

The peril of spiritual pride

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Preacher: Roger Mundy

[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everybody, and a very warm welcome to Union Baptist Church this morning.! It's a special welcome to you. If you're here for the first time, you're very welcome, or if you're joining us online.

My name is Sheena, and I am the Deacon for Community Ministry, and it's my pleasure today to lead the service today. A little bit later, Roger Mundy will be taking us through the next stage in our preaching series on 1 Corinthians, on the loving, serving, and worshiping church.

But now, as we prepare to worship, I'm going to read some verses from Psalm 96. Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless his name. Tell of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous work among all the peoples. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.

Splendor and majesty are before him. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Let's pray. Father God, this morning we come to worship and praise you.

[1 : 12] We join all creation in praising your holy name. You are great, and greatly to be praised. Majesty and strength surround you, and your glory fills this place.

You are our creator, sustainer, and redeemer. We thank you for your sacrifice on the cross, which has given us access to your holy presence.

Open our hearts and minds to receive your word, to hear your voice, and to experience your presence. Fill us with joy as we meet with you. May this time of worship be a time of encounter with you, our living God.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Let's sing about that in the splendor of the King. Amen. The splendor of the King.

Clothed in majesty. Let all the earth rejoice. All the earth rejoice.

[2 : 31] He cast himself in light. And darkness tries to hide. And tremble as his voice.

And tremble as his voice. Our great is our heart. Sing with me, our great is our heart.

And all will sing our great. Our great is our heart. Let us sing our heart. Let us sing our heart.

And land, land, land, land. How great is our God. Sing with me how great is our God.

And all who sing how great, how great is our God.

[4 : 01] Name above all names, mighty of all praise. My heart will sing how great is our God.

Name above all names, mighty of all praise. My heart will sing how great is our God.

How great is our God. Sing with me how great is our God. And all who sing how great, how great is our God.

And all who sing how great is our God. Today, something very special happened here.

We had a light party here, which was amazing fun. Who here was at the light party? Just put your hands up if you were here. Yeah, we had a fantastic time. Lots of children and lots of fun.

[5 : 24] Now, at the light party, some of our leaders and helpers were assigned tasks to do in the dark. Now, they're here today, but let's see if we can find them.

So we're looking for Bethany and a few others. They might be through here because they've been given tasks to do in the dark. We want to see how they got on. So is anyone there? Oh, hi, Bethany. Hi. Can you tell us what was your task? What have you been doing? I was trying to eat a donut in the dark, but I might have got it all over myself. I was going to say, it looks like a lot of donut has gone down your t-shirt and around your face and on your nose.

I'm not sure how much has gone in. So it didn't work so well doing it in the dark, did it? No. You kind of need to be able to see what you're doing to eat a donut, don't you? Need some light around.

Yeah, okay.

I think I better go and send you off to get cleaned up. Okay. Is anyone else in there? Any other leaders from the light party? Uh-oh. Oh, what's this? Oh, my word. What's going on here?

[6 : 29] Whoa. Okay. Okay. Hi, Miriam. Can you tell us what are you trying to do here?

Oh, I was trying to put a tent up. And how did that go? Not good, as you can see. That was quite scary. I got all tangled up. You did and you wrecked the joint. Taking it a bit too seriously into character.

I think a bit of light would have helped here, wouldn't it? I think it would have helped a lot, yeah. I think it would have helped a lot, yeah. Okay. I'll let you go and put that away. Okay. Now, the other people that we're looking for, we sent Jamie and Jameson to go and put some rubbish away. I'm hoping they're through. Oh, Jamie. I was just looking for you. Oh, thank you. Jamie, you've been ever so helpful. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. We sent you to put the bins out. Yeah. How did that go? Medium success. Yeah. Got everything tidied up. Got the bins out. Just a question. Just a question. Because we sent you and your son, Jameson.

[7 : 30] Yeah. Where is Jameson? Yeah, about that. I'm not 100% sure where he was. It was really dark while I was doing it. I heard some fumbling. Yeah. Any ideas?

I wonder. Where do you think Jameson might be? To me? Is the inside? We better check. Oh my word. Jameson, what happened?

I got put in the bin. Now, we need to have a chat with Dad here. How did your son end up getting put in the bin? I'm not sure. It was kind of dark. I was lifting stuff, lifting something slightly heavier. And then, yeah. And yeah, I'm not sure. It just could have done with some more light, I think. I think it would have been a help to have some light and to be able to see what you're doing. Right. You better get your son out of there. Yeah.

Okay. Better go and take him outside and hose him down. And thank you very much. I'll let you put that away there. Thank you. Let's give a round of applause to our helpers.

[8 : 27] And I'd like to say a massive thank you to Jackie and all the team. We had a whole bunch of adults and young helpers who were helping on the light party, which was a fantastic thing.

And what we learned through that is that things don't go so well when we do them in the dark, because we need light to see things as they really are, don't we? Now, this is true in our lives as well.

We need the light of Jesus in our lives so that he can lead us in a way that's good for us and so that we can flourish as people. Now, the grownups here have been working through the book of 1 Corinthians over the last few Sundays on our Sunday morning sermons.

And the Corinthians, we find out from the book of 1 Corinthians that the Corinthians, the people in Corinth, were doing some things wrongly. But unfortunately, they weren't prepared to talk about it. They weren't prepared to pray about it and to bring these things into the light. And Paul told them in 1 Corinthians 4 verse 5, which is part of the reading that we're going to have later on in our service.

[9 : 29] He said this, he's talking about Jesus. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. You see, everything ultimately will be brought to light by Jesus.

And that is good news. But that means that we need to not hide things. And that means that we need to ask Jesus to help us bring the hidden areas of our lives into his light so he can lead us in ways which are good for us.

So we'll be learning more about that later on. I'm going to invite our musicians to come back up now and we're going to sing about God's goodness and Jesus lights and what he's done for us as we sing the next song.

Please stand and our musicians are going to lead us. Let's sing a song.

Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Let's sing a song. Thank you.

[11 : 03] Right, now you've all got the hang of it and how it goes, we're going to do it in a round. Bear with me a minute. Right, I'm sure most of you have sung it in a round before, so you ought to know what you're doing.

I'll lead this side first, and Georgie and Emmanuel will lead that side. The instrumentalists play the same thing all the time, so they've got the easy bit. Right, so we start off with For God So Loved The World.

Okay, and when we get to Shall Not Die But Have Eternal Life, after that, this side will start at the top. We'll sing El For Love, and you lot sing For God So Loved The World.

Now, I haven't got any volunteers to do actions, but if there's anybody who wants to come up and help, please do, because I'm no good at actions. I just turn into a windmill. Do we have two volunteers? Oh, bless you.

Oh, I thought that was Vicky being another, but she's gone out to do something else, that's fine. Well done. Right, okay. So the actions obviously are going to be different, depending on what you're singing, so that side I'd better follow Bethany, and that side I'd better follow Serena.

[12:17] And I'll try and keep order in the middle. Right, okay, intro please. For God So Loved The World He gave His only Son But whoever believes in Him Shall not die, but have eternal life And it's for the love that He has for me I am the reason He died on the tree I am the reason He died on the tree At this call forgiveness And now I am free He is to enjoy being in His company For God's sake of the world He gave His only Son For the love that He lives in Him

Shall not die in their capital of life And this Father of God that he has for me I am risen in the island of the tree And this Father of forgiveness and I am free He is to enjoy me in his company For God's love that he has for me He gave his only son And whoever lives in here Shall not die in their capital of life Perfect!

You lot ought to be up here with us, I think. Well, thank you for that. That was wonderful.

Now we're going to have a few notices before the children go out to their groups. On next week, on Saturday, we have a meeting, a music ministry gathering from 10 till 12 For anybody who's interested in joining in with the music ministry in the church.

You don't have to have had prior experience. Just some enthusiasm and some good energy would be great. Now, the morning will include a chance to pray together for the music ministry To talk about how they're doing and what supports are needed To do some training and to learn some new songs So if you are interested, please contact Andy Banks and find out more Next week, on the evening, we're going to have a prayer and praise service at 6.30 And we'll also have communion So it'll be a great time to come together to worship God On the 15th of November, we're going to have an amazing opportunity to take part in the Christmas Lights Festival in the town centre We'll be in the high street with our pop-up nativity scene We'll be inviting people to get in the picture and to have a selfie in the stable But we do need help with the following things Please help us with preparing nativity costumes or praying for us on the day

[15:36] If you want to dress up as an angel or a wise man or another character Please come along and ask us and we can get you kitted out We'd also want people to help to sign up people for photo consent and contact forms And others of you who are good at enlisting people to take part To go out and get people to come and have their photograph taken So if you'd like to get in the picture and help with that Please sign up on the link shown on the slide if you're able to help Now the children are going to be going out to their groups in a minute And also it's today is WOW Extra So they're going to be going out to their group now too But let's pray for them God our Father, we thank you that you love each one of us And we pray for our children and young people and our WOW group As they learn about you today May their time together be a safe and fun environment To get to know you more We pray for a special blessing on all the leaders Who are helping in those activities this morning

In Jesus name, Amen And as they go to their groups we're going to be singing In Christ Alone Please stand up Thank you In Christ Alone My hope is found He is my light, my strength, my song This cold and stern, this solid ground Far from the fields that's drought and storm What parts of love, what ends of peace When fears are still When striding cease

My comforter My all in all Here in the love of Christ I stand In Christ Alone Who took on flesh Fullness upon Him Helpless faith The spirit of love and righteousness Scored by the ones He came to save Till on that cross was Jesus died The brother God was satisfied For every sin on Him was laid Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay Light of the world by darkness slain Their mercy fall in glorious day Up from the grave He rose again And as He stands in victory Since Christ has lost His grip on me For I am His and His mind Fought with the precious love of Christ The power of Christ No guilt in life No fear in death This is the power of Christ in me From life's first crime To final breath Jesus commands my destiny No power of hell No scheme of man Can never love me from His hand Till He returns All bones behold Here in the power of Christ God stand Do sit down

[20:45] Now we are going to have Another in our series Of this time tomorrow Learning what it means To be God's disciples Now Jamie is going to be Helping me with this Thank you Jamie Our

time together on Sundays Is a time when we get prepared For the week ahead In our front lines in our lives Because God has placed us Where we are To be His hands and feet And this is our chance To support each other In doing that So Jamie Where are you going to be Where are you going to be This time tomorrow I'll be working at my desk Remotely For an American company Called 8x8 So what they do is They sell a video meeting software And with lots of extra bits and functions In their bid to make them different From their competitors Great So who are you going to meet there?

Who I meet? So in person Very few Because it's video meeting software Yeah In video meetings Lots of people In the team that I work with I have a good amount of opportunity To refer to what I do outside of work Which is good Such as joining in with youth work And attending church I find other opportunities To speak with people Sometimes in the gym But when people are wearing headphones They're often If they're occasionally Open to Taking them off for a few moments To chat Great So you actually work You know very much on your own Largely So what do you actually do at work?

Yeah Sorry Let me just find that Sorry Yeah A bit of a technical job So I look after Sales commissions Which is the calculation Of what the sales staff Should be paid As well as some other finance bits And this involves understanding Commission plan contracts And ensuring that Our commission's tool formulas Spit out the right payments So it's highly technical stuff So what are some of the joys And challenges of your role?

Prior to this job I was looking for a change of roles For over four years So I'm really glad This was a real prayer answered And this job And this company found me And I was able to get the job Around Currently able to get the job Done around Other things That I'm involved with Outside of work And parenting Great This job has also taught me That patience And God's timing Is very real And being in the right place Has led to some opportunities As well over time As for the challenges Working with people In multiple time zones So the Romanians who report to me Are two hours ahead And the Americans that I collaborate with Are six to eight hours behind us So partnering with them Can be a little bit Taxing and lengthy at times Yeah I can imagine So have you seen God at work at all In your role?

I do find it quite hard to see God at work Sometimes within my company But however just this week Speaking with my equivalent American colleague She felt comfortable enough To talk to me about her aging father Who's had a fall I asked for his name And if I could pray for him as well So that fell into place nicely I could tell from That she could not tell What the next steps really were for him So it was a real ideal opportunity to offer this I mentioned as well That I get involved with some children's work It's awesome to see the joy the kids have in coming to the Sunday groups As well as discoverers And I pray that this will lead them and their families to faith Even if I can't see it directly in what I'm doing specifically Well we know you do a huge amount amongst the children in this church And we're really thankful for that We saw him this morning with Jameson in the bin So how can we pray for you?

[24 : 35] I pray for good ears to understand God's will Relating to everything that I do And some real clearness when there's something I could do And should be doing to bring others to him I pray as well to get more equipped over time With finding ways to bring God into the conversation As I don't think I know enough ways to do this at times I think that's true for all of us Let me pray for you, Jamie Father God we thank you for Jamie For all that he and his family do To take part in the children's work And in other areas And being so willing to be helpful We pray for him and his current role in his job Thank you for the technical skills that you've given him For the way that you have led and guided him into that role After a long gap We pray that you will continue to use him there To reach out to those around him in gentle And thoughtful ways as he has with his colleague We pray for him as he manages all the different time zones It can be really challenging to be managing that In amongst everything else as well

So we pray that you give him opportunities To learn more of you And more in different ways to communicate your love to others around him In Jesus name, Amen And now Mike Birmingham is going to bring us the intercessions Thank you, sorry Thank you, sorry Good morning I don't know how you find it find it but if I want to see our doctor I have to make an appointment and I don't know when that might be I can't just go and talk to him even on the phone I have to make an appointment but you know with God we can come at any time isn't that fantastic really so let's come before God we were challenged this morning with a prayer before the service from Colin about

being delighted to come before God those who delight in him I want to delight in him so let's pray thank you father God for the fact that we can come into your presence in the name of Jesus king of kings lord of lords and we thank you father that we can call you father because of what he did on the cross for his death and his resurrection for his forgiveness for his love for us thank you that he's interceding for us at your right hand and thank you for your holy spirit that will intercede us for us in ways that we can't even put into words father God we want to pray and intercede for the children's work here we want to pray for those who lead our children each week who give up their time to encourage to bless and to teach we pray for those who teach in schools that they'll have a good holiday this week as the half term is enjoyed we pray that it'll be time to refresh and reload their thoughts and their plans for the new term new half term father I want to pray for those who help with the tennis club on Friday night for those who have learning difficulties who meet together it's such fun to be with and such a good atmosphere there I want to pray for the leaders who lead for that particularly for

Colin and Karen Burkhouse father we want to pray for your church here at union I want to pray for Andrew and Miriam in the half term break that they'll have a good refreshing time and for an Andy and Carol as they have a short break an opportunity to visit Andy's dad who's not been well commit that situation to you Lord we pray for each of their elders and deacons and administrators who keep the church running and guide us in the ways for the future would you bless them and give them wisdom Lord in the decisions that they're making each time they meet father we want to intercede for our own loved ones our own families each of us has somebody who we love dearly who doesn't know you we pray father for them we pray for opportunities where we can't speak that they might hear from others of your love and your forgiveness pray for those who used to walk closely with you Lord and have drifted away we think of the prodigal son how he was welcomed back by the father and we know that you're just waiting to welcome back those who may have drifted away and we ask Lord draw them back to yourself Lord remind them that you gave everything you gave your son that they might have life and life in all its fullness father we pray for those who are finding it tough at the moment maybe some for some of us life is good life is easy and life is going well but for others there's physical emotional financial material and spiritual troubles that they're having and we want to pray father and I'd like to give just the quiet time that we might mention quietly in our own hearts those who we know who are going through difficult times that we perhaps might be able to help with a visit so perhaps in this short minute you might raise up names to the Lord just quietly we pray today for some for a fresh start Lord for healing for strength for change wherever it's needed we ask your Holy Spirit to touch each one of us this morning in a way that we know and experience your love your forgiveness and your you're you're you're we trust you in this area of our lives that you will have your will and that your will will be done that's what we want Lord we pray for those whose faith has been challenged and are finding a struggle may they find and peace and joy in the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ where there's been conflict we pray for reconciliation forgiveness and humility we want to thank God that Jesus came to restore our relationship that we lost with him father we thank you for all that the cross means and the resurrection means to us father we want to intercede for our town we want to be people who help transform our town want to thank you for all the opportunities that you've given us to serve through the various ministries we pray for all the preparations that go into setting up

Wickham night shelter thank you for each of the churches participating and all those who give time to enable those who are homeless to get a hot meal and a warm place to sleep we pray particularly for the work of Wickham homeless connection in setting this up father god we commit outreach opportunities on the 15th of November to invite people to get into the picture to be part of the true meaning of Christmas to pray for those preparing and organizing and participating in this outreach in the town father we thank you for the job club cafe we pray for those attending and those giving their time to serve in this through this opportunity pray for Wickham child contact center held here on our premises we pray that they will be led to the right will led to the right person to take on the responsibilities as part-time center coordinator pray for those who are serving as chaplains in our town for those whom they serve in the town in the hospital the university the police in the shops and the businesses in our town thank you for all these openings that we might share god's love with those we contact and we also pray for Wickham youth for christ as they reach out into our local schools through assemblies mentoring and after school clubs pray for wisdom for erica as she leads that team take each of us lord and use us for your glory we are your church your people your witnesses in our family in our town and in your world thank you lord jesus for interceding for us

amen and now just before we hear the word read to us and uh before roger opens it up to us we're going to sing um our next song which is speak oh lord as we come to you speak oh lord as we come to you oh lord as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word take your truth



For your purposes, for your glory. Teach us, Lord, for obedience, Holy reverence to humility.
[35 : 49] Bless our thoughts and our attitudes In the radiance of your purity.

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see Your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail Let the truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds Help us cross the eyes of your plans for us Choose and change from the dawn of time That will echo down through eternity And my grace will stand on your promises And my faith will walk as you walk with us Speak, O Lord, till your church is built And the earth is filled with your glory Do sit down and Mary Ann's going to bring our reading.

Good morning, everybody.

[37 : 58] Our reading is today from 1 Corinthians 4, verses 1-21 The nature of the true apostleship So then, men ought to regard us, the apostles, As servants of Christ And those entrusted with the secret things of God Now it is required that those who have been given a trust Must prove faithful.

I care very little if I am judged by you Or any human court Indeed, I do not even judge myself My conscience is clear But that does not make me innocent It is the Lord who judges me Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time Wait till the Lord comes He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness And will expose the motives of men's hearts At that time, each will receive his praise from God Now, brothers and sisters I have applied these things to myself and Apollos For your benefit So that you may learn from us The meaning of saying Do not go beyond what is written And then you will not take pride in one man Over against another For who makes you different From anyone else?

And what do you have that you did not receive? And you did receive it? And if you did receive it You do Why do you boast? As though you did not Already you have all you want I already have Sorry Already you have become rich You've become kings And that without us How I wish you really had become kings So that we might be kings with you For it seems to me That God has put us apostles on display At the end of the procession Like men condemned to die in the arena We've been made a spectacle to the whole universe To angels as well as to men We are fools for Christ But you are so wise in Christ We are weak But you are strong You are honoured And we are dishonoured To this very hour We go hungry and thirsty We are in rags And are brutally treated We are homeless We work hard with our own hands And we are cursed When we are cursed We bless And when we are persecuted We endure it When we are slandered We answer kindly Up to this moment We have become the scum of the earth And the refuse of the world I am not writing this to shame you But to warn you as my dear children Even though you have thousand guardians in Christ You do not have many fathers For in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel Therefore I urge you to imitate me For this reason I am sending you Timothy my son Whom I love Who is faithful in the Lord He will remind you of the way of Christ In Christ Jesus Which agrees with what I teach Everywhere in every church Some of you become arrogant As if I were not coming to you But I will come to you very soon

If the Lord is willing And then I will find out Not only how these arrogant people are talking But what power they have For the kingdom of God Is not a matter of talk But of power Why What do you prefer Shall I come to you With a whip Or in the love With gentle spirit Praise God for his word As Roger brings his word I'll just pray for him Father God we thank you for Roger And his gift of preaching We pray that you'll speak through him today As he opens your word to us And may we be ready to receive it With open hearts and minds In Jesus name Amen Thank you Roger Amen Thanks Well what did you make of that reading?

[42 : 26] Sounds as though at this stage In writing this letter to the Corinthians He's getting really exasperated And upset with them And even threatening to come And sort them out Isn't he?

Well when I saw A few months ago That I was down to preach This particular part of the letter I thought Help How am I going to preach this one? So it came to me And this is the sixth In the series That we're doing That it might be a good idea To just sort of review The context And the

background Of where we got to so far So in order to do that And some of you won't be surprised at this We're going to have a mini geography lesson Now if you can find a church Bible I've spread them all around So I hope you can find a church Bible I want you to turn to the back inside cover And you'll see a map Of Paul's missionary journeys It's a bit small You might need a magnifying glass But hopefully You'll be able to find First of all Look for Corinth See if you can find Corinth It's almost in the middle of the map It's about 45 miles or so West of Athens Which is fairly Well it's in bold print anyway And Paul Was on his second missionary journey Now that is the third Of all those lines In the key that you see there It says second missionary journey From 50 to 53 AD And this was his outward journey He went all the way around Through what is present day Turkey Across to the city of Philippi Thessalonica Down to Athens And eventually arrived in Corinth Where he spent about 18 months This is where he met A couple called Aquila and Priscilla They like him Were leather workers And they worked together And they shared the gospel With the people in Corinth Now we learned earlier That Corinth Was a pretty bad place To try and make people Understand the truth of the gospel It was known As a place of Pagan worship With lots of Greek temples Roman temples There was a lot of sexual immorality Just a lot of pagan activity It was a multicultural city A port city It was a bit like Some of the cities Of modern day western world In a way It was the Las Vegas Of the eastern Mediterranean Sin city And yet There were a number of people Who came to Christ Some of them were Jews Paul always went To the synagogues first And he spoke to the Jews About Christ And some of them listened And believed Others though Objected And they were turned out Of the synagogue And they went to the home Of a guy called Titus I think Justice Something like that Who lived next door To the synagogue And that's where The small Christian community Developed Now After he'd been there About 18 months He travelled With Priscilla and Aquila Across to Ephesus That you'll see on the map There This is the line That says Return to Jerusalem Okay He left them there That's about 230 miles Across the sea They started A small church In Ephesus And then he carried on All the way down To Jerusalem And then he started A third missionary journey Sometime later So this is Months and months Afterwards And now he's arrived In Ephesus And he's heard This bad news About what's going on In Corinth Some people have come From there To Ephesus And so Paul Has been writing This letter To try to put right The way that They've been Absorbing Some of the Culture Of the Corinthian City around them One of the things In particular That people Valued in Corinth Was people Who were great Philosophers Great speakers Eloquence But Paul Wasn't like that He said this When I came to you I did not come With eloquence Or human wisdom As I proclaimed [46 : 41] To you the testimony About God For I resolved To know nothing While I was with you Except Jesus Christ And him crucified My message And my preaching Were not with wise And persuasive words But with a demonstration Of the Spirit's power So that your faith May not rest On human wisdom But on God's power And this is what Paul was emphasizing All the time He said look By the grace That God has given me I've laid a foundation As a wise builder And someone else Is building on it But each one Should build with care For no one Can lay any other Foundation Than the one Already laid Which is Jesus Christ Now he's been Emphasizing this In chapters 1 2 and 3 He's dictating The letter By the way To a scribe It's thought that Paul couldn't see Very well So he dictated His letters And there's quite A few clues To that In the letters And in the book Of Acts And now he's got To chapter 4 He's sort of

Restating some Of these points He's particularly Mentioning a guy Called Apollos Now Apollos Apparently was An eloquent speaker But he was speaking On behalf of Paul About Jesus Christ And so some people Were saying Oh Apollos is great He's the one We should follow Others were saying Oh no But Paul Oh no No it's Peter Some of them Knew about him Who was the leader Of the church In Jerusalem So they were Kind of putting People on pedestals And that's not What it was about So Paul is getting Really quite Uptight About the way That they're Going on Now some Bible Scholars think That about this Point in the story Some more people Came from Corinth And gave him Even more news Of things going Wrong there And in the Following chapters He's addressing All sorts of Specific issues Like sexual Immorality Divorce The communion Service Spiritual gifts And so on And there's going To be another Few sermons On that But at this Point he was Going to send The letter With Timothy Back to Corinth And he decided No there needs To be some More instructions Here And so it took A little bit Longer Before that Letter was On its way To them So let's Have a look At it Let's now Turn to That

chapter 1 Corinthians Chapter 4 And what I'm Going to try And do today Is see if we Can find out Anything from Here that Really would Speak to us In our Culture Our day As I mentioned I think we Do live in a Similar sort of Culture don't We where people Are put on Pedestals The celebrity Culture The kind of Way that People idolise Things Sport Or whatever It is In our Society And then Jesus Christ Doesn't seem To be very Important In fact in One of the Chapters he Talks about It appears To be Foolishness And yet It's the Wisdom Of God Because that's All that Matters The foundation Is Jesus Christ If we get That right Then all the Other things In our lives Will begin To make Sense Now What I've Done is to Divide it Into four Sections And in Fact I think You'll find There's Four paragraphs In this Chapter And the First one I've called Serving So we're Going to Get that One up On the Screen It's Verses One to Five And this Is where Paul is Emphasizing Look Paul Me And Apollos We're Servants We're Just simply Doing our Particular Part In bringing The message Of the Gospel To you It's not Our place To be Judged By you Or even To judge Ourselves He's saying In these Verses God will Do that The important Thing is We're Faithful To what God has Called us To do And then If we serve Him correctly If we're Doing all That He Wants We will Receive Praise We will Receive Reward So that's What those Four Those first Five verses Are really Saying Now When I Started To think About this I thought How does That affect Us We're All servants Too Every one Of you Here And me We're All servants In one way Or another And God Has given Us each Skills Aptitudes Gifts Talents Whatever To serve Him And to Use our Lives For God's Glory The important Thing Is that We know What those Are Now it Took me A long Time to Discover I'm a Teacher I was In my Early Twenties And I Was sent Off to Teacher To school Quite Unprepared The age Of 21 And discovered I could Do it And I Thought Oh Right Well this Is what The Lord Wants me To do I guess Some years Later I discovered Another gift I didn't Know I Had And that Was for Administration Mind you That was In the Pre-digital Age It was All Paperwork I could Do That [51 : 42] I Couldn't Do The stuff That The guys At The Back Are Doing I Just Don't Have Those Kind To stop All Of That And I Had to Take on Another role I had to Become a carer For my wife For six years Before she died So through Life God calls us To serve In different Kinds of Ways And I Think it's Very important That we Know what The Lord Wants us To do At particular Stages In our Lives And you Know this Morning's Service is A demonstration Of that Here's our Music team They've been Serving the Lord with Their gifts Up here This morning Helping To lead Us In Worship There's My friends In the Studio At the Back There They're Serving The Lord With Their Skills Something I Couldn't Possibly!

With The Sound System And the Live Streaming And the Screen And all Of those Things And then There's the People who Welcomed you In There's the People who Are going to Serve you Tea and Coffee Afterwards There's all Those who Are serving The Lord With our Children At the Back There And I'm Sure there Are many Other kinds Of service That I've Forgotten To mention But each Of us Has a Role We can Play And I Think that's Not just Here in Church But throughout Our lives The Lord Wants Us to In whatever Way In whatever Time in Our lives So that we Glorify him And then as Paul says Here Then we Will receive Praise We will Receive Our reward Now let's Go on to The Second one Which is Boasting In verses Six and Seven He says Now Be careful Don't get Too big Headed about What you Can do Don't boast Because Everything you Have is From God You know Boasting is Quite insidious It's not Actually sometimes Speaking out Loud and Telling people I'm really Good at This Sometimes It's how You think Inside Isn't it Let me Give you A silly Example I'm in A community Choir And some Years ago When I Hadn't been In it For very Long We were Having Our Summer Concert And we Were Going to Give A medley Of songs From the Musical Les Miserables Many of You will Know those Lovely Musical I love The songs And I Thought Oh great There were Going to Be some Solos I thought I can sing Stars Javert's Song You know That one Stars In your Multitudes I thought Yeah I've got A good Baritone Voice I can Do That But I Wasn't Chosen And I I knew Why in The end Because the Guy who Was chosen Was a Lot better Than me And then I Was thinking To myself Well he's Using the Music I could Sing it From memory Whoops See how

Easy it Is to Kind of Feel A bit Too blown Up about Ourselves That's Boasting And incidentally If there's Anybody here This morning Who's feeling A bit Stressed Or down Or feeling I can't Do much For the Lord Please be Encouraged There is Something you Can do You know My Tina Used to Sit in a Wheelchair Over there Where we Had a Blue badge On the Wall Before the Pews Were taken Out And she Couldn't Sing She couldn't Really do Very much In the Service But you Know what

She used To do In the Song She raised Her hands And people Told me Afterwards How that Blessed them And back Home when The carers Came in To look After her She just Talked about Her faith Very simply One of the Carers told me After she Died Tina was Always trying To convert Me Well it Wasn't like That at all It was just That Tina Was simply Being a Witness She couldn't Do much Else She could Just sit And she Could just Share And she Was so Ready To be With the Lord So wherever We're at Wherever we Feel we Might be There's Something we Can do All we Got to do Is ask Lord what Do you Want me To do At this Stage in My life So Serving's Important But boasting We have to be A bit careful Of Now we Go on to This long Section From verses 8 Through to 13 Where he's Really getting Wound up He's saying You Corinthians You think You've got it All sorted Don't you Yeah Yeah You know It all And we're Put down We're scum Of the earth He says At one point Personally I wish you'd Left that bit Out of the Letter I don't Think that Was needed That is Comparing And I don't Think that's Helpful Is it Comparing Ourselves

[56 : 33] With other People He's He's Really I don't Know what's Happened to His self Esteem At this Point I think It's so Important That We Think Of others Well And kindly And appreciate What they Can do Rather than I think He's putting Them down Here a bit I think When they Got this Letter Those Corinthians Would have Been a bit Upset about That section And in fact It's very Likely They were Because when He finally Got there Which was Some years Later He was there For three Months And it Was a Very bad Visit And he Had to Write another Letter To Corinthians We're not Doing that For a while I don't Think And there's Some pretty Strong stuff In it In fact Do you Know Paul's Letters In the Early part Of his Ministry These years From about 50 to 55 or so To the Galatians The Corinthians They're Pretty Strong They're Blunt Irritable But when

He got Later on In his Life And he Was taken Into prison In Rome He was Writing Letters To the Churches Established In the Philippians The Ephesians Philemon Colossians And so On You read Those They're Different They're More Mellow They're More Encouraging And as An older Man Who'd Experienced An awful Lot He began To see That He's got To show Kindness And so Comparing Is Not a Good Idea Is It's Much Better That We Appreciate People But there Are a few Nuggets In here Just look At verse 12 He says We work Hard With our Own Hands That's Good Advice Isn't It That We work Hard At Whatever God Wants Us To Do And the Last Thing He says There When We're Cursed We Bless When We're Persecuted We Endure It When We're Slandered We Answer Kindly I think That's Good Advice Rather Than Comparing Ourselves With Others In What Seems To

Forgive To Have No Hard Feelings And Maintain Unity That's The Whole Point Of What We're Talking About The Loving Serving Worshipping Church All In Unity Thinking Of Others As Just As Important As Ourselves What I'm Doing Here Is Not Any More Important Than What Mark Is Doing There On The Sound System Or The People Out The Back Leading The Children We're All Just Giving What God Has Given Us To Share With You Now The Last Few Verses 14 To 21 Are A Warning And This Is Where Paul Is Getting Really Quite Angry In A Way Isn't It He's Saying Some Of You Become Arrogant As If I Were Not Coming To You But I Will Come To You Very Soon And If The Lord Is Willing And Then I Will Find Out Not Only How People Are Talking But What Power They Have So He's Thinking Of Coming And Sorting Them Out And In A Way Paul And Timothy Have The Authority He Says That Doesn't He That Even Though You Have Ten Thousand Guardians In Christ You Do Not Have Many Fathers For In Christ Jesus I Became Your Father Through The Gospel He Founded The Church He Has The Authority To Come And Tell Them What They Should Be Doing To Bring Them Back To The Foundation That's Jesus Christ And Not Putting People On Pedestals Now Our Leaders Our Pastors Our Elders Our Deacons They Have A Certain Degree Of Authority That God Has Given Them To Lead Us And So It's Important That We Respect That And Listen To Them We Can Of Course Ask Questions And Discuss Things Important That We Listen To What They're Teaching Because Their Whole Goal Is To Build Us Up To Make Us More Like Christ To Bring Us Closer To Him And To Each Other So There Was A Real Arrogance There In The Corinthian Church The People Who Thought They Were So Much Better And We Really Have To Guard Against!

[60 : 57] That And In Verse 20 It Says So It's Not Really What We Say But How We Live And Allow God's Power To Work Through Us Isn't It And Then The Things That We Say Should Match What God Is Showing Us In The Way That We Live And It Made Me Wonder Is Anyone Coming To Discipline Us Is There Anything That Needs Sorting Out In Our Church Which Is Talking About

Here In Verses 19 To It's Unlikely That The Founder Of This Church Will Come And Sort Us Out Because That Was In 1845 But You Know There Is Someone Who Does Come And Who Brings Discipline And Judgment When Churches Are Going The Wrong Way Who Is It Jesus In

The Book Of Revelation Chapters Two And Three Jesus Actually Writes Letters Well He Doesn't He Kind Of Dictates Letters To The Apostle John Who Is On The Island Of Patmos At That Time And There To Seven Churches In Present Day Turkey And Two Of Them Were Really Glorifying The Lord But Five Of Them Were Going Wrong In Various Ways And In Those Churches Jesus Is Saying I Will Come To You And I Will Remove Your Lamp Stand Something Like That In Other Words My Spirit Will Leave Your Church Now In My Lifetime 70 Plus Years I Have Known Churches Where It Appears That God's Spirit Has Left Churches That Have Gone The Wrong Way That Have Taken On The Wrong Kinds Of Beliefs That Perhaps Put People On Pedestals Or Have Not Been Following The Bible And They Lose That Former Glory

They Had In Fact The Church I Grew Up In Is One Of Them It Is Very Sad It Was A Church Where It Was Completely Full On A Sunday Morning In The 1950s We Even Had A Televised Service I Was Ten Years Old And I Remember It Now I'm Told There's About 25 People In That Church And That Is Sad Isn't It And I Pray That May Never Happen Here Because We All Have A Responsibility To Take On These Warnings Of Paul That We're Serving Him Serving The Lord But Without Boasting And Without Comparing And Then We Know That The Lord Will Be With Us As We Try To Build Our Church As A Loving Serving Worshipping Community Focus Completely On Jesus Christ Because He Is The Only Foundation We Have Let's Pray Heavenly

Father We Thank You So Much For Our Church We Thank You For Each Other We Thank You Lord That You Are Here With Us And We Know That You Long To Build Us Up In Our Faith Built On The Foundation Of Jesus Christ Help Us To Be Good Servants In Your Service All Through Our Lives Whatever!

Lord Prevent Us From Boasting From Getting Too Big For Our Boots And Also From Comparing With Others Help Us Not To Do That But To Show Our Appreciation Of Others To Show Kindness To Show Love And Help Us Then Lord To Build Each Other Up So That We Are Indeed!

[64 : 50] That Loving Serving Worshipping Community That You Long For Us To Be We Ask In Jesus Name Amen Thank you Roger We're Now Going To Sing When I Surbey The Wondrous Cross On Which The Prince Of Glory For each I, my richest king, I count but loss and for contempt on all my pride.

For bid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my Lord.

All heaven, peace, that charming most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet.

Sorrow and love flow fickle down. Did I such love and sorrow feed?

[67 : 29] Or thoughts compose so rich a crown? Were the whole realm of nature mine?

That were an offering part to small. Love so amazing, so divine.

Demands my soul, my life, my hope. Do please sit down.

If anything in the sermon has given you a pause for thought, you'd like some prayer, please do find somebody with a praying hands badge or with a lanyard. We'd be really happy to play pray with you.

We're going to have tea and coffee either in the foyer at the back there or in the welcome space. So please stay on for tea and coffee and join us for a time of fellowship. And our final prayer.

[68 : 48] May the Lord bless you and keep you. May he guard your heart from pride and fill you with the spirit of a true servant. May the grace of Christ strengthen you to walk humbly.

The love of God surround you and sustain you. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit guide you in every step that you take. Amen. Amen.