants. So Paul is saying, we're just the assistants of Christ, our master.

Think of us in the background. Think of Christ as being on center stage. The Corinthians had obviously reversed that and they had put these leaders at the center of the stage.

So Paul is saying, we're servants. We do our master's bidding. But then he introduces another word to us here. He says, we're stewards. You see it there in verse one.

[ 9 : 42 ] Stewards of the mysteries of God. Now a steward is like a servant in many ways. There's overlap when we think of these two titles, a servant and a steward.

But a steward especially has been entrusted with something. There's this responsibility that's given to them to care for something, to look after something.

Kids, do any of you at home have a pet? Does anybody have a pet? Any of you kids have a pet? My own kids are like, we want to raise our hand, but dad won't let us.

We don't have a pet. Some of you have pets. And maybe you have a dog. Maybe you have a cat. Maybe you have something more interesting even than a dog or a cat. I had a crab when I was a kid.

But my kids weren't very, my kids, my parents weren't very excited about getting a crab. They could tell you this story. And so we talked about it and they said, okay, we'll get a crab. But that crab is going to stay in your room.

[10:40] It's going to stink up your room. You're going to have to feed that crab. You're going to have to care for that crab. This crab is your responsibility. Kids, maybe your parents have said that to you about your own pets.

Maybe it's a dog that you have and your parents have said, this dog is your responsibility. You need to make sure that this dog has food in its dish. You need to make sure the dog gets taken out each morning.

That's having responsibility. That's what it means to be a steward. You've had responsibility entrusted to you. You're caring for something. In this case, it's a pet.

Well, God says, or Paul says the same thing. I have been entrusted with something. But as much as we love our pets, Paul's been entrusted with something far more important than a pet.

Paul says, I've been entrusted with the mysteries of the gospel. So what does he mean by that? What are these mysteries that Paul is talking about?

[11:40] We hear mysteries and maybe we think of like detectives who have clues and they're trying to solve a mystery. They're trying to unravel the riddle.

That's not so much how we should think of the mysteries that Paul is speaking of. Paul isn't talking about an enigma that you and I have to work really hard to figure out.

Paul is talking about something that was once hidden that has now been disclosed. Something once unknown that has now been brought into the light and fully made known.

Paul explains this very clearly in another letter that he wrote, his letter to the Colossians. In chapter 1, beginning in verse 24, listen to what Paul says to the Colossians.

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the, here it is, stewardship from God that was given to me for you to make the word of God fully known.

[12:51] So Paul doesn't say I've been given this mystery and I'm going to give you a few clues and see if you can figure it out. Paul says I've been given the mysteries to make them fully known.

Verse 26, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

That mystery, now revealed, is the gospel. And so Paul says very succinctly in 1 Corinthians 2, Christ crucified.

Colossians 1, Him we proclaim. 1 Corinthians 2, Christ crucified is what I came proclaiming to you. Now that is a mystery revealed that does leave people scratching their heads still.

[14:01] Salvation through a suffering Savior? That is counterintuitive to this world. Not the way that man naturally thinks. Not a triumphant, conquering Savior, but one who comes and suffers?

Crucified? Crucified? Is this Christ? And so as Paul says, this is a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Greeks or non-Jews, Gentiles.

This is the mystery revealed. It was hidden. It was unknown from the wisest of human minds, but revealed and made known, imparted by the Holy Spirit to those who have been given eyes to see. So Paul is saying, I am the mouthpiece for this mystery. I am the steward of these mysteries. And so he says back in chapter 2 of 1 Corinthians, beginning in verse 6, Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom.

Although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away, but we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

[15:14] None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, what no eye has seen nor ear heard nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.

These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. So there's mystery, language being used even here in 1 Corinthians. A secret, hidden wisdom of God, not understood by the rulers of this age, but revealed to those who have been given eyes to see.

The good news that Christ died for sinners such as us, Jews and Gentiles alike. These are the mysteries now revealed and Paul is the mouthpiece, the steward of these mysteries of God.

Now it's very important for us to see who do these mysteries belong to. These are not the mysteries of Paul. These are not the mysteries of Apollos or of Cephas.

These are the mysteries of God. God's mysteries entrusted to Paul or entrusted to Apollos as stewards. But ultimately, who do they belong to?

[16:26] They ultimately belong to God. So Paul understands something very practical about that. I'm then accountable to God for what He's given to me. I'm accountable for what's been entrusted to me.

I'm going to have to give an account for how I have been faithful or unfaithful with these mysteries. So it's my responsibility, Paul is saying.

I must proclaim this. I must carry out this responsibility well. Or as Paul himself says in verse 2, moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

So Paul must give an account. Paul answers to God. And so he must be faithful in the task he's been entrusted with. This is obviously a sobering thought for Paul.

I answer to God. He's given me such an incredibly important responsibility. I can't be negligent. I can't be lazy. I'm the servant of Christ. I'm the steward of God's mysteries.

[17:29] I'm going to give an account to him who judges justly. It will be found out if I have been faithful with what he's given me. So this is no laughing matter.

This is no trivial task. This is not a small thing to Paul. What God thinks of me and how I've carried out the task he's given me.

That's no small thing. But here is a small thing to him. Verse 3. Here's a very small thing. What anyone else thinks of him.

Anyone else other than God. Paul himself included what he thinks of himself. Very small thing, he says. He can't think of any way that he's being negligent.

He can't think of any way that he's failed to be faithful in his ministry. He can't think of anything against himself. But even if he can't, he's not in the clear because he can't acquit himself.

[18:27] No one else can acquit him. No one else can find him guilty. He can't acquit himself. He can't find himself guilty because he doesn't have the power to do either of those things. There's only one who has that power.

As Paul says at the end of verse 4, it is the Lord who judges me. And that judgment will be at the last day when the Lord comes, when Christ returns.

And what will he do in that day? As Paul says in verse 5, he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

So the servants and the stewards, the leaders in the church, like Paul, it will be known with certainty whether they had been faithful. Everything will be disclosed.

It will be out in the open for all to see. It will be known then. It will be crystal clear then. So that future day has very present ramifications for Paul today.

[19:29] If God will judge me in the final day, then I care very little if I'm judged by anyone else today because I answer ultimately to God. He's a far better judge than anyone else anyhow.

We can't see what's hidden in darkness. We can't see the purposes of the heart. But God can. And so Paul is saying, let's wait for him and for his evaluation of me.

So that's what Paul says to the Corinthians in these first five verses. Now let's consider some lessons for ourselves. What does God have to say to us through the words of Paul to the Corinthians?

God says something to us who are leaders in the church, primarily now thinking of pastors in the church, those of us who are shepherds of the church. And God says something to those who are

being led in the church, the congregation, the flock.

So a word to pastors and a word to the congregation. So first, for us pastors, we should lead with both humility and strong conviction.

[ 20 : 39 ] Humility and strong conviction. Paul is an example to us here in 1 Corinthians 4. Now we are not Paul in every way. Paul was an apostle that uninspired but still very helpful heading in your Bible probably says something like the ministry of apostles or apostles of Christ.

Now Paul, along with 12 other men, was an apostle. He was in that unique office. They were especially set apart by Jesus Christ.

They were chosen directly by him. They were witnesses of the resurrected Christ. They had seen him as the risen Christ and they were commissioned by him.

They carried his authority to lay the foundation of the church. Thirteen men unique in that office. Paul was one of them. But Apollos, who is mentioned here, was not one of those designated apostles in that sense.

He was a preacher. He was a leader in the early church but not an apostle. So yes, Paul is an apostle but Paul is also speaking more broadly here of leaders in the church with very clear direct application to pastors.

[ 21 : 55 ] So we as pastors should think of ourselves in the same spirit as Paul does. As servants and stewards. We've been given this great responsibility to preach and to teach.

We've been entrusted with the gospel like Timothy, another leader who was not an apostle. Paul said to Timothy, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

So as your pastors, we're to do the same today. We're to be faithful in proclaiming the word. We're to be faithful in handling the word rightly. To lead in the church.

To exercise oversight as 1 Peter 5 says. But how we are to do that with humility. Not abusing our roles. Not taking advantage of those that we're to lead and to shepherd.

Not puffed up with pride and self-importance. We're to serve Christ who's the chief shepherd of his church. It's his church. It belongs to him. So as pastors, we're to lead with humility.

[ 22 : 58 ] And at the same time, with strong conviction. Paul again is a real example to us here. We're to lead with this recognition that of course, we're to listen to those in our charge.

We're to listen to wise counsel from church members. We're to be ready to receive correction when it's needed. Perhaps in serious times. Perhaps just in how we make announcements about potlucks.

We need to be ready to receive correction. It's all a part of the humility. But we also shouldn't be people pleasers. We shouldn't be so concerned with giving an account to others or even ourselves and thereby failing in our call to be faithful to the Lord.

So of course, we as pastors shouldn't be abusing our authority, not listening to anyone. If we're doing that, guess what? We're failing in our call to be faithful. Faithful to the Lord. But we also shouldn't be campaigning like a politician, fishing for the approval of others.

We shouldn't be trying to win favor in all kinds of worldly ways because we want to boost our status and our influence in the eyes of others. That's what was happening in Corinth.

[ 24 : 12 ] Worldly standards were being applied to the evaluation of church leaders. So there was this strong temptation for church leaders to adhere to those standards, to try to meet those standards, to flatter their hearers, to come up with original ideas that would pique the interest of their hearers, to curry favor and to do it for their own glory.

And Paul is saying, that's garbage. I don't want anything to do with that. I'm not accountable to others in that way at all. And we as pastors today should have that same kind of moral background, backbone.

To say it with conviction, it is the Lord who judges me. And that will make us all the more effective and fruitful in the ministry.

You don't want a pastor who's just trying to make you happy. You want a pastor who's trying to make the Lord happy. So, from whom and when will we as pastors receive our commendation? It's from the Lord when He comes. So, we have to guard ourselves from seeking it from other people today. We have to guard ourselves from seeking it from even ourselves today. There's no place for pastors to be patting themselves on the back.

[ 25 : 33 ] So, there's a needed word from the Lord for the leaders in the church. We should lead with both humility and with strong conviction. Now, how about those being led? What does God

have to say not just to the shepherds but also here to all the flock?

Here's the lesson for the church from this passage. We should evaluate those who lead with both patience and discernment. With both patience and discernment.

We see that patience there in that command in verse 5. It's a strong command. Do not pronounce judgment before the time. God is giving this command to withhold judgment.

Now, it would be a mistake though to read that and think all pastors, all those in ministry who preach and teach, they are untouchable. They can't be evaluated for the words they speak.

They can't be evaluated for the actions of their lives no matter if they twist scripture, no matter if they abuse their leadership positions, no matter if their personal lives don't match up with their public lives.

[ 26 : 45 ] All judgment of any kind is to be withheld. That would be a mistake. That would be a twisting of what Paul is saying here.

So we need to understand what Paul means by do not pronounce judgment. Or as your translation might say, judge nothing. I mean, let's be honest.

In our world today, the word judge is a loaded word. People love to quote Luke 6.37 perhaps without knowing the reference. Judge not.

The Bible says, judge not. We could probably just lump in 1 Corinthians 4.5 and say, that's the same idea. Do not pronounce judgment. So what does Paul mean here?

Does this mean that there's never a place to judge in any way? There's never a place to make moral assessments, to draw conclusions about right and wrong, to evaluate the actions or the words of another.

[ 27 : 46 ] We have a very quick answer given to us right here in this letter in chapter 5. Paul begins chapter 5 saying this, It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans for a man has his father's wife and you are arrogant.

Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though I am absent in body, I am present in spirit and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.

And then near the end of chapter 5, verse 13, Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? So Paul couldn't be more clear here in chapter 5.

Judge those who are living in sin. There is discipline to be had even in this life, church discipline, for those living in sin. It's blatant, obvious sin in the church.

These are professing Christians who need to be held accountable. So Paul is saying pronounce judgment, evaluate, draw conclusions, and take action here in chapter 5.

[ 29 : 05 ] But all of that would lose its punch if he was saying the exact opposite in totality here in chapter 4. You can't ever pronounce judgment, you can't ever evaluate, you can't ever draw conclusions, and you can't ever take action.

So clearly, there must be some nuance to what Paul is saying in chapter 4. There is a time and a place and a way to judge that Paul would affirm.

He's giving us a good example in chapter 5. So what's the difference? What's the difference between chapter 4, the call to not pronounce judgment, and chapter 5, the call to pronounce judgment?

The difference is found in answering two questions, and the answers are given to us here in this passage. And these two questions are, are we using the right criteria, and are we recognizing the final judge?

If we answer these two questions, if we answer them well, then we'll evaluate those who lead with patience and discernment. We will judge in appropriate God-honoring ways.

[ 30 : 13 ] We won't be throwing out the baby with the bathwater, because there are good ways to evaluate. There are needed ways to evaluate. So let's answer these two questions.

The first is, are we using the right criteria? In chapter 5, Paul was evaluating. Paul was making a judgment call, but he was using the truth of God's Word as his standard.

He was using God's revealed Word as his criteria. You see, God condemns sexual immorality. So Paul says, we must as well. We must call evil what God calls evil.

But in the first four chapters of Paul's letter, he's been making it very clear. The Corinthians are not evaluating church leaders using the right criteria.

They're using worldly standards to then rank these men as greater and lesser. Some were more charismatic and winsome. Some were more eloquent and persuasive in their speaking ability. [ 31 : 17 ] Some were even taller and having a physically commanding presence. There were some with peg legs. There were some without peg legs. But that's just worldly wisdom, Paul says.

That is petty and self-promoting if we're using that criteria to do any kind of assessment. So Paul is cutting out this competition. Paul is saying, look instead at God's standards.

The wisdom of God that's foolish in the world's eyes. Look to that. So did we bring the truth of God to you? Did we bring the good news of Jesus Christ to you?

Not pitting ourselves against each other. Not fighting for this personal superiority. Not arguing over who has the more successful ministry. Who has more followers on social media.

Who has more subscribers on YouTube. Not arguing over who has a ministry named after themselves and who hasn't quite reached that plateau yet. Not fighting against each other but building off each other.

[ 32 : 21 ] So Paul came to the Corinthians doing what? Preaching Christ crucified. And what did Apollos do in the footsteps of Paul? Paul had planted the seeds of the gospel.

Did Apollos come along and dig up all of those seeds and say I'm going to plant my own seeds here. I got my own work I want to do. No. Apollos watered those seeds.

He continued to preach Christ crucified. And if Cephas had come to Corinth what would he have done? He would have continued in that same gospel ministry.

The same thing preaching Christ. That's what the servants of Christ do. That's what the stewards of the mysteries of God do. They aren't in it for themselves. That competitive self-promoting worldly standards that the Corinthians were just enamored with.

we can be enamored with that too. Those are meaningless to Paul. And even more importantly that's a stench in God's nostrils if that's the way that church leaders are evaluated.

[ 33 : 24 ] So what's of real importance? It's this. Were these church leaders faithful in their stewardship of God's word? Were they humble servants of Christ?

That's the kind of evaluating, that's the kind of assessing we should be doing as we look to those who preach and teach. And yes, pastors in our own church but also pastors and teachers that we listen to and that we read books by, those that we're looking to, those that we're learning from. We should still be discerning. We should still be evaluating but with the right criteria. Is what I'm hearing grounded in the wisdom of God? Or is this person peddling worldly wisdom just under the guise of gospel ministry?

And the sad reality is those who have started as preaching the true gospel can find their way into falsehood. And so we never stop discerning.

So in that sense, evaluation of church leaders is necessary. It is foolish not to judge even church leaders because as promised, some will come as wolves in sheep's clothing, men not qualified to lead, to preach, to teach, to be pastors.

[ 34 : 43 ] We must be able to see them and recognize them and make right evaluations about them. So we must use the right criteria when we think of what Paul says here of pronouncing judgment, the wisdom of God, as it's revealed in the word, not the folly of men.

So that's the first question. Are we using the right criteria? And here's the second. Do we recognize who the final judge is? We must not think of ourselves as though we are the final judge, that we deserve to be upon that throne on that day when the Lord returns.

That would actually be going back to the Garden of Eden and behaving just as Adam and Eve did, who tried to usurp God's right to the throne. To be like God, knowing good from evil.

Adam and Eve wanted to be the arbiters of truth. They wanted to be the ones who were upon the throne. But they had no place thinking of themselves as that final judge.

And neither do we. God is. So any evaluation that we may make, any calling evil evil and calling good good, we do it because we've been given the standard for what good and evil are and the God of that standard has revealed it to us in His Word.

[ 36 : 10 ] And so God is that final judge. He will render His verdicts fully and finally at His return. We are not the ones to make the ultimate pronouncement of judgment.

The faithful servants of Christ, those stewards of His Word, they will receive their commendation, but not from us, not from themselves, but from God when He comes.

And He will bring to light what is in the darkness. He will disclose the purposes of the heart. So in the same way that pastors ought to remember who the judge is, so too should we as the whole church remember who the judge is.

It's God. The servants and the stewards answer to Him. But that doesn't mean that we stop discerning here and now. That any and all evaluation is wrong and leaders in the church just get a pass.

No, we need to be careful as we're listening. We need to be evaluating what we're being told. And now, more than ever, Bible teaching is just readily available to us.

[ 37 : 15 ] But at the same time, we need to be patient and not evaluate ourselves or elevate ourselves to a throne that doesn't belong to us. For it is God who will ultimately reward and it is God who will ultimately condemn.

Rewarding faithful servants condemning unfaithful cons. So we've looked at Paul's words to the Corinthians here in chapter 4. The first of three relationships that he defines.

As it relates to Christ, I am a servant and a steward. In a humble position, like a servant, and in a position of great responsibility, yet accountable to God, as a steward.

So may we who are ministers of the word, be all the more humble and yet filled with strong conviction in our teaching and preaching of the word.

And may we as the church be all the more patient and yet careful and discerning in how we receive and evaluate those who teach and preach. And may we all look to God and to his word for our standard and settle for nothing less that Christ may be glorified in our lives.

[ 38 : 31 ] Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have given us your word, that you have given us here 1 Corinthians chapter 4 to see how Paul wrote to the Corinthian church and yet how these words ring ever true.

That your gospel continues to go forth and it is going forth by servants and stewards. And so Father, make us to be a people who are discerning, who are wise, who are listening to all that is said to us.

And for those of us who are pastors, we pray that you would make us to be all the more careful and diligent and yet also not man pleasers, not looking to win the favor of people, not even looking to pat ourselves on the back, but ultimately desiring to please you.

We want to live lives that are honoring to you. We want to live lives in which Christ is magnified. Whether pastors or part of the flock, we pray Father that Christ would be honored in our midst as we go into this week.

We thank you Father for your word. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. We prayed to us for■ng