

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 220 – August 8th – 1 Corinthians 4:1-21

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 1 Corinthians

John Drane	<i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976
Leon Morris	<i>The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians</i> , Tyndale New Testament Commentary, 2 nd Ed., IVP, Leicester, 1985
Anthony C Thistleton	<i>The First Epistle to the Corinthians</i> , The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2000

1 Corinthians 4:1

Οὕτως ἡμᾶς λογιζέσθω ἄνθρωπος ὡς ὑπηρετάς Χριστοῦ καὶ οἰκονόμου μυστηρίων θεοῦ.

λογίζομαι reckon, calculate, suppose
 ὑπηρετης, ου m assistant, servant
 οἰκονομος, ου m steward, manager

One responsible for managing a household or estate.

μυστηριον, ου n secret, mystery (see 2:7)

Verse 2

ὥδε λοιπὸν ζητεῖται ἐν τοῖς οἰκονόμοις ἵνα πιστός τις εὐρεθῆ.

ὥδε adv here, under these circumstances
 λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other

ὥδε λοιπον moreover, in this connection

ζητω seek, search for, look for
 οἰκονομος, ου m steward, manager
 πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable
 εὐρεθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s εὐρίσκω

"Ministers need to ask the question whether they will be found honest, faithful, reliable, or trustworthy. Paul is about to disclaim the capacity to know fully the secrets even of his own heart. He simply leaves with God in trust how trustworthy his work will be found to have been in the judgment of God." Thistleton

Verse 3

ἐμοὶ δὲ εἰς ἐλάχιστόν ἐστιν, ἵνα ὑφ' ὑμῶν ἀνακριθῶ ἢ ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐμαυτὸν ἀνακρίνω·

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ

Here in the sense of 'as free as I am concerned,' or 'as I look at my own case.'

ἐλαχιστος, η, ον (superl of μικρος) least, smallest, insignificant

'It counts for little,' 'it is of no importance to me.'

ἀνακριθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s ἀνακρίνω
 examine, judge, evaluate
 ἀνθρωπινος, η, ον human, characteristic of mankind

ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας a peculiar phrase which seems to mean 'human judgement'. Morris suggests that it may be by analogy with the Day of Judgement – God's day.

οὐδὲ neither, nor
 ἐμαυτὸν Pronoun, acc s ἐμαυτου, ης
 reflexive pronoun (not used in nom)
 myself, my own

"The Christian is to be judged by his Master. His own views on himself are as irrelevant as those of anyone else. This needs emphasis in a day when many are tempted to be introspective. Often they think that they themselves know just what their spiritual state is and just what their service for God has effected. The result may depress unduly or exalt above measure. But it is not our task to pass such judgements. We should get on with the job of serving the Lord. This does not mean that there is no place for times of heart-searching and rigid self-scrutiny with a view to more whole-hearted and more efficient service. It is an attempt to anticipate the judgement of the Lord that Paul is condemning." Morris. Paul "leaves his successes and failures with God. What has been done is done, and God alone knows and can disclose the worth of it. It must simply be left with God while the servant of God goes on to the next task, at the same moment 'judging nothing before the time' (4:5) and 'knowing that your labour is not in vain (κενος, empty, null) in the Lord (15:58)." Thistleton

Verse 4

ἐμοὶ δὲ εἰς ἐλάχιστόν ἐστιν, ἵνα ὑφ' ὑμῶν ἀνακριθῶ ἢ ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐμαυτὸν ἀνακρίνω·

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν no one, nothing
 συνοῖδα (verb perf in form but pres in meaning) be aware of

Cognate of συνειδησις 'conscience,' hence the NIV translates, 'I have nothing on my conscience.'

δεδικαίωμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s
δικαιοω justify, acquit

"Paul is saying that he is not aware of any great matter in which he has failed in his stewardship. But he does not rest his confidence in that... Paul's acquittal does not stem from his own estimate of his work. The assessment is made by the Lord." Morris.
"Hence Paul trustfully leaves everything in the hands of God who alone has competency to judge in an absolute, irrevocable sense. Neither other people's verdicts nor one's own self-awareness can penetrate unconscious motives and stance: everything, these included, are left with God." Thistleton

Verse 5

ὥστε μὴ πρὸ καιροῦ τι κρίνετε, ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος, ὃς καὶ φωτίζει τὰ κρυπτά τοῦ σκότους καὶ φανερώσει τὰς βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν, καὶ τότε ὁ ἔπαινος γενήσεται ἐκάστῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
καιρος, ου m time, appointed time
ἕως conj until, while
ἂν particle indicating contingency

ἕως ἂν "indicates that the fact of the coming of the Lord is certain, but the time is unknown." Morris

φωτιζω shine on, bring to light, reveal
κρυπτος, η, ον hidden, secret, private
σκοτος, ους n darkness, evil
φανερω reveal, make evident
βουλη, ης f purpose, intention, plan
τοτε then, at that time
ἔπαινος, ου m praise, commendation
ἐκάστος, η, ον each, every

Verse 6

Ταῦτα δὲ, ἀδελφοί, μετεσχημάτισα εἰς ἑμᾶν τὸν καὶ Ἀπολλῶν δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε τό· Μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται, ἵνα μὴ εἷς ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐνὸς φουσιούσθε κατὰ τοῦ ἑτέρου.

μετεσχημάτισα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s
μετασχηματιζω transform, apply

Paul is saying that he has used Apollos and himself as illustrations to draw out lessons which the Corinthians are to apply to themselves.
Chrysostom argued that Paul's meaning is that he transferred the things he wished to say to himself and Apollos while in reality they apply to the false teachers in Corinth who have inflated egos.

μάθητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl μανθανω
learn, find out

ἵνα ἐν ἡμῖν μάθητε 'that you may learn through our case'

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

It would seem from the way the phrase 'not beyond what is written' is introduced (namely with the definitive article, το) that it may have been a familiar phrase (of Paul), known to the Corinthians. It expresses his concern for himself and for them to live by the Scriptures and not add their own fancies.

A number of commentators (e.g. Hooker and Fee) think Paul is referring to the specific Scriptures he has already quoted (e.g. 1:29, 31; 1:19; 3:19-20). "Paul warns the addressees that if they seek to go beyond what is written, the misguided attempt to 'add to' the gospel of the cross by self-styled wisdom, rhetorical status-seeking, or self-styled 'spirituality,' the result will be an inflation of mere wind that will lead to taking sides, self-affirmation, and pitting one group or its leaders against another."

Thistleton

φουσιω cause conceit/arrogance; pass be
conceited/arrogant

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

The thought here is of arrogant claims made for one teacher over against another.

Verse 7

τίς γάρ σε διακρίνει; τί δὲ ἔχεις ὃ οὐκ ἔλαβες; εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔλαβες, τί καυχᾶσαι ὡς μὴ λαβῶν;

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

διακρινω judge, evaluate, discern, make a distinction between

The sense here is either:

- i) 'Who makes you differ one from another?', expecting the answer 'God' – any distinctions are distinctions of grace and therefore no ground for boasting; or,
- ii) 'Who sees anything different in you?' i.e. no one has anything superior that marks out one from another.

καυχᾶσαι Verb, pres midd/pass dep indic,
irreg 2 s καυχομαι boast, boast about

"They owe everything to the grace of God." Morris

Verse 8

Ἦδη κεκορησμένοι ἐστέ, ἤδη ἐπλουτήσατε, χωρὶς ἡμῶν ἐβασιλεύσατε· καὶ ὄφελόν γε ἐβασιλεύσατε, ἵνα καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν συμβασιλεύσωμεν.

Thistleton draws attention to the melting pot of religious ideas and sects in the 1st Century Graeco-Roman world, religious ideas which clearly had an impact on the life of the Early Church. "Nock observes that among Hellenistic-oriental cults notions of conversion in the first century could be extravagant: a convert could be overwhelmed by a new sense of power, liberation and status: 'Many of the converts, convinced that they were on a new plane of life, felt that they could do anything: they were kings (1 Cor 4:8), they were in the Spirit, they were ... emancipated ... They were altogether superior to the unchanged men around them.' In yet another context, to be rich and to reign represent catchwords of the Stoics. As Moffatt acutely observes: 'Paul ... pours out his soul... The nearest approach to this caustic description of religious self-satisfaction lies in the prophet John's word to the Christian church at Laodicea (Rev 3:17): "You declare, 'I am rich, I am well off, I lack nothing.'" ... "Rich" and "reigning" were catchwords of the Stoics ever since Diogenes, whose tomb was shown at Corinth, had taught a Stoic to maintain, "I alone am rich, I alone reign as king" in the world.'"

ἤδη adv now, already

κεκορησμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
κορεννυμι fill; pass be full, have
enough

"Normally meaning satiated, fed-to-the-full, glutted, applying to the 'bloated' self-important 'people of the Spirit' the farmyard metaphor of overfed animals." Thistleton

πλουτεω be rich, grow rich

χωρὶς prep with gen without, apart from
βασιλευω rule, reign

ὄφελόν would that, I wish that

γε enclitic particle adding emphasis to the word with which it is associated

συμβασιλεύσωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl
συμβασιλευω reign with

"The Corinthians are behaving as if the age to come were already consummated, as if the saints had already taken over the kingdom (Dan 7:18); for them there is no 'not yet' to qualify the 'already' of realised eschatology." Barrett

Verse 9

δοκῶ γάρ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἐσχάτους ἀπέδειξεν ὡς ἐπιθανατίους, ὅτι θεάτρον ἐγενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις.

δοκεω think, suppose; intrans be
recognised, have reputation

'It seems to me.'

ἐσχατος, η, ον adj last, final

ἀπέδειξεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

ἀποδεικνυμι set forth

ἐπιθανατιος, ον sentenced to death

'Doomed to die.'

θεατρον, ον n theatre, spectacle

"The imagery is derived from the arena, as Moffatt's rendering brings out, 'God means us apostles to come in at the very end, like doomed gladiators in the arena!'" Morris. Thistleton, quoting Deluz, says, "Paul perceives his apostolic labours as a cosmic spectacle, which, if they are evaluated by Corinthian criteria, seem to be a spectacle of struggle, failure, and disgrace. The apostles 'seem to be of no more importance than the gladiators who shed their blood in the arena to provide an amusing public spectacle... surely the Corinthians should be ashamed to lounge in the best seats and just applaud or even boo!'" However, for Paul's balancing views concerning the real element of triumph that characterises the Christian life cf. Col 2:15; 2 Cor 2:14.

Verse 10

ἡμεῖς μωροὶ διὰ Χριστόν, ὑμεῖς δὲ φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ· ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰσχυροὶ· ὑμεῖς ἐνδοξοὶ, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄτιμοι.

μωρος, α, ον foolish; το μ. foolishness

Cf. 1:25.

φρονιμος, ον wise, sensible

ἀσθενεῖς Adjective, m nom pl ἀσθενης, ες
sick, weak, helpless

ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful

ἐνδοξος, ον glorious, splendid

ἀτιμος, ον unhonoured, dishonoured,
despised

Verse 11

ἄχρι τῆς ἄρτι ὥρας καὶ πεινώμεν καὶ διψῶμεν καὶ γυμνιτεύομεν καὶ κολαφιζόμεθα καὶ ἀστατοῦμεν

ἄχρι (and ἀχρις) prep with gen until, as far as

ἄρτι now, at the present

πεινωω be hungry

διψαω be thirsty, thirst for

γυμνιτεω be dressed in rags
κολαφιζω beat, strike, harass

May refer to beatings at the hands of the mob or by the authorities or to various harassments physical or spiritual (cf. 2 Cor 12:7).

ἀστατεω be homeless, wander from place to place

Cf. Jesus' words in Mat 8:28; Lk 9:58.

Verse 12

καὶ κοπιῶμεν ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν·
λοιδορούμενοι εὐλογοῦμεν, διωκόμενοι
ἀνεχόμεθα,

κοπιαω work, work hard, labour
χειρ, χειρος f hand

"This is all the more significant in that the Greeks despised all manual labour, thinking of it as fit only for slaves." Morris Thistleton, quoting Hock, says, "Workshops, such as that in which Paul would have plied his trade, "were often noisy, dirty and amounted to 'exhausting toil' (1 Thess 2:9; 1 Cor 4:12).' This is why, Hock proposes, the Corinthians were so upset that Paul did not wish them to provide financial support as his patrons, thereby bestowing upon him a superior social status as a professional rhetorician."

λοιδορεω curse, speak evil of, insult
διωκω persecute, seek after, pursue,
follow

ἀνεχομαι endure, be patient with

Verse 13

δυσφημούμενοι παρακαλοῦμεν· ὡς
περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐγενήθημεν,
πάντων περίφημα ἕως ἄρτι.

δυσφημεω slander, speak ill of
παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

"In the face of those who slander him or speak ill of him behind his back, Paul appeals to them, but probably face to face, i.e., clarifies misunderstanding with moral courage and sensitive listening." Thistleton

περικαθαρμα, τος n refuse, rubbish

Thistleton says that the meaning is 'scum', filthy residue which clings to the surface of a vessel.

περιψημα, τος n scum, dirt

That which has to be scraped off (e.g. from the shoe).

ἕως until

Verse 14

Οὐκ ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς γράφω ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ὡς
τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ νουθετῶν·

ἐντρεπω make ashamed

Thistleton thinks the participle is the more plausible reading. Paul's irony above was meant to shock them into a realistic view of things, it was not intended to engender low self-esteem.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

Part of the role of a parent towards a child is the discipline that proceeds from love.

νουθετεω instruct, teach, warn

Verse 15

ἐὰν γὰρ μυρίους παιδαγωγούς ἔχητε ἐν
Χριστῷ, ἀλλ' οὐ πολλοὺς πατέρας, ἐν γὰρ
Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς
ἐγέννησα.

μυριοι, αι, α ten thousand

'even if you have countless thousands of instructors...'

παιδαγωγος, ου m instructor, teacher

The παιδαγωγος did not belong to the family, nor did the children under his care belong to him – though he was responsible for their correction and training. Paul's relationship with the Corinthians is closer than that: they are his children, for he has been instrumental in giving them life through the Gospel.

γενναω be father of, bear, give birth to;
pass be born, cause

Verse 16

παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge
μιμητης, ου m imitator

I.e., 'by your conduct, prove your parentage.'

Verse 17

διὰ τοῦτο ἔπεμψα ὑμῖν Τιμόθεον, ὃς ἐστίν μου
τέκνον ἀγαπητὸν καὶ πιστὸν ἐν κυρίῳ, ὃς ὑμᾶς
ἀναμνήσει τὰς ὁδοὺς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ
Ἰησοῦ, καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ
διδάσκω.

πεμπω send

Barrett thinks that Paul had sent Timothy on to several destinations with the hope, but not the certainty, that these would allow time for him to include Corinth.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable

I.e. Timothy himself exemplifies what the Corinthians are called to be.

ἀναμνήσει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s

ἀναμνησκω remind, bring to mind

Here, bring to mind not only through his teaching but also by his person, conduct and example.

ὁδος, ου f way, path, road, journey

The Christian life is spoken of as a 'way', or 'ways', i.e. manner of life or pattern of life, and is characterised as 'the ways that are in Christ'.

πανταχου everywhere
διδασκω teach

Paul requires no more from the Corinthians than from any other community of the people of God.

'or in love which shows itself in a gentle spirit.' Thistleton makes the point that the rod of correction, rightly used, is also an expression of love. The question therefore is 'Which expression would you prefer?'

Verse 18

ὡς μὴ ἐρχομένου δέ μου πρὸς ὑμᾶς
ἐφυσιώθησάν τινες·

ἐφυσιωθησάν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
φυσιω cause conceit/arrogance; pass
be conceited/arrogant

Some, supposing Paul would not come himself, have become inflated with self-importance.

Verse 19

ἐλεύσομαι δὲ ταχέως πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐὰν ὁ κύριος
θελήσῃ, καὶ γνώσομαι οὐ τὸν λόγον τῶν
πεφυσιωμένων ἀλλὰ τὴν δύναμιν,

ἐλεύσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s
έρχομαι
ταχέως adv. (formed from ταχυς) quickly, at
once, soon
θελήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s θελω wish,
will
πεφυσιωμένων Verb, perf pass ptc, gen pl
φυσιω cause conceit/arrogance

"It is not a question of whether Paul's Corinthian opponents could speak well, but of whether the power of God was manifest in them." Morris
"When Paul arrives, some may find that their public esteem corresponds with that of burst balloons." Thistleton

Verse 20

οὐ γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἐν
δυνάμει.

δυνάμει Noun, dat s δυναμις

Verse 21

τί θέλετε; ἐν ῥάβδῳ ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἢ ἐν
ἀγάπῃ πνεύματι τε πραΰτητος;

ῥαβδος, ου f stick, rod, sceptre

The rod of correction.

ἔλθω a deliberative subjunctive, 'am I to come'
τε enclitic particle and, and so

πνευματι τε πραυτητος 'and (also) in a spirit of gentleness'.

πραυτης, ητος f gentleness, humility