

Paul's Warning To The Hyper Spiritual

by Dean Taylor

This sermon delves into the dangers of hyper-spirituality and the importance of genuine discipleship and humility in radical Christianity. Paul warns against pride and superficial spirituality, urging the church to imitate him as a father in the faith. The sermon emphasizes the need for true authority in the church and the manifestation of God's power in transformed lives, rather than mere words.

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Description

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Transcript

Today, I'm going to continue along 1 Corinthians, and I'm going to get to chapter 4 today. And remember, the name of this series is Through the Eyes of Radical Christianity. That's the frame that I'm making for this whole thing.

And I'm doing that on purpose that a lot of times we can just preach to others and to different audiences in different ways, but I'm trying to look at my life of my journey of being kind of in radical Christianity, and these concerns come out of that. So let's start with a word of prayer, and then we'll come to chapter 4. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for the Word of God, and we ask for your power to be revealed and to let loose from the power of your Word. You said that you would not let your Word just be brought out and that it would accomplish the reason why you sent it.

So God, I don't know who is here or if it's just me, but Lord, I pray that the benefit of hearing this Word preached, at least that your Word, parts of it, oh God, would fulfill its purpose. So I pray that I can be in walking in harmony with the Holy Spirit. Be here, we pray, Lord.

It's in Jesus' name, amen. So today I kind of skipped a little bit of the end of chapter 3 because he's just continually, Paul has been continually going down this whole route of stop being so proud. Stop thinking you're something that you're not and stop dividing amongst yourself and all that.

And Paul has been hitting this for three chapters, and it kind of ends here in chapter 4. And the way I read it is he's finally getting to a little bit of the personal stuff that's going on there in Corinth and what he's dealing with. You know, it's interesting. I have said this before, but the older I get, the different ways that I read Paul, and I read him a little more defending himself, a little more irritated.

And I don't even know if that's right, but at least I see the passion in him. And I see it in this chapter in particular, one of the ones that really seems to come out. Because what he's going to do today is really jump on the radical, hyper-spiritual.

So I'd like to name this message in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, Paul's warning to the hyper-spiritual. And if there's anything that I've had to deal with, even in my own experiences and experiences of radical Christianity, it's dealing with the problem of hyper-spirituality. The tendency that I've found is that we tend to read these scriptures with always you in the victory seat, and the rebuke is somewhere else.

And so it's healthy, like when you read different parables. Who are you in the parable? You know, like with the prodigal story. Are you the older brother? Are you the prodigal? Are you Jesus? Which one are you? And it's good to flip those around different ways.

And I think this passage is really healthy to do that with. And we just tend to always see ourselves as the hero of the story. It reminds me, when I was in high school, we had this, I forgot his name, but I was trying to think of it this morning.

We had this student, one of the guys in school, and we did the class play, which I think was Oklahoma. Every high school constantly does Oklahoma, you know. And I remember this guy, he did a real good job with that, and he wanted to go on and be an actor.

And I remember he got this role as an extra there in Dallas in RoboCop. And probably none of you have ever heard of RoboCop, but RoboCop was a movie out in the 80s. You know, that was like this, I don't know, RoboCop that would go around doing things.

I don't know, crazy. Anyway, he had this role that was literally maybe two and a half to three seconds where RoboCop comes out of a door. And he's there, and he goes like, and that's it.

And that's it, the whole thing. He's like an extra in the movie. And he was running to us and telling us, man, you've got to see this movie.

It's about me. I got this role. It's awesome.

And the way he was talking about it was like, you would think that this guy was RoboCop himself. He was just some guy in the extra, you know. So Paul continually through these three chapters, and I think really gets it into here.

We got to know ourselves and get the delusion out of you. If we're going to ever be used of God, I've said it before. God cannot change the person that we're pretending to be.

God cannot change the person we're pretending to be. You have to know yourself. That phrase, know thyself, it was a big Greek phrase.

Matter of fact, if you look at Corinth, I showed you on the map before. If you look at Corinth, right across the water from Corinth would have been Delphi. And Delphi was a really important place for ancient

Greece.

As a matter of fact, there was an old Greek myth that Christians wouldn't have accepted, but the common people would have thought, that Zeus let out two eagles. And these eagles were to go around the whole earth and come to find the very navel of the world. And that navel was Delphi.

And so it was right across the bay from, or the gulf there from Corinth. And across one of the main things there was platted the words, know thyself. And you hear this picking up, several of the early Christians speak of this and this concept.

And it's good. And so here Paul is like through this passage in chapter 4, going between, who do you think you are? And know yourself. And who do you think you are? It seems to be kind of like what comes out of that.

And I think it's healthy for us to flip the roles and to put ourself into the smarty pants, into the hyper-spiritual, and let that rebuke sting. Again, I think of the groups that I've been with in my life since my conversion, and they've all been radical renewal groups. And I praise the Lord for that.

From 10 years with David Brissot, and there was the charity churches, the radical Hutterites that are here today, thank you very much. And all of those were renewal groups. They weren't just the status quo regular Mennonites, regular Hutterites, regular, but they were always these radical groups.

And here today, we're with this radical group. And I love that. It's me.

It's my people. I like it. But there's certain things that we can do that can be harmful, but I think it's good for us.

And I've been in this for 30 years, so please allow me just to speak on some of these things. So let's get to it. And there's an interesting thing that comes out right at the beginning.

So chapter 4, verse 1, 1 Corinthians. So he goes on, you know, don't think more of yourself than you should. And he goes through that for three chapters almost, back and forth with it.

Verse 1, It was interesting when I went to look at to see the way some of the early Christians just interpret these things. I frequently do that. It's interesting.

Chrysostom and some of the others made a point that Paul is saying both a servant and a steward of the mysteries. And I just kind of read past that. And so I went back to it.

Actually, here I've got the NIV version. I don't usually quote the NIV, but it's interesting the way that it words it. 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 1. And so Chrysostom seems to make this point that there is this servant thing that he's doing, but then that these apostles had these rich mysteries of God and they wanted to be good stewards of this.

And so Paul's sort of defending that, that I've really got something for you and you're missing it because of your hyper spirituality, which we're going to be kind of getting to here. And you should really treasure what I have because this isn't from me, this is from Jesus. And there's a passage in 1 Timothy 3.9 that has to do with the deacons that I wonder could be related.

1 Timothy 3.9, speaking of one of the qualifications for the deacons, it says, holding the mysteries of the faith with a pure conscience. Again, an NIV that must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with the clear conscience. So the concept of holding the mysteries of the faith.

What does that mean? Does that mean in a sacramental sense? Does that mean in deep, rich things of God's sins? But it's one of the qualifications of a deacon that they're able to handle the deep mysteries of God with a clear conscience. And Paul says that he and he's defending himself against these hyper spiritualists and says, I'm a steward, I'm being a steward of these deep mysteries that I have. And he's bringing that.

And I think it's, I think it's significant. There's something in that that he's for their own good saying, man, you're missing this by all your talk and all your fluff. Verse three.

And this is where he gets, I don't know, a little raw in my thought. You read Paul and he's a little, I don't know, it's just like this is where I think he's finally getting it. And he's like speaking to a certain group.

I could imagine that he has in mind or maybe, you know, in one of these factions that he's been rebuking. And in verse three, he says, but with me, it's a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself for I know of nothing against myself.

Yet I am not justified by this. But he who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the heart.

Then each one's praise will come from God. And again, a different version, put it this way. And he's the way he talks about his conscience being clear in this in verse two from this different version.

Now, it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. This is again, he's talking about this deposit that he has. I care very, very little if I am judged by you or any human court.

Indeed, I do not even judge myself. Then he says, my conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

And so, again, what I'm seeing is that Paul is about to start unpacking and unloading the whole rest of the book of Corinthians. He's got some gems, some deep wisdom, some rebuke, some serious rebuke to this church. That's just thinking that they're hyper spiritual and free and can do everything they want.

And he says, you're messing this up. And apparently that group has heard about Paul's concerns and there's some something going on against him. And he seems to be coming and letting them know this is this is not good.

Therefore, judge nothing before the appointed time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart.

At that time, each will receive their praise from God. And I just love this, this freedom of conscience that he's walking confidently in his in his faith. There's a there's an early there's a quote that I love from the early church.

It's by a dispute that was going on between Cyprian and they're out the year 250 and a bishop in Rome called Stephen over the the whether or not you should rebaptize heretics or not. And they're going back

and forth and they're fighting and everything. And then Cyprian ends the discussion and says this.

You have your letters and I have mine on Judgment Day. Both shall be read. I'm like, oh, you know, the the confidence of walking in the fear of God in your ministry and being a good steward of what God has given you is the kind of thing that I see in a statement like that from Cyprian, but even more so from the apostle Paul.

He's pouring out to these people. He's got some hard things to say. He wants to speak this to them.

And there's something there that's preventing it. And he's wanting that to come out. And he wants to hear this next.

So, verse six. Now, he's talking about his character and why he maybe feels a little disrespected by them. They don't understand his humility.

Verse six. Now, these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sake, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. So the stuff before this in chapter three and the end of chapter three and talking about him being a servant and not grandiose and all that, he says, I want you to get that this is the right kind of attitude.

And what I'm hearing from you people is not right. It's just not good. And he says, verse seven, for who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now, if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? You know, have you ever been to a different culture or could be like even a different church, but particularly like a different political thing in a country or something? And there's someone that, you know, that's there that's supposed to be like really, really important, you know, and you're like, I don't even know who that is.

I mean, you know, and sometimes, you know, some groups and, you know, this is pastor so-and-so. And you're like, and you're like, he's got thousands of followers and all this, like who? Or he wrote this book and all this type of a thing. And it's funny how we do this in our world.

And I'll give you a warning to radicals. And it's this. There's two ways to rule the world.

There's two ways to rule the world. One is to be like, let's say, Alexander the Great or Napoleon or these types of a thing and be conqueror and take over the world with might and power and subdue the earth. That's one way.

And in that wake is tyranny and destruction and all those sorts of things. The other is to create a world so small that you remove all the competition. And what I have found in my life is that the wake of pain and suffering is at least in that local area can be just as painful, can be just as just as heinous.

And so in this concept, he's like, who do you think you are? Who made you better than the other? I mean, who are you is the kind of attitude that I see Paul rebuking the church of Corinth there. It's it's it's I've seen like African kings sometimes. And, you know, in their world, there's like thousands of people that are with them.

And and you're looking at them in all the pomp and the different things of the tribal, the tribal practices and stuff. And you're like, wow, that would be challenging for me to truly understand the magnitude of who

these are, because to me, it's totally out of my culture. There's some ethnocentric problems there with me.

But, you know what I mean? It's just like we do this in our worlds is actually think there's something that's so important to it all. And we don't realize who made you this way. We don't.

I remember years ago when Jimmy Carter was president, probably a little before most of your time. OK. And Jimmy Carter was president and his brother got famous for making a certain product.

Anybody know what his brother got famous for? What is it? Yeah, beer. Exactly. Billy Beer.

It was Jimmy Carter's brother. Billy was famous for making beer and he really rode the ticket of Jimmy Carter and making his beer and Billy Beer. Billy was on an interview one time and the interviewer asked him, so, Billy, do you think that you know that your beer is maybe popular because your brother is the president? And he's like, are you kidding me? My beer is great because it's the greatest beer in the world, not because my brother is Jimmy Carter.

And it's just so funny how we get a big head so easy in our little worlds and not even realizing sometimes when you do fall into some sort of an advantage or something that that goes to our heads so easily. Paul's rebuking that and getting to it. You know, in Revelation 317, you think of the way the Laodiceans, the whole church was feeling overly confident in this kind of a thing.

And Revelation 317 says, you know, he's rebuking them. You're you're losing it out because he says, because you say I am rich, have become wealthy and have need of nothing. But do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

And Jesus is really rebuking there in Revelation. This is this attitude and you don't get it. And I think Paul is trying.

I've got some stuff I need you to hear and you're not getting it. I need you to get it. All right.

So then he gets to verse eight. And I think now we get really to the crux of the matter. He wants to speak specifically to this hyper spiritual group.

And wow, does this one really, I think, is an excellent point for for us in the radical worlds, wherever they are, to be that way. There's also many of you also from who are also from International Church of Christ background. Yeah.

Another radical group. So, you know, you're correcting the regular ones. Some other groups here, some charity people or something like that.

There's a lot of different radicals. I think there's other ones, things. And there's a common thing that I think we should hear about that.

Now, there's a balance in all this, just like David was giving us. There's a balance in all this. We should contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

And there should be a zeal and a passion with us. But there should be also a humility. And this is the rebuke for us when we're thinking too big of ourself.

So here it is. Verse eight. This is where I think he really lets loose.

Verse eight. He goes. So, you know, he's right after the saying.

Now, if you did not if you did indeed receive it, who do you why do you boast as if you had not received it? And he goes on. Verse eight. You are already full.

You are already rich. You have reigned as kings without us. And indeed, I could wish you did reign that we also might reign with you.

For I think that God has displayed us the apostles last as men condemned to death. For we have been made a spectacle to the world, but to angel, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake.

But you, you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are distinguished, but we are dishonored.

Wow. I ponder this. What is it about this hyper spirituality that Paul is so concerned with? And he's hearing this vocabulary and he's hearing this language.

He goes, you know, I only wish it was really true. I really wish you were this spiritual. I really wish that you truly did the things that you are claiming you do.

Then we'd reign with you. But you're not. Your church is a mess.

You're a mess. And you need to listen to what I have to say to you. And here's something I've noticed that we tend to do in radical Christianity.

We judge ourselves by what we dream we want to be. We judge others by the works of who they are. Let me say that again.

So we judge ourselves like I want to fast 20 days this month. I want to read my Bible three hours a day. I want to have this family devotion that lasts these hours and all those other guys.

That's totally unspiritual, totally ridiculous. But this is what I want to do. And somehow as radicals, we live in this life of aspiration already.

And yet judge all the rest of people like, who are you? And I think this is kind of the way Paul is getting this. Is that these people are saying, I'm already rich. I'm already reigned in the end of Corinthians.

I've already resurrected. And here he's saying, it's just not true. Who do you think you are? Why are you acting like this? And this kind of a coming against the structure that's there, coming against the authority, coming against his leadership because they're hyper spiritual, happens over and over and over, century after century.

It happens over and over again. On January 21st, 1793, King Louis XIV of France was taken out to the guillotine. And as he addressed the crowd, he was trying to say something in his defense of the French people.

And the drums were drumming so much that it was drowning out his voice. But then quickly, off with his head, and the guillotine took his head off. But there's something that happened there at that moment, according to the reports of the audience, that just shocked all of France, particularly the people that were there.

A few of the people that were in the audience could not handle that the king was dead and killed themselves. Some jumped into the river and drowned themselves because of the overwhelming idea that the king has been killed. From there, we start this whole radical revolution that was happening by the French and people like Rose Pierre, and was fighting from one head after another until eventually it happened to his head.

The radical types of vocabulary and language and destruction of all that was there in France was becoming more and more popular. The same thing happened about a century before that when Charles I was also killed there, and when Oliver Cromwell, and just the feeling that when he killed the king, what that did to just the feeling of the people and all those sorts of things. So where am I bringing all this particular thing in this radical to? There's something in this rebuke of this radical spiritual language, the breaking down of all norms, the not listening to what the Apostle Paul has to say, that Paul is saying, be careful and listen.

One of the books that our students read at Sattler that Stephen and Christian got me interested in, because it wasn't in my class, Hans Lehmann, I think, was the one that had them read this. It was Reflections of the Revolution in France by Edmund Burke. You all read all that, right? Yeah.

Marcus didn't like it. Here's the thing. You've got to give him a bone for this, Marcus.

How do you argue the cause for the conservative voice? How do you ever say to the radicals, should you be a little careful? Should you tone it down a little bit? I mean, it's hard to make that argument. I mean, because it's so easy just to bash this and bash that and say this hyper thing and that hyper thing. And in the midst of that, sometimes when the smoke clears, we realize, wow, what happened? And I've been in these 30 years in some pretty amazing, incredible radical movements of God, and I don't regret it.

I'd do it again, I think. I'd do it again. And as I went through those things, I love the experiences that I've had, but I think, wow, I would have said some things a little more cautiously.

So there's some quotes that I took from that book, if you don't mind. It's totally a rebuke. So it's Edmund Burke now is in England.

He's looking, and he heard that now when the queen was killed, and he starts writing this gigantic letter that's now ended up to this book, and there's some impressive quotes. As I think about hyper spirituality and these new radical movements that are happening here and there, and just reflect upon it with me, if you would. Now, he didn't say that we shouldn't change things.

He does say nothing turns out to be so oppressive. Oh, wait, no, excuse me. He says a state without the means of some change is without the means of its own conservation.

We must be able to change. If anyone's trying to make the argument, don't change anything. Don't do that.

Don't do that. You're going to end up dead. You can't do that.

A movement, a group, a church must be able to have honest reflection and to have change. But then he also says things like nothing turns out to be so oppressive and unjust as a feeble government. And he's talking about, he's looking at what's happening with these radicals, these radicals in France, and he says, you're literary men and you're politicians, and so do the whole clan of the enlightened among us, essentially differ in these points, all the points of politics.

They have no respect for the wisdom of others, but they paid off by a very full measure of confidence in their own. With them, it is sufficient motive to destroy an old scheme of things because it is an old one. As to the new, they are in a sort of fear with regard to the duration of a building ran up in haste because duration is no object to those who think little or nothing has been done before their time and who place all their hopes in discovery.

He says to give freedom is still so much more easy. It is not necessary to guide. It only is required to let go of the reins, but to form a free government, that is to tempter together, those opposite elements of liberty and restraint in one work requires much thought, deep reflection, saying goes, just powerful and combining minds.

It goes just powerful and combining mind. This is kind of maybe the balance that David was talking about here earlier of having that freedom, but yet being a people that are governed, that's the hard thing. So how do we do this? What are we going to think of the French Revolution as he's watching it? He said, I should therefore suspend my congratulations on the new liberty of France until I was informed how it had been combined with government, with public force, with the discipline and obedience of armies, with the collection of an effective and well-distributed revenue, with morality of religion and with solidarity of property, with peace and order, with civil and social manners.

All these in their way are good things too, and without them, liberty is not a benefit whilst it lasts and is not likely to continue long. The effect of liberty to individuals is that they may do what they please. We ought to see what it will please them to do.

Wait. The effect of liberty to individuals is that they may do what they please. So we ought to see what it will please them to do before we risk congratulations, which may be soon turned into complaints.

In my life, I've seen many people leave old order groups, old order Amish, old order Hutterites, old order Mennonites, different groups, and many of them come because they feel that they have been freed from the constraints of that religious system. And I get it. I totally understand it.

But it's not until you see the course of their life and what things they're choosing in that new freedom that it really begins to see the heart of it. And this is what he's saying about France. We're seeing this.

And so, back to verse 8. You, these spiritual ones there in Corinth. Oh, you're already full. Yeah, you've got everything you need.

You're already rich. You've reigned as kings without us. And indeed, I could wish you did reign that we also might reign with you.

Do you get what I'm saying? Our words, our thoughts of ourself, they can be so deluded. So that was a critique of civil government. Let me take you to another document, if you could bear my long quotes.

There's another document, interesting, written by Tertullian, written around the year 200, and it's called The Prescription Against the Heretics. In other words, it's a prescription that you give. Think of it as medicine that you give the heretics to cure them.

And again, think of my classmate, the RoboCop guy, flipping who's the heretic and who's the guy on the good side, as Tertullian reads here. Listen to some of his words. He's describing a heretic church.

I must not admit on account of the conduct also of the heretics, how frivolous it is, how worldly, how merely human, without seriousness, without authority, without discipline, as suits their creed. To begin with, it's doubtful who's a catechumen and who's a believer. They all have access alike.

They hear alike. They pray alike. Even heathens, if any should happen to come along them.

And that which is holy they cast out to the dogs. And their pearls, although to be sure they're not real ones, they will fling to the swine. Simplicity they will have to consist in the overthrow of discipline, attention to what, in our part, they call brotherly.

Peace also they huddle up anyhow with all comers. For it matters not to them, however different, be their treatment of subjects, watch this now, it doesn't matter to them whatever their subject, provided only they conspire together to storm the citadel of the one only truth. Just being radical seems to be all that's good enough.

All are puffed up. All will offer you knowledge. Their catechumens are perfect before they're full taught.

They're very women of these heretics, how wanton they are. For they're bold enough to teach, to dispute, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures, and even to baptize. Their ordinations are carelessly administered, carpiceros, changeable.

At one time they put novices in office, at another time men who are bound to some secular employment. At another person they have apostatized from us to bind them by vain glory since they cannot buy the truth. Listen to this quote.

Nowhere is promotion easier than in the camp of rebels. Oh, you think of all the passion people have for ministry. Men will do a lot in thinking they're going to be in some sort of position of authority, and maybe all, it's a man thing.

I don't know, do women have this problem? I don't know. Sure it's a man thing. Nowhere is promotion easier than in the camp of rebels where the mere fact of being there is a foremost service.

And so it comes to pass that today one's their bishop, tomorrow another. Today he's a deacon, tomorrow he's a reader, today he's a presbyter, tomorrow he's a layman. For even the layman do they impose the functions of the priesthood.

And so I just find this interesting, this kind of a hyper-spirituality that he's rebuking to. One more point that he goes to. I've given that quote before, but let me give you where he goes on because it's interesting in context with our writing today of Corinthians.

He goes on. But what shall I say concerning the ministry of the word? Since they make it their business not to convert the heathen, but to subvert our people. This is rather the glory which they catch at, to compass the fall of those who stand, not the raising of those who are down.

Accordingly, since the very work which they purpose to themselves come not from the building of their own society, but from the demolition of the truth. They undermine our edifices that they may erect their own. The consequence is that they more easily accomplish the ruin of standing houses than the erection of fallen ruins.

It is only when they have such objects in view that they show themselves humble and bland and respectful. Otherwise, they know no respect even for their own leaders. I am greatly in error if they do not among themselves swerve from their own regulations for as much as every man, just as it suits his own temper, modifies the traditions he has received after some fashion as the man who handed them down did when he molded them according to his own.

I find this challenge really scary. In all the radical groups I've been with, I have found it's a lot easier to find really solid Christians who are wrong on some doctrinal points and get them and build your churches on that instead of putting our energy into winning the loss that are around us. I remember one time back when I was at charity and it was at our heyday when things were really awesome.

I mean, what we saw with the young people, my own young people and experience that it's genuine and I don't in any way want to say that it wasn't. It was genuine. One time I was thinking and I pondered.

This was our heyday. We had Bible schools of 600. How many people are completely from the world? Not radical Baptists or Mennonites or Amish or Hutterites or whatever, but right off the world with all our efforts.

We were going street preaching and all those things and I counted five. Five. And I thought, you know, five is good.

And now as I think of even those five, maybe one that are still lasting. It's so much easier. But the work I think that what Christ has for us is to win the loss and to do those things.

That's why I get really excited when I see like the Chinese people that are reached at the bridge and the atheists that are brought in and the different ones like that. I get really excited about that. And I rejoice in that.

I rejoice when I see the refugee population and all those sorts of a thing. Who does that sound like? And as we go through that. So verse eight, you're already full.

You're already rich. You've already reigned as king without us. And indeed, I could wish that you reign.

There's a tendency when we bump into the hyper spiritual for us to cower down and to not stand strong. And I should not say the hype when we run into the superficial spiritual. Here's an example.

In 1940, there was a whole group of Mennonites that had gone to Tanganyika, Africa, to preach the gospel there and wanted to get involved in missions. And they were there. And in six years, six years of solid work there in Tanganyika, they had 10 churches and 100 baptized members.

1946, you know, and so that's pretty good. But they ran into a group of people. They ran into not just a group of people, but a massive wave of people called the East African Revivals.

And this was thousands and thousands and thousands of people that were being converted. And there was lots of this movement. There was lots of different manifestations of the gifts.

And there was different things. And it was sweeping East Africa, one of the largest revivals in history. And these guys from Lancaster County were over there going, Oh, we've always been doing it completely wrong.

These guys have the right doctrine. These guys are much more spiritual. And then I took a time where I read the letters, where the missionaries were speaking back to Lancaster County, and you're reading the bishops speaking back to them.

And both of them, I'm like, huh. It's like, of course, communication would have been hard in these times. But the stuff said back and forth just broke my heart.

And all of it was set aflame by sort of this hyper-spiritual language. They were like, wow, yeah. Who are we with these just measly 10 churches and 100 baptized members? These guys are just like wildfire.

But you know what happened? You can trace it directly. They began to say, okay, we're wrong for just this strong discipleship. We're wrong.

And it's literally they wrote back and said, We don't want to be their Holy Spirit. These things were literally said. And so like those things of the teachings of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount and all those things, we're not going to worry about that.

We're going to teach them the gospel, which to them, with this now, with this new revival, was this atonement message or this belief in Jesus and his suffering and that kind of thing. And that was it. The Holy Spirit would take from that.

But do you know what happened next? Right after this, Africa starts to get into different civil wars and fights and different things amongst themselves. And many of these same people that were so hyper spiritual went headlong into these different battles. As a matter of fact, during after that, the fallout of the 50s, the 60s, this building of this of this Christian thing that was happening.

And finally, Uganda and Rwanda and all these places proclaim this is a Christian nation. Rwanda in the early 1970s. This is a Christian nation.

Do you know what happened in 1998 in Rwanda? Amongst the Christians, not the ignorant, you know, we try to make some ignorant thought of some bizarre people. But amongst the Christians in the church conducted by the ministers was mass murders of 800,000 fights between the two tribes. And I look at that hyper spirituality, and I can't completely blame it on the East Africa revival.

I actually think the East Africa revival, probably God was waking it. I often when I read revival, see it as God bringing in something. But out of that is to be careful discipleship, following the words of Jesus, putting the teachings of Christ into place and walking through that.

And it's just not as exciting. It's just not as glamorous. It's just not all the sparks and everything.

As many times as these revivals are. And that's just what I see with Paul. Oh, you're you're so you're already full.

You're already rich. You've already reigned as king without indeed that you were. Even to this day, when I'm now dealing with the refugee crisis, and it's my heart, it's my burden.

I just when I saw that with my own eyes, the Lord just put a burden in my heart for the refugees and the displaced people, which now there's 82 million of them on this earth, that they need these godly and disciplined churches and to walk in that. But it's still there's so many just fields of hyper things and different things said, instead of just the careful, godly work of the church, the brotherhood and working in those

ways. So I ponder that you're already full, you're already rich, you've already reigned as king without us.

And indeed, I could wish that you did reign, that we might reign with you. There's two more points here. Let me give you an example.

I might have given this quote before, but it applies to this and the kind of what I'm thinking. There's a book that I read years ago by Alan Patton. It's called *The Cry Beloved Country*.

It's about South Africa apartheid. In South Africa apartheid, there was a the blacks against the whites. And the whites had suppressed the blacks and come over there and didn't let them work and put enslaved them and terrible things that were happening.

And the apartheid was holding them in sort of a segregated way. When that was starting to change, you know, during my generations of the 80s and that 90 things and Nelson Mandela and all that. Well, during that time, you know, the ministers that the gospel that kind of came into that many of those people, even in that suppression were ministers that were were converted and and walked, worked within that.

And there's this book and it's the book is a novel, but it's based upon what life was like when those tribes that had become Christian in the time of apartheid. And all the what was happening to their young people and these two ministers, one of the young men killed a white woman, I think, or something, and he went to jail. And these two these two black ministers are just grieving on the state of their church.

And they say this statement in the book. And to me, it's it's just staggering. And I ponder the hyper Christianity, the non careful Christianity versus a careful discipling church community ponder their complaint.

He says this one minister talking to the other, he said, my friend, I'm a Christian. It's not in my heart to hate the white man. It was a white man who brought my father out of darkness.

But you will pardon me if I talk frankly to you. The tragedy is not that things are broken. The tragedy is that they are not mended again.

The white man has broken the tribe. Listen, radicals, listen, the white man has broken the tribe. And it is my belief.

And again, I ask your pardon that it cannot be mended again. But the house that is broken, these are the tragic thing. This is why children break the law and old white people are robbed and beaten.

He wipes his hand across his brow and says it suited the white man to break the tribe. He continued gravely. And now listen.

But it has not suited him to build something in the place of what is broken. I have pondered this for many hours. I must speak it for it is the truth for me.

They're not also there are some white men who give their lives to build up what is broken, but there's not enough. He said they are afraid. That is a truth.

It is fear that rules this land. And so this idea of a shallow, hyper spirituality that speaks without the fullness of Christ. We're commanded in Matthew at the end of the Great Commission that to teach the all things of Christ and to make disciples.

And this hyper language I see that Paul is dealing with. And it's so easy for us to get caught up in a hyper spirituality without this stuff of what follows. And then coming to the end of it now.

Paul then gives himself as a living example. Verse 11. To the present hour we both, you're this, you're right and you do this.

To the present hour we both hunger and thirst. And we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless. And we labor working with our own hands.

Being reviled, we bless. Being persecuted, we endured. Being defamed, we entreat.

We have been made the filth of the world. The offscoring of the things until now. This is the example.

I saw a video once of a minister. And they literally had him on a throne. They had him on a throne.

They were trying to bless him, you know. Bless the pastor. And they had him on a throne.

They were marching him around and all this. And doing all this. And he was taking it, you know.

This is the example of ministry that we see here Paul is giving. I'm willing to sacrifice. I'm willing to do anything it takes.

Your attitudes of this way that you're doing it is not right. And he goes on to say this next statement. It's a strong one for us.

Particularly in the radical world. I do not write these things to shame you. But as my beloved children, I warn you.

For though you might have 10,000 instructors in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Boy, if there's a weakness in the radical world, we have so many instructors. So many prophets.

So many correction of doctrine and this and that. But so few fathers. As I think of my 30 years in the radical world, and I'm saying this, and I can agree with Paul and hear this, because I'm not saying this to shame you.

But as my beloved brethren, I'm warning you. And I think that if we see Judgment Day, as we think of some of the wake that follows some of our radical expressions. Think of us.

There's many radical groups represented here. From radical hetero rights, radical charity, Mennonites at the Church of Christ. You know, the different ones that are here.

Sometimes in that journey, I'm like, Ooh, I really hope that this person that we're taking in, that we truly be a father to them. I really hope that we follow through. I really hope that he will or she will have a father that will truly care.

I do not say these things to shame you. But as my beloved children, I warn you. For though you might have 10,000 instructors in Christ.

This is important that he's already saying that. You don't have many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel.

We're really bringing out evangelism here and thank the Lord we are. But please, I rebuke myself so often with are you keeping up with those people? I see in Paul that when he brings someone to Christ, he's like connected. It's like the way I see John when he got out of the island of Patmos.

And he heard that one of the people that he had baptized was, I think I already shared this. You know that he was gone back into robbery. He went and sought that person and says and he got re-baptized in his tears of repentance.

This passion, Paul's saying, I am your father. I'm the one that brought the gospel to Corinth. And so I'm going to die being a father to you.

That's the kind of passion we need. Therefore, I urge you people there in Corinth, imitate me. Imitate me.

For this reason, I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who reminds you of my ways in Christ. I teach everywhere in the church. And then the last three verses, four verses.

I want you to notice something here also is it's called church authority. Just recently, I was at a conference and I loved it. And I was at the conference and it really excited me because it was a new generation.

And I was really excited of seeing a bunch of people that I would have preached with their fathers. Now the next generation coming up. And it really made me feel good.

But one of the things that worried me is when I heard some of the speculation, some of the same, you know, kind of wounds of things have gone before and how we're going to accomplish this, this, this, this feat of being a church in the future. I couldn't think of some of that Edmund Burke type of stuff. Where is the authority? Is it, I mean, do you have a place where you can set that? Is it, is it going to be the brotherhood? Is it going to be your minister? Do you believe in having a pastor who can speak into your life? And David touched on this too, of having someone that is there a place that can have some authority? Because I'm going to tell you something.

If there's not, and you find yourself in some radical expression, and it's just some sort of complete democracy and there's no sense of authority, there's no sense of things, you better run as fast as you can. Therefore, I urge you imitate me, Paul says. For this reason, I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son of the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, not Paul's way by himself, in Christ.

I teach everywhere in the church. Scripture teaches us this authority, Hebrews 13, 17. Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourself.

For they watch for your souls, and they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you. Giving all the different things on how you run a church, and it's the end of the day. At the very least, we should be clearly seeing that the Bible gives us a clarity.

There should be some authority and leadership, not unchecked authority. I'm never saying that. But it's real, and he is going to give an account for our souls.

And there's something in that. Alright, last four verses. Now, some of you, some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.

You're walking around, you're saying this about Paul, and this and that. Do you realize I'm coming? And talk about church authority, it's interesting the way Paul talks here. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills.

And I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. Show me. Enough of the talk.

Enough of the hyper-spirituality. Let me see the power of God. Let me see the wonder workings of God.

Let me see lives that are changed. Let me see this. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love, and a spirit of gentleness? And I think that he probably came in a spirit of gentleness. So, I look at this passage, and now we're finally from this. He's for three chapters gone on and on and on.

Now four, kind of like hitting the factions and the things and the pride and all that. Now we're going to start to get into some of his practical rebukes. He says he's got these great mysteries that he wants to give a cross.

So, as I ponder radical Christianity, I think of this, and I try to flip the audience of being the guy that he's talking to. I'm sorry, Brother Paul. And thinking of my life, I think it's healthy for us to allow this scripture to speak to the radical churches.

All right, let's pray, and I guess I'll give it to you, Christian. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for the Word of God. And I ask your forgiveness, Lord, for so many times that I've had this pride and this high thought of myself.

I've thought beyond my understanding. I've thought too much spiritual language, but God, I want to be real. I want to stand in power.

I want to stand by the true Holy Spirit within me. So, God, I thank you for this Word, and I pray that you would empower us to live it according to your way. In Jesus' name, amen.

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