

*The Blessed Mess: Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth*

December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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### **Escaping the Trap of Comparison (1 Corinthians 4:1-13)**

#### **1. Freedom from Making Judgments (vv. 1-7)**

*"This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (v. 1)"*

#### **2. Freedom from Taking Judgments (vv. 8-13)**

*"We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things." (v. 13)*

**For Further Thought and Discussion:**

**Getting Started:**

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

**Going Deeper:**

2. Read verse 6. What "*things*" has Paul applied to himself and Apollos (see 3:1-17; 4:1-5)? What Scriptures does Paul have in mind here (see 1:18, 31; 2:9, 16; 3:19-20)? How were the Corinthians going beyond them (v. 6; compare 1:10-12)?
3. Read verses 1-5. How does seeing ourselves as stewards change (1) how we view our own blessings (v. 1; compare v. 7)? (2) how we define success (v. 2; compare verse 6), and (3) who we think is ultimately qualified to determine our success (vv. 3-5)?
4. Read verse 8. How did the Corinthians misunderstand the nature of their own blessings in Christ? How did this impact their view of Paul?
5. Read verses 9-13. Why are Paul's contrasts here ironic (compare verse 10 with 1:26-28)? What did the Corinthians expect the Christian life to look like? What did Paul's life look like? How does Paul's language echo the teaching and example of Jesus (compare verses 11-13 with Matthew 8:20; Luke 6:20-34; Luke 21:12-18)? Why is it critical for us to see that *God* is the one who made the apostles a spectacle to the universe (v. 9)? How does this change our view of following Jesus (see Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10-11)?

**Application:**

6. Which do you struggle with more: *making* judgments (thinking critically of people in your heart), or *taking* judgments (seeking to meet human standards, rather than God's)? Why?
7. Why is comparison a trap? Jeff laid out several principles for breaking free from comparison. Which of these was most helpful to you? Why?
8. What's one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?