

## ***The Civil Servant (1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5)***

- I. **Introduction – Sin City Politics**
  - A. Civil Servants in Sin City
  - B. Civil Servants in the Church
  - C. Context Review – divisions in the church
    1. Political parties and the presidential election
  - D. Read the text
  - E. Pray
  - F. Outline of the sermon's 2 points
  - G. Both imperatives (“*Let*”) are grounded in preceding indicatives
  
- II. **1 Corinthians 3:18-23** – *Let no one deceive himself by ignoring the wealth of heritage that God has given to the church.*
  - A. vss. 18-20 – *Let no one deceive himself*
    1. Self-deception and the Christian
    2. The basis of self-deception – thinking oneself wise
      - a. Pr 26:12, Is 5:21, Rom 12:16, Pr 3:7
      - b. True wisdom holds a high view of God and low view of self
      - c. True wisdom is foolish to the world (opposite of the world)
    3. God will reveal the emptiness of man's crafty wisdom, and bring all of his plotting and scheming to naught.
      - a. Job 5:12, Ps 94:11
  - B. vss. 21-23 – The particular kind of wisdom in the church at Corinth
    1. *Do no boast in men*
    2. Their factions caused them to miss out on God's blessing
      - a. These were men who preached the true Gospel
      - b. How boasting in or deriding the names of Gospel ministers robs the church of valuable resources
      - c. Beware of “guilt by association”
      - d. learn to be discerning (in the real sense of the word)
    3. Paul shuts the mouths of factionalists with great theology and doxology “*You are Christ's and Christ is God's*”
      - a. stop trifling over human personalities
      - b. the Trinity is the basis of unity!
  
- III. **1 Corinthians 4:1-5** – *Let us so consider God's ministers, as servants who must give account for his message, to God alone.*
  - A. Pastors and church leaders are stewards of the Gospel message
  - B. The Pastor's master is not the congregation, but God
    1. Even one's conscience is not the final arbiter
    2. Ezekiel's stewardship of the Word – Ez 3:17-21
    3. Paul's stewardship of the Word in Ephesus – Acts 20:17-29
  - C. A future judgment relieves us of requiring vengeance now
  - D. A future judgment guards us against pride