

## Meditations on the Message

Sunday: February 14, 2016.     *Thinking Through the Tension*

Text: **1 Corinthians 1- 4**

Consider the following thoughts and questions:

1. In chapter 1, Paul references himself as a called apostle. (1 Cor. 1:1).  
In chapter 3 & 4, Paul references himself as a servant and steward – *a field worker in God’s field; a construction laborer in God’s house; a custodian in God’s temple*. (1 Cor. 3:5-17; 4:1-5)  
In chapter 4, Paul references himself as a role model; someone to imitate and follow (1Cor. 4:14-17)
  - a. Is Paul to be promoted, or not promoted? Is Paul to be followed, not followed, or worked alongside of?
  - b. How does Paul’s knowledge of God, knowledge of himself, knowledge of others in God’s family provide him freedom and security – freedom to be a role model without being egocentric; security to serve as a servant without being inferior?
  
2. In chapter 1, Paul declares that the Corinthians (a) belong to God, (b) have been graced by God and (c) enriched in Jesus. They are (d) not lacking anything. (1 Cor. 1:4-9)  
In chapter 4, Paul declares that identifying with Jesus in this present world might cause them to lack basic necessities. (1 Cor. 4:9-13)
  - a. How is it that Christians are simultaneously children of the King and the scum of the world?
  - b. How does that tension play out in our daily attitudes and activity?
  
3. From the Corinthian text we learn:  
*The most powerful message in the world is given to and communicated by the weak.*  
*The wisest message is given to and communicated by those considered the least brilliant.*  
*The message concerning this world’s rightful King is given to and communicated by the non-influential.*
  - a. According to 1 Cor. 1:26-31, what is the application of the above truth?
  - b. Why does God operate this way? How is this good news to you?
  
4. As Paul closes out this portion of his letter (1 Cor. 1-4), he asks: “What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?” (1 Cor. 4:21)
  - a. How are both gentleness and severity a part of Christian love and leadership?
  - b. What aspects of Paul’s message to the Corinthians thus far (1 Cor. 1-4) do you need to ask for God’s forgiveness and grace in helping you to change?