

1Corinthians 18-02-18b

But we pick up now in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, we've looked at verse 1, let a man so consider us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. And this ought to resonate with us perhaps a little bit more having looked at the value of these words in Greek, what they draw on in terms of history and of a pictorial representation of what Paul is really saying. Let a man so consider us, evaluate us, logizomai us.

And you know, logizomai, remember the O-M-A-I, whenever you hear that on a Greek verb, it has a middle or a reflexive idea. Let a man figure this out for himself is what the Oklahoma translation would be. Figure this out for yourself when you look at Apollos and Paul or any other communicator of the word of God, oarsmen on the ship and not even the ones above deck.

And the ones who ensure that the household is running properly to support the people who live there and have important things to do. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. Now this is very deft.

This is a very ingenious, indirect allusion. You remember in chapter 3, Paul says, I planted, Apollos watered. I've laid the foundation that nobody else can lay.

Other foundation can no man lay, I should say, than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Paul says, I've laid that foundation of Christ. Others are building on that foundation and they need to be careful how they build.

Now this is specifically referring to teachers. Paul mentions graciously himself, Apollos, Peter, and Christ as sources of teaching. Those who are stewards of God the Father's mysteries, right? What has been in view, the elephant in the room so to speak, are several other teachers in Corinth that are not named.

It's not just dividing behind this apostle or that apostle, this great orator, or exclusively the Lord Jesus. There are others in view. How do I know this? Because as we continue what I consider to be the end of chapter 3 here, down in verse 6, which is where chapter 4 actually begins, he says, These things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos.

1 Corinthians 4, verse 6. This, to me, should be verse 1. This is where you have it moving in a little bit of a new direction here. But he says, I've transferred these to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn not to think beyond what is written. And he says, I'm using myself and Apollos as examples.

The implication is, there are other guys I could have named who are puffing themselves up. This, to me, is the potential danger. And I'm not condemning or criticizing.

But in a lot of large churches, they're victims of their own growth. They become so big that you

can go there and basically be anonymous. Somebody will greet you and smile.

And you might talk to somebody that sits next to you in the pew or behind you or in front. Or let's take a moment and greet. But in a big group, they've discovered that it can become very impersonal if they don't work hard to personalize it and ensure that there is some actual meaningful fellowship.

So what do large churches do? They divide into flocks. Well, we're going to have a flock meeting. And the people that live in this area, we've seen some of them here in Owasso and in Tulsa and other places.

And everybody gets together on Sunday morning. And it's so big that sometimes they have to have two services to fit everybody in. That's a situation of a Bible church down in Plano.

They've got to divide. The First Baptist Church in Dallas had to do that in Dr. Criswell's day. So many people were coming, they had to split the services to fit.

But you can easily just be a face in the crowd. And especially if you're not gregarious in and of yourself, if they don't sort of actively try to seek out people and connect with them and do some of the other things churches are supposed to do besides teach, there's a danger of just being anonymous. So they'll divide up into smaller groups and they'll do it geographically and say, well, people in northeast part of the town or in this neighborhood or this area, it's a short drive.

And so we'll have a flock meeting, kind of a Sunday school group, and they'll also divide up into many different Sunday school groups so that you have a smaller place to talk about the word of God and interact and so on in an ideal circumstance. Nothing intrinsically wrong with that. The danger is that because there are multiple flocks and you know people that are in other flocks and you say, well, at our flock meeting they use Colombian coffee.

Well, over here they use this weird stuff from Costco. It's like brand X. You just get it in a big case and it's terrible. And, oh, well, it's so inviting and it's so friendly.

And, oh, well, it's kind of more of a stern and drang over here. There's no questions and brook no back sass. They go in there and it's right down there.

And there's inevitably going to be comparison. And inevitably there is a temptation to competition and to, well, mine's better than yours. And, well, ours is unique in this way or superior in that way.

And within a church, if you say this is all one church, but you also at the same time promote subgroups, you're almost asking for trouble. In my view, and this is just me, I not the Lord, like Paul said, to me, if you're that big, you need to actually become separate churches and have a leader so that you can unite and have one branch of leadership, have one good source of whatever teaching or style or personality of the group that you prefer, but don't amalgamate. A church should be a single grape, not a cluster of grapes or a few of them being raisins or a few

of them.

Paul constantly harps on unity. So what are we saying here? When Paul says it is required in stewards that one be found faithful, he says, when you do take a look, when you logizomai for yourself, the amai, I'm going to think this out for myself, everybody has the God-given right to associate with whatever church and whatever believers they want to in whatever level they want to. They can be intimately involved.

They can show up and sit on the back pew and disappear before the last amen. Totally up to each individual. Logizomai, you figure this out for yourself.

Am I getting fed? Is this meeting my needs? What is the nature of the fellowship and so on? Everybody is captain of their own ship in this regard. And you look at the people supplying whatever is there as the oarsmen of that ship. But if you're going to look at your oarsmen, if your ship is crabbing through the water and not sailing a straight course, you say, well, I need faithful oarsmen.

If the primary function is, as Paul seems to indicate here, stewards of the mysteries. The mysteries of God are the fundamental thing here. That's what he's talking about.

We're stewards of the mysteries of God. You got to be faithful in that. Whatever else is going on, if you're going to logizomai, it's stewardship of the mysteries.

That's what Paul is focusing on here. And he's taking a sideways glance at these unnamed factionalized guys that have cropped up in Corinth. People are saying, well, this guy over here is the bee's knees.

I know Paul got us started, but this guy has really just taken that and run with it. And these unnamed guys. And Paul says, if you're going to start trying to glory in men and trying to divide over men, well, a good measure instead of how tall is he? How bald is he? How sonorous is his voice? How round are his tones? How impressive is his stature and his demeanor and his personality? And how good are his jokes or whatever? How good a steward of the mysteries is he? It is required in stewards that a man be faithful.

If you're pulling that oar, you better be pulling your weight plus your fractional percentage of the boat. I'm so grateful that my roommate at Navy was an oarsman in crew and introduced me to that sport. And I got a chance to participate at a very much lower level.

But I was on the lightweight varsity crew for a set. I rode battalion crew for a couple of sets. And I learned about being an oarsman and about what the nature of moving a boat through the water is with oars and as a team.

And the whole concept that if you think about that process, you have a boat, you have a coxswain who has no oar. He's making sure you go in the right direction. He's judging the pace.

He's coaching. Let's bring up the pace. He's managing the stroke rate.

He and the stroke oar, the guy that's in the front of the boat that everybody else can see. I say the front of the boat. It's the front as you're sitting there.

He's the stroke oar. Everybody keys off of him. And he and the coxswain work together is my understanding.

I know my roommate's listening. And if I get anything wrong, I'll hear about it. I'm teasing.

But you think about that responsibility. It's not just being the huperetes. In a crew shell, you've got the weight of the boat.

Well, if you've got eight oarsmen, that oarsman has got to pull his own weight. Hence the phrase, pull your own weight. He's got to pull his own weight through the water, plus one-eighth of the boat, plus one-eighth of the coxswain.

And one of the measures of an oarsman when you're in practice, you've got this machine, the old primitive ones. They've got high-tech electronic stuff now. But the old ones were a great big flywheel, some big thing, I don't know, made out of concrete or something with an oar attached to it and a pulley system.

And it simulates. You've got a sliding seat, just like in the boat. And you can vary the resistance on this thing.

It's got a belt or something to make drag. And so to do this ergometer, ergo work, ergometer, measure your work, you would set the resistance to your weight. And they would call it a body weight ergo.

And that evens out the score. If you want to see who are the best oarsmen, well, who can make the most revolutions at their own body weight? Assuming that those are also going to be the guys that can pull one-eighth of the boat and one-eighth of the coxswain and their own body weight. And so it's a measure and it evens it out by setting it at your body weight.

Well, so to be faithful as a steward, to be faithful as an oarsman, you've got to be pulling your own weight. This is why in other places, Paul tells Timothy and Titus, elders need to have certain characteristics. They've got to be pulling their own weight spiritually.

They've got to manage well their own household. They've got to keep their anger in check. They've got to not be intemperate.

They've got to not be profligate. They've got to be visibly responsible in the area of implementing spiritual truth. They've got to pull their own weight so that they can also inject some momentum into the rest of the boat, which is the house of God and the people of God that are in it.

It's required that a steward be found faithful. And a visual guide for oarsmen in a cruise shell is looking at the puddle that their blade creates as it goes through the water. You can look at the turbulence in the water and see.

I mean, a guy could go through the motions and he looks, he's perfectly in tune with everybody else. And it's just a thing of beauty. You see these camera shots over a bridge and the shell comes out from underneath and the guys or women are in perfect synchronization.

You think, oh, that's the thing of beauty. But people that have rowed aren't so much looking at the boat or is everybody's oar exactly parallel. They're looking at the puddles and you'll see four strong puddles over here and you'll see three strong puddles and no puddle next to one oarsman.

And you say, that guy either had a momentary glitch or, you know, if that happens stroke after stroke, he's just going through the motions. He's not really pulling his weight. Therefore, guess what all the other guys are doing? The other seven are pulling their weight, the fractional weight of the boat, fractional weight of the coxswain and a fractional weight of that dilettante oarsman, right? It puts more stress on everybody else.

So it's important to be faithful and the measure is not atmosphere, coffee, dress. How funny are the anecdotes? The measure is stewardship of the mysteries of God. That's what Paul says.

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

And, you know, we had a great question over the break. Well, I thought we're supposed to, doesn't it say, judge yourself lest you be judged? And Paul says, I don't judge myself. Well, this is another example of what we were talking about.

Doesn't the Bible say, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves? And then he says, no, don't be wise. If you think you're wise, be a fool. Well, which is it? Am I supposed to be fool or am I supposed to be wise? Am I supposed to take up the full armor of God and be a threat on the battlefield? Or am I supposed to be harmless as a dove? Which is it? Context, context, context.

What is being judged in chapter four, verses one and two here? What is, what are we looking at? What is being logizomied here? Paul says, when you look at us, you look at us as oarsmen and stewards of the mysteries of God. It is required when you look at Apollos or Paul or Cephas or even the Lord Jesus himself. And certainly these nameless guys that he's going to allude to down in verse six.

If you want to truly judge those guys, not according to the standards of men, but according to the wisdom of God, how good a steward of the mysteries is he? Now, Paul says, with me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. And if you've got a good New King James there, you see the word court has a number next to it. And you look it down, it says literally day.

This is not a human court. It's a human day. It's a day of man.

It's Hemera, Hemera, the day. This is really fascinating because Paul uses the word day the same way that all ancient Greeks did. And it can mean a 24 hour period of time.

In the Jewish culture, it can mean less than 24 hours. This is the whole debate about, well, was Jesus in the heart of the earth for three days? Because in the traditional chronology, Friday evening, just before sundown, he gets put in. He's in there all day Saturday.

He rises first thing in the morning on Sunday. How is that three days? And they say, well, the Jews counted any part of the day as a day. So the hour to hour and a half that he was in on Friday, that's a whole day.

And then Saturday is a whole day. And then the first breaking dawn hours of Sunday, that's a day. So see, three days.

Of course, it doesn't save them because Jesus said three nights. And I don't care how you slice the days, Friday evening to Sunday morning, you don't get three nights. And it's just wrong.

Jesus had to have been and was crucified on a Thursday. And when he said the son of man would be in the heart of the earth, just like Jonah was in the belly of the fish, three days and three nights, you can take that to the bank. Three nights is Thursday night, Friday night, and Saturday night.

And the days are Friday, Saturday, and early in the morning on the third day. All you got to do is count backwards. It says early in the morning on the third day.

Well, the third day is Sunday. What's the second day? Saturday. What's the first day? Friday.

When did Friday begin? Thursday night for us. So it's just dead simple. And people say, well, but the next day was the Sabbath.

Well, the Feast of Firstfruits that begins right after Passover. Passover is Thursday. The Feast of Firstfruits, that is a high Sabbath.

So they got to get the men down on the cross because the next day is the Sabbath. They got to get them prepared and in the tomb because the next day is the Sabbath. It's not a Saturday Sabbath.

It's a high Sabbath. So hamerah becomes really important in terms of what is a day. Well, what about here? Is it talking about a 24-hour period? Not at all.

Here you have day used as in the phrase day of the Lord, and it is often used alone, and it means the day of judgment. You have it in our context. Flip back a couple of pages to 1 Corinthians 1, verse 8. In verse 4, he says, I thank God concerning you, the grace given you in Christ, you are enriched in everything by Him, in all utterance and knowledge.

The testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 8, chapter 1, who will also confirm you to the end. Lord Jesus Christ is going to confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blameless in the day. This is not just the day when He appears, not just the kingdom or the coming. This is the judgment.

Day of judgment. In the day. The Hamorah of the Lord Jesus.

Same thing in Philippians, chapter 1, verse 6. That was 1 Corinthians 1, 8. Paul uses it the same way in Philippians, chapter 1, verse 6. And you remember this verse, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. Well, you know, the day of the Lord is at the seven years of the tribulation, is at the thousand years of the millennial kingdom. Here, in this context, the good work that has begun in us will be complete, and the work stops at the judgment.

This is your four years of training. The judgment, you know, in our system of sports is the national competition, or the world competition, or the Olympics. And that's the day, and that's when the evaluation is made.

The day of judgment. Four verses further down in Philippians, chapter 1, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may discern the better things. Philippians 1, 10, that you will know the difference, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Christ.

This is the judgment. This is the transition point. We move out of this phase and into a new phase on that day.

It is the day of judgment. We're going to see this coming up in the next chapter in 1 Corinthians. You remember, Paul says, I'm shocked I hear that a guy is living in incest in your congregation.

You're familiar with that, just general knowledge. And he says, I, absent in body, verse 3, this is 1 Corinthians 5, 3, I am absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, him who has so done this deed. This guy that is living in sin with this woman, I've judged it.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. I don't know who this guy is. We may find out in the eternal future.

But can you imagine in history, in the early church, the Apostle Paul says, you all get together, call this guy out by name, and turn him over to Satan for his flesh to be destroyed. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. I'm not too keen on falling into the hands of a living

Paul.

Turn him over to Satan for the destruction of flesh. But look at the rest of it. So that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Judge him now with the hope that he will turn, just like when God would judge his people with the rod and the scourge of Assyria, or with all of the curses in Deuteronomy for disobedience, so that they will turn and be delivered at the judgment. It's the judgment day of Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 5.5. In 2 Corinthians 1.14, Paul is talking to these same people a bit later, and he says, you have understood us in part.

He says in 2 Corinthians 1.13, we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. I trust you will understand, even to the end, as you have understood us partially, that we are your boast, just as you are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus, in the judgment, in the evaluation of the Lord Jesus. He's just been talking about, do not boast in men.

But he says, if you've got the wisdom of God, then you'll boast in us as faithful stewards of the mystery. You took the content, you got the message, you paid attention, and you can be grateful that you had a faithful oarsman and a faithful steward. But your boast is that because of that faithfulness, you arrived at the destination, you accomplished the goal and the objective.

And he says, in the same way that we will boast in you, if we've delivered the and you took it on board and ran with it and glorified the Lord Jesus and pleased God the Father, we are going to be pleased in the same way that you'll be pleased that somebody gave you the mysteries of God that you needed to fulfill that potential. It will be mutual appreciation in the healthy wisdom of God's sense. If any man boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

Remember? So that's his idea. But it's the day, it's the judgment day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 2, verse 16, holding fast the word of life so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain or labored in vain, that I have not rode in vain in the day of Christ.

So with that as background, that particular usage of hamerah, come back now to 1 Corinthians 4. And he says, with me, verse 3, it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a day of man. You see how it plays there? Be judged by you or by any other human day of judgment. They might pick a particular day to say we've got cult leaders in the town and we need to get rid of them.

There might be a convocation. There might be a church conference or a pastor's conference or a teacher's conference. And any given day of judgment, Paul says, it is a very small thing.

Now notice, he doesn't say it is no thing. It is something. You do listen.

You don't want to just, as my dad used to say, you know, you look around and say, well, they're all out of step but me. You're marching along and, you know, everybody's left foot's in the pavement at the same time and yours isn't. Well, are you the only guy hearing the true drum or

are you really deaf to the proper step? If they're all out of step but me, you do need to do a quick evaluation and make sure that you're doing what you're supposed to do and that you're not out of step and out of time and out of synchronization that you should be synchronized with.

But there is a time when you may be the only or one of the few, but when the day, when the human day reaches its decision, you do take account. Paul says it's not nothing but it's a very small thing. I keep that in quite a bit of perspective.

But he takes note. He says it's a very small thing if I'm judged by you. He says, I'm aware.

I'm sure it stung when the people of up one side and down the other. Everybody takes note. But it should be a small thing.

Now, if it's small, what does the word small mean? How small is small? In your household, is a thumbtack small? In the solar system, is the moon small? Comparing a thumbtack and the moon, is the moon small? In other words, it's a relative term, right? So when he says it's a very small thing, well, compared to what? Compared to what? Well, he's given it to us in this context. It's a small thing that I should be judged by you or by a day of man. Any day of man.

Any human individual or group of individuals who set up an evaluation and say, well, here's what we've decided. In fact, I do not even judge myself. Now, in this context, he's not saying, I don't look to see if there's any sin in my life.

I don't look to see if I'm being a faithful steward of the mysteries of God. What does he say? I do not know of anything against myself, verse four, yet that doesn't justify me. He who judges me is the Lord.

I'll use myself as a poor example. I endeavor to teach the word of God and to do the best job I can, but to figure out if I'm doing a good job, I don't go back and listen to the lessons. I don't go back and watch the videos.

I don't go in with a score sheet and try to figure out, well, you know, you could have had a better transition. You went too long. You went down a rabbit trail.

That was this, that, and the other. I don't judge myself because it inevitably makes you both subjective and self-conscious. I try to catch if I start developing a tick.

There was a time when I was doing this, and Dr. Criswell did the same thing, and I had a helpful person point out that, you know, between your sentences, you're going, a little smacking noise. I thought, boy, that is, now that I'm aware of it, it's really annoying. So I've worked hard to eliminate that, but I don't go back and check.

What do you do when there's a potential to not be doing your best? You can go back and try to agonize and, you know, people watching old tapes of their, oh, he almost caught that pass. He

almost ran that race. He almost stayed in the lines when he was in the downhill or whatever.

Paul says, I don't agonize. I don't go back and review my performance. What does he do? He says, the Lord is my judge.

So if you want to find out how you're doing, do you go back and evaluate yourself and say, oh, you know, this would have, you know, it's a small thing and you can do that, but the big thing that makes everything else small is the Lord's evaluation. The safer and better course is not to try to evaluate how well, I've got the gift of how helpful am I? I've got the gift of, of, uh, you know, speaking the truth in love. How, how much truth have I spoken? You know, well, I've got the gift of evangelism.

Well, when's the last time I led somebody to the Lord and who's in my periphery that I can go lead? Is that really the right way to evaluate how faithful you are as a steward of your opportunities? What is the best place to go for evaluation? Paul says, I don't judge myself. I don't sit there comparing myself to the other apostles. I don't weigh myself against Apollos.

I don't look at how many converts, I don't count the health and strength of the churches for or against myself. He says, my judge is the Lord. If I want to know how I'm doing, I go to the all wise, all knowing, all powerful source of my strength, source of my commission, source of my gift, the objective source of evaluation.

I go to the Lord. It doesn't mean that he doesn't look at himself to see if he's in the faith. It doesn't mean that he doesn't examine himself to see if he needs to, 1 John 1, 9, confess his sins so that the Lord can forgive and cleanse.

It doesn't mean that he doesn't look to see if he's, uh, treating his fellow travelers or the people within whatever group he's currently associated fairly or honestly or openly. Or, uh, it doesn't mean he doesn't look to say, should I be relying on support from these people? Or should I go get some tents and mend them and make my own money? He's making these evaluations all the time, all the time. What kind of evaluation is this that he says, I do not judge myself.

What's the context as a steward of the mysteries of God? I don't know of anything against myself. If I did, I would fix it. I don't know of any problem, but I'm not looking to pat myself on the back, nor am I looking to flagellate myself and whip myself with a chain.

I go to the Lord in the function of that spiritual gift and in my spiritual health and function, I go to my heavenly father. I let him tell me. And I say, Lord, remember David in the old Testament, purge me with hyssop, search me and know my heart.

Try me and see if there'd be any wicked way in me, go to the Lord. He's got the full, you know, if you think there's something wrong inside, do you self-diagnose or you go let some doctor run an MRI or an X-ray or a sonogram or, you know, let the expert go in there and look, he's got the equipment and the expertise to judge and say, that's not a tumor, that's a fat deposit. Or, you know, you need to get that, uh, out and treated that that's, that's something serious.

You go to somebody who has the proper perspective and knowledge to judge it. This is why he says, I do not judge myself. He says, I don't know of anything against myself.

If I did, I would fix it. But I am not justified by this just because I don't think there's anything wrong. I feel like I'm doing my best.

I feel I'm doing it prayerfully and, and, uh, you know, trying to do the very best I can. I don't know of anything against myself, but that does not vindicate me. I'm not on safe ground just because I don't think I'm doing a bad job.

That's what he says in verse four. I'm not justified by my lack of knowledge of anything against myself. He who judges me is the Lord.

If I want to know how I'm doing, I asked the Lord, do you think the Lord is going to remain silent? If I, as a teacher of the word of God, go to the Lord and say, Lord, I want to do the very best I can. I want to be faithful to your word. I don't want to screw it up.

I don't, I don't want to incur double discipline on myself. I don't want to lead people astray. I don't want to slow people down instead of, you know, speeding up the ship and making sure the supplies are flowing through the household.

I want to do the very best job. And I think of that prayer of David all the time. You know, let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight.

Oh, Lord, my strength and my redeemer. You're the source. Do you think if you pray that prayer, try me and see if there'd be any wicked way in me.

Search me and know my heart. Use the two by four to the side of the head guidance. If I'm messing up, I don't want to fail.

I don't want to fall short. I don't know of anything against myself, but I'm not justified until you justify me. I'm looking forward to the day.

Do you think God will not let us know if we honestly ask him to let us know? Ask and you will receive, right? Knock and the door will be opened. God will answer that prayer. Give me the spiritual wisdom I need to live the life you've called me to the life that the Lord Jesus died to give me.

Help me understand if I'm failing to apply what I know, may the Holy Spirit convict me. May something come up to show me my failure. I don't know of anything against myself, but I know that I'm myopic.

I'm short-sighted. I'm not qualified to judge myself. Let God use his all-knowing viewpoint to communicate to us what we need to know.

I do not judge myself. He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore, now, verse five, and this is the

last verse in chapter three to my mind.

Therefore, judge nothing before the time. It's the first real imperative in the book. I mentioned that we have five lets and five ifs.

And it's probably helpful to just circle them. But you go back to chapter three, verse 10. That's where it all begins.

Chapter three, verse 10. This section that starts in 3.10 and goes through 4.5 is such a beautifully structured argument. So notice in verse 10, according to the grace of God, which was given to me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation.

The grace of God given to me. I am not a great master builder on my own behest and recognizance. God gave me the grace.

It's a grace gift to be a foundation layer, Paul says. And that's what I did. You see how it comes full circle down at the end in 4.5? I don't judge myself.

God judges me. God decides how good a foundation I have laid. And I look to Him.

I don't walk around saying like Nebuchadnezzar, wow, look at this great foundation I've built. Every man's praise will come from God. So he says, I've laid the foundation and another builds on it.

And this another are these anonymous guys, right? Let each one take heed how he builds on it. Notice let. Let each one take heed.

That's let number one. Let every man take heed how he builds. Now, in the first blush, these are the other guys who presume to be teachers or pose as teachers or hope to be teachers, try to be teachers.

You better be careful how you build, Paul says. Let each man take heed how he builds. So it's in the teaching realm in the first blush.

But by way of interpretation and application, we have a foundation that's laid in our souls, right? And we need to take heed how we build on it. What do we do with it? And the same principles and the same rules pertain no matter what we're doing. In this example, it's teachers.

And Paul says, I'm using Apollos and me as figures and talking about teachers. But it's more than that. I didn't get the ghost there.

That was a fruit fly. And if he comes back, I'll clap again. So keep that in mind.

Keep that in mind. This is, Paul says, I'm using the figure of teachers who are competing and people who are getting their eyes on them. But it's a figure.

I've applied these things. That's the first verse of chapter four, really, which is 4.6. These things I

have figuratively transferred so that you may learn not to think beyond what is written. So let number one is let every man take heed how he builds.

Then you have three ifs, right? So if anyone builds in verse 12, let each one take heed how he builds. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Now if anyone builds on this foundation, that's if number one, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will be clear for the day the Hamerah will reveal it.

The day, the day of judgment, right? We've seen that. It will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test each one's work of what sort it is. Verse 14, second if, if anyone's work abides, endures, he will receive a reward.

Verse 15, the third if, if anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss. If anyone builds, if it abides, if it is burned. See the if he uses gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble, the day is going to reveal it.

If his work abides, reward. If it burns up, in other words, it does not partake of the eternal, eternal life, eternal glory, it disappears. Notice the work is burned up.

Do you think there's any part of the work left if it burns up? The wood, hay, and straw built on the foundation. If it's burned, what's left of it? Maybe a memory, and that's it, right? People thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death, what's left? When work is burned up, it's gone, and there is loss, right? He will suffer loss. He will be rewarded, or he will suffer loss.

In the Bible, when you throw something in the fire, and it does not survive the fire, it's gone. Otherwise, you'd have to basically compare people in unending conscious torment throughout all eternity in the lake of fire as gold, silver, and precious stones, because the fire doesn't perish them. Seriously? It doesn't work.

It doesn't match any of the biblical pattern. Lake of fire is the second death, and the people who get thrown in the lake of fire are gone. Gone, gone, gone, just like this work, burned up, suffer loss.

If your inheritance gets thrown in the lake of fire, do you think you're ever going to recover it? It's going to come back, insurance is going to pay, and you're going to replace it? No. If you're outside, and your part, your meros, is in the lake of fire, you lost. It is gone.

It is no more. So, then in verse 16, he says, Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you? If, this is the fourth if, if any man defiles the temple, God will destroy him. If any man defiles the temple.

So notice, if you build, it's going to either be gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, if the work abides, there's a reward. Third if, if it burns, he will suffer loss. If any man defiles God's temple.

Now, interesting, there's a foundation, and then something is built. If someone, it started out

good, and holy, and someone defiles it. It's one thing for the work to be burned up, and you suffer loss.

It's something else for you to be destroyed. There is a heavier penalty for taking a healthy, sanctified temple of God, and defiling it, than there is for building a bad one from the outset. Read the context.

If you build one out of straw, you're like the three little piggies, you know, and you make one that the wolf can blow down. Well, you suffer loss. You got no, you got no house, you've got no reward.

But if you take a house that somebody else built, and you defile it, you tear it down, God will destroy him, it says. Now, if I had to take a choice, hopefully I won't, but if I had to take a choice between suffering loss or being destroyed by God, which one would you choose? Well, I'd rather be saved yet so as by fire. I don't want to be destroyed.

It says God will destroy him. I don't think this is loss of salvation, but I don't want to even know what this is. So now we come up with the second let in verse 18.

Let no one deceive himself. The first one, let every man take heed, right? Back in verse 10. Now, in verse 18, this is the second let.

Let no one deceive himself. Let a man take heed. Let every man take heed.

Let every man take heed because this is expanding beyond just the teachers. We all need to pay attention. Let no man deceive himself.

You need accurate evaluation here. Paul says later on in our passage, I don't know of anything against myself, but I could potentially be deceiving myself. Let no man deceive.

How can you avoid being deceived? If it says, let no man deceive himself, he's basically saying you should not deceive yourself. How do you avoid this? If I'm deceiving myself, how do I know? How do I know if I'm deceiving myself? If I've fooled myself, oh, I fooled myself. How would you know? You have to go to the Lord.

The Lord has to reveal that I have been deceiving myself. God has to open our eyes. John 9. You're asking me where Jesus is from, says the former blind man.

Well, that's not hard to figure out. Since the beginning of time, who could ever open the eyes of the blind? He's from God. God reveals where Jesus is from because he opened the eyes of the blind.

Now I see. Once I was blind, now I see. Who gave me that sight? God did.

This man has to be from God or he couldn't do it. If a teacher is from God, it's going to open my eyes. It's going to help me see.

If I go to the Lord and say, Lord, if I'm deceiving myself, I really want to know. God will reveal it. God will reveal it.

Let no one deceive himself. That's the second let. So in that same verse, if any man seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool.

We get two lets right in a row there. Two and three are right together. Let no one deceive himself.

Anyone seems to be wise, let him become a fool so that he can actually be wise. Let him say, Lord, I don't know. I need you to tell me.

Sometimes it's going to come through faithful stewardship of the mysteries. I'm going to find out because good revelation from the Word of God is going to shine a light on my heart. It's going to be the Word of God dividing to the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow, judging my thoughts and intents.

It's going to be profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction. And if I'm praying to the Lord, I don't want to deceive myself. Help me see where I stand and what I need to do.

Become a fool. Say, Lord, I don't know. I need you to tell me.

I don't judge myself. See the link? I'm a fool when it comes to knowing how I'm doing. I need God to tell me.

I'm not going to be wise and say, well, look at all of my accolades. Look at my accomplishments. Look at how appreciated or how emoluments come to me or whatever.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. So that's the second and third let. So verse 21, therefore, let no one boast in men.

Let every man take heed how he builds on the foundation. Let no man deceive himself. Let him become a fool.

Let no man glory in man. And then we saw the fifth one, chapter four, verse one, let a man so account us. Let a man, now that you're looking at yourself, let a man be careful how he builds.

Let no one deceive himself. Let him become fool so he can be wise. Let no man glory in men.

Then the fifth let makes great sense. Let a man, when he looks at Paul and Apollos, account us as under rowers and oikonomoi, stewards in the household. Get the beam out of your own eye.

Look at how you are building. Don't deceive yourself. Be a fool.

Don't glory in men. Get that all squared away. Now account Paul and Apollos as oarsmen and as stewards.

Those are the five lets. Now we had, if you're building with gold, silver, and precious stones, if your work abides, if your work is burned, if any man defiles the temple, God destroys him. And your final if is right after the, you are God's temple.

If any man defiles it, God destroys him. If any man seems wise. So verse 18 is right at the center of the lets and the ifs.

You have two lets and an if in verse 18. Let no one deceive himself. If anyone seems to be wise, let him become a fool.

Let him become a fool. Let, if, let. All there in verse 18.

And that leads up to 4.1. Let a man account of us as ministers and stewards. And all of that structure is the porch. It's the entry.

It's the vestibule to the first imperative in the book, which is verse 5 of chapter 4. Therefore judge nothing before the time, before the day. Let the day of the Lord reveal it. You look to the Lord.

If you need intermediate time hacks on how you're doing, you know, the splits, how am I doing in the first quarter of the race, the first half of the race, this many laps into the short form skating or whatever, look to the Lord. I don't judge myself. I go to an outside objective source to get that judgment.

Judge nothing before the time until the Lord comes. What's the first thing that's going to happen when the Lord comes and we're raised? The judgment seat of Christ. So don't decide in human wisdom and by human standards.

Judge nothing before the time. The Lord comes who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness. Now, hidden things of darkness doesn't mean that they're evil.

It just means they're hidden. There's not light shining on it. If you go into a perfectly pitch black room and you can't see a thing, does that mean there's nothing in the room? The room can be full of things and you can end up with bruises on your shins and bumps on your noggin when you try to walk through a dark room.

It's not that there's nothing there, but the darkness makes it unseen. The hidden things of darkness, this is the darkness to the human view, the human mind, human wisdom. It's dark.

Atheists and errant faithless believers are in the dark when it comes to God's wisdom and God's evaluation and what really counts. And so those hidden things of darkness are going to be revealed in the light of the Lord Jesus. And people that seemed insignificant and no impact, no fruit in the eyes of man and from an external observation, when the light of the Lord Jesus shines on them, the last will be first and the first will be last.

And a lot of very famous names are going to be out there picking cotton on some unknown

person's plantation, to use a figure. So the light will shine and reveal the counsels of the heart. How are you going to be judged? On what you do or on how you think? It is the counsels of the heart.

Paul says, I don't know of anything against myself, but I want God's word to judge the thoughts and intents of my heart. I want to go to the Lord, let Him reveal it by whatever means. I might be a believer speaking the truth.

Sooner or later, it's going to come down to the word of God. Stewardship of that mystery is going to result in me knowing what God wants me to know and evaluating properly. Counsels of the heart will be revealed.

Then each one's praise will come from God. What are we going to see next time? Remember, He's going to suffer loss, it's going to be burned, it's going to go away, or there's going to be praise. Earlier in this book, we saw the word shame, that I be not ashamed, and that is going to be the result of the judgment.

So you have in Romans 5.5, you know, that perseverance leads to character, character leads to hope. Hope does not disappoint. Hope does not put to shame, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 9.33, I lay in Zion a stone, a stumbling rock of offense. Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame. It's not going to be a bonfire house.

It's not going to be loss. It's not going to be destruction. Romans 10.11, Scripture says, whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.

Whoever trusts Him will not be put to shame. Whoever looks to Him for evaluation will not be put to shame. Every man's praise will come from God.

It will be praise and not being put to shame. We saw this in chapter one, verse 27. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise.

He's chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty. See how this all ties together. And we're going to pick up next time at verse six, which is really the first verse of chapter four, in my view.

These things have transferred figuratively to myself and Apollos for your sake, that you may learn in us, by us, looking at us, us as examples, not to think beyond what is written. Interesting. Not to think beyond what is written.

Chew on that and we'll explore it and develop it next Sunday. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word and the wonderful power that it introduces into our hearts, into our souls, into our thinking.

In the hands of Your Holy Spirit, it transforms us into supernatural and eternal thinking and

practice. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enliven these truths and bring them to our minds in the hours and days ahead so that we can fulfill our potential and that we can enjoy praise and a positive evaluation in that day and not be put to shame and not suffer loss and certainly not destruction by having taken the wonderful spiritual truths and spiritual opportunities that You give to us through Christ and having defiled them and ruined them for ourselves and others. We pray that in all things our Lord Jesus will be glorified.

May there be a blessing from this study and this passage and our fellowship for each one today. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.