

Serve

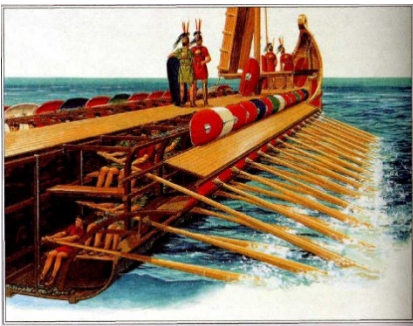
1 Corinthians 4:1-2

¹This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. ²Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Transition

History of Corinth.

Vs. 1 “servants” is the greek word for “under-rower”
The slave at the bottom of the ship who rows the boat.



I. Under-rowers have to trust the captain.

1 Corinthians 4:1

This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.

- A. Unpack the text.
 1. Paul is talking about himself – but the application is for us all.
 2. Under-rowers – who are trusted with the mysteries God has revealed.
 3. God has revealed the mysteries of God “through Christ”
 - a. In Jesus Christ you will find the “mysteries of God”
 - b. They are resident and hidden in Christ.
 - c. Not hidden so you cannot see them.
 - d. But hidden in the sense they are in Christ and ONLY in Christ

Illustration

- So if someone comes along that has another revelation in addition to Jesus Christ.
- Or another revelation instead of or “BETTER THAN” or “IMPROVED UPON”
- You will know that it is not from God.
- You will know that is a false spirit.

B. So the application is for everyone in the KINGDOM who says I want to make a difference.

1. Everyone who claims any type of leadership role.
2. Everyone who is a follower of Jesus Christ

C. Paul says – “YOU ought to regard us as ‘SERVANTS’”

Illustration

- The metaphor has grown.
- Jesus uses the pitcher and bowl.
- You will be foot washers.
- Paul uses the metaphor of an “Under-Rower”

D. Everyone in Corinth would understand this.

1. They were a coastal town.
2. Cargo and battle ships used under-rowers.

Illustration

- In battle the under-rowers could not see the actual battle
- Maybe they would see on side or a limited viewpoint.
- There would be a series of instructions given that were given to...
- Turn right
- Turn left
- Go in reverse
- Go forward
- They had to trust the CAPTAIN.

Increase our faith so we fully trust you.

Teach us how to trust you even when we cannot see very well or understand.

Illustration

Row, row, row

II. Under-rowers row in unison.

- A. There could be as many 80-100 Under-rowers in the hull of the ship
1. Each oar could have several rowers on each oar.
 2. All the rowers had to be in sync with each other so that the ship would go in the correct direction.
 3. If the rowers got out of sync then the ship would not go in the course the captain desired

Illustration

- This was crucial.
- The more in unison everyone was the more efficient the work was.
- The more in unison everyone was the more effective the ship was.
- In battle it could mean the difference between life and death.

- B. Unity in the KINGDOM is absolutely crucial.
1. When there is not unity the work become less efficient.
 2. Less effective
 3. Can be detrimental to the spiritual life.

Illustration

- Lack of unity causes the time and energy to go into putting out fires.
- Consumed with working through emotions and HE said – SHE said.

John 17:20-21b-23

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one... ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

- C. Unpack
1. Jesus intercedes for us to be in unity.
 2. “I pray for those who will believe in me through their message”
 - a. That is us.
 3. “that all of them may be ONE”
 4. I in them....
 5. You in me...

6. Brought to complete unity.
 - a. This will take work.
 - b. Notice Jesus doesn't say almost unified.
 - c. Jesus doesn't say 90% unified.
 - d. Jesus says --- Complete unity.

D. The result is....

Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them like you have loved me.

Ephesians 4:11

¹¹ God gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Application

1. Focus on what you can do...

Be more concerned about yourself than policing everyone else's actions, intentions, facial expressions, words, etc...

2. Assume the best from one another – Don't assume the worst.

3. Determine that you are going to be the most difficult person to offend.

III. Under-rowers do not get the glory.

A. Under-rowers were not seen.

1. Back to the picture of the ship.
2. They are under the ship
3. At the bottom.

B. The bottom of the ship was difficult, nasty, smelly.

1. The bottom was not a place of glory.
2. The bottom was a place of servanthood.
3. The bottom screams – Humility, Servanthood, Sacrifice.
4. You don't become an under-rower to be famous.
5. You become an under-rower to bring fame to the captain.
6. That is your job.

C. Unpack

1. In the battle the captain gets the glory.
2. They are the ones with the ultimate responsibility.
3. The captains are the ones that are given the job of leading.
4. The under-rowers get the satisfaction of knowing they won but the captain gets the glory.

Paul Ai

- The General Superintendent of the A/G in Northern Vietnam.

John 3:30

²⁹The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰**He must become greater; I must become less."**

D. Get out of the way so others can see Jesus.

1. Dress in a way so that others see Jesus.
2. Talk in way so that others see Jesus.
3. Eat and drink in a way so that others see Jesus.
4. Take care of your body in a way so that others see Jesus.

Colossians 1:15

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

IV. Under-rowers keep their hands on the oars.

Psalm 23 – The Lord is my shepherd.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.