Devotion #291

**On the Bottom of the Pile**

**1 Corinthians 4:13 (NASB)** *“We have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now*.”

That verse from the Apostle Paul doesn’t sound anything like what people normally think of themselves, unless they are looking to get some kind of special attention. There are many people who look down on themselves and promote themselves as worthless or valueless just so they can get the desired attention they deeply long for. But that was not the emphasis the Apostle was making.

The Corinthian church had grow arrogant. Now that they had heard the Gospel and turned from their former ways of life, that were anything but godly. They saw themselves in a totally different light – not positive. Their spiritual arrogance became nauseating as they promoted themselves as better than others in society. So Paul calls them out on it. Basically saying that God’s people should never look at themselves as better than anyone. In fact, they should see themselves as the leftover food scum that is scraped off into the disposal to be flushed down the drain.

You might think that’s terrible - why would anyone think of themselves that way? Or how could anyone not see themselves as priceless treasures of God who He rescued and set upon the solid rock of Christ? That is all certainly true. Even though we did nothing to gain the grace and mercy of God, our sinfulness still looks to be on the top of the pile. We so struggle with wanting to be on top that,even though Christ did everything to save us, we often act as if we deserve it. It’s not even intentional. We simply don’t like to think of ourselves as nothing worthy of being rescued. I am speaking of how our sinfulness speaks in our hearts.

So we must fight against that tendency. We can do so by thinking of how Paul described himself. In the few verses before our verse for today, Paul said, **1 Corinthians 4:11-13 (NASB)**  *“To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate.”*

What Paul wanted the church to know is there is never a reason to think of one’s self as better than anyone. Even when we must discipline or correct a brother or sister, we are to do so always with an attitude of humility and considering the other person better than ourselves. (Philippians 2:1-11) Arrogance has no place in the family of God. There should never be a time when someone comes into our midst and doesn’t immediately sense the humility and unworthiness that comes from the awareness that God has done it all to save us. Never should there be a time when someone could have enough evidence to judge us as arrogant or more spiritual than another.

You might be thinking why you should live as a doormat or such that people trample on you. The Lord is not talking about being depressed and down on yourself. He is saying that we need to live in such a way where Jesus is seen in us from the moment others come into contact with us, and that all we accomplish in this life is as a result of His work and power and grace in us. (2 Corinthians 2:15-17) He gives us many abilities and strengths, but we are to always point to Him as the source of all that is good and positive in us. That’s what Paul was saying. There is nothing naturally good in any of us, only Christ, so, for that reason, Paul could say, we are the scum of the world.

To live with this awareness is revolutionary. It changes our whole approach to life and honors God for who He is and what He has done. So, in your trying moments during your week, remember it is only in Christ that we have any value. So as we deal with people and their idiosyncrasies, let us look to our hearts and remember that without Jesus and the Holy Spirit in us, we are nothing. Isaiah said it like this, **Isaiah 64:6 (NASB)** *“For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment*.” In Christ, however, we are clothed in righteousness. (Isaiah 61:10)