

Paul now resumes his exposure of the **carnality** (fleshly thinking and living) of the Corinthians saints. Yes, we can use the words carnal and saint together, sad as it is. We are left here with the desire and power to avoid sin and follow the Lord but we have not been programmed to do so automatically. Then we would be mere robots acting at the whim of a controller, whether it be computer, human, or divine. Rather we are intended to be fruitful human beings voluntarily pleasing our Creator, Savior, Lord and Father. We have been redeemed, set free from the bondage of sin, given the Holy Spirit and direct access to God and eternal life to live for Him and with Him. But the Corinthians were missing this. They were seeking fulfillment in this world; all kinds of fulfillment, physical, emotional, spiritual, but without God. They were full all right. Glutted. There is a play on words here in the Greek. The word translated “full” in the KJV is:

korennumi, *kor-en'-noo-mee*; a primary verb; to cram, i.e. *glut* or *sate* :- eat enough, full. Sound a little familiar? It is. It is like the name “Corinthian”. Their conduct was “corinthian” rather than Christian.

Furthermore, they were out of the path laid out for us by the Lord and His apostles and prophets, now recorded in the scriptures. They were reigning as kings. What’s wrong with that? Something very basic. The Lord was rejected and crucified by the world. He is not reigning yet. Now is not the time. Now is the time of His patience (see Revelation 1:9) while He awaits the hour when the Father sends Him to return to reign. Meanwhile He is longsuffering not willing that any should perish (2Peter 2:9). He waited for us nearly 2000 years. Now we wait with Him for the others to be saved.

We participate in His patience now. For believers to seek to reign or even to interfere with world affairs now will but discredit the gospel of grace we have been commissioned to bring. Yes, He will reign and we with Him and the Corinthians, too. We will be co-regents, and Paul desires that time were already. But he doesn’t jump ahead of God’s Plan. We shouldn’t either.

Romans 8:17-25 ...if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together. ...25 But if we hope for that we see not, [then] do we with patience wait for [it].

2Timothy 4:8 ...all them also that love his appearing.

Colossians 3:4 ...then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

2 Peter 3:12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God

John 18:36-37 ...My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,...

John 16:33 ... In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

John 17:13-20 ...the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Matthew 28:18-20 ...19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,.... lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen

No, now is not our time to reign. Not the time to seek public office, to change laws, to root evil out of the world. We are busy enough keeping evil out of the Assembly. Let’s not be diverted to the incurable evil in the world.

But Paul points out the painful differences between the suffering apostles and the satiated Corinthian believers. This he says in verse 14 not to shame us but to warn us. Which are we like?

Rather than reigning as kings, the apostles were a different kind of spectacle. They were being treated more as a public attraction for the amusement, derision and mocking from the world. Repeatedly, wherever they went, they were treated as dirty dishwater or bath water to be tossed out. Just as “off scouring” left from washing dirty chariots or diapers.

Spectacle **theatron**, *teh'-at-ron*; from Greek 2300 (*theaomai*); a place for public show (“theatre”), i.e. general audience-room; by implication a show itself (figurative) :- spectacle, theatre

Paul is not bragging here of his superior faithfulness or spirituality. He is pointing out the normal Christian experience to be expected and encountered in this world if we are faithful. Are we fools for Christ’s sake? Or are we “wise in Christ?” Are we weak and despised or strong and honorable? They were apparently true believers in Christ. But they had not only settled down and made themselves comfortable, they were stuffed, glutted, crammed full with all this world could offer, more than anyone could want. And mixed in with this was their abundance of spiritual gifts from the Lord. Yet they were not acting for Christ but for themselves. But, in contrast, Paul has

to say:

Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, [and are] the offscouring of all things unto this day.

This kind of treatment was no surprise to Paul. The Lord told him this early on at his conversion.

Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

There are several more instances where his difficult experiences are listed, not to mention the experiences

recorded in Acts. Check them out. Look in:

Acts 9:22-23; 29; 13:50; 14:5; 19; etc. etc. 1Corinthians 15:30-32; 2Corinthians 1:5, 8-10; 4:8-12, 16-17; 6:4-10; 11:23-33;

not to mention the several epistles,

Galatians 6:17;

some written from prison, such as,

Philippians 2:17; 3:10; 4:12; 2Timothy 4:6-8;

etc.

May we be encouraged to live and give our all for the Lord Jesus, His saints, the testimony of His assembly on earth today and the gospel of His grace.

By Ron Canner, January 8, 2003