

SOHL
WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS



"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"

Taking up your cross

July 15, 2019

1 CORINTHIANS 4:10-13 NKJV - (10) We are fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored! **(11)** To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. **(12)** And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; **(13)** being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the off scouring of all things until now.

Paul contrasts the life of the apostles with the life of the Christians at Corinth. The Christians at Corinth thought that they were wise. Paul was 'foolish' because he believed the simple truth of the gospel. The Christians at Corinth believed that they were powerful. They did not like the way that Paul *preached. He did not use clever words. So they decided that Paul was 'weak'. They were very proud about themselves. They imagined that people respected them. The Christians at Corinth did not give honor to Christ. So they did not give honor to the apostles.

Paul describes the difficulties that real apostles had to suffer. He had often been hungry and wanted a drink. His clothes were poor. He had often had nowhere to sleep at night as he travelled from one place to another place. He had worked hard with his own hands. He had earned money so that he could live. We know that he was a skilled worker with leather. He made tents and other goods (**Acts 18:3; 20:33-34**). Paul shows in **1 Corinthians 9:14-18** that the Christians at Corinth did not agree with his decision to do this. So he says, 'We work hard with our own hands', in this list of difficulties. He therefore emphasizes that he was a disciple of Christ. Christ had also suffered so that he could serve other people. The Greek word for 'hit' describes the way that a master might hit his slave. Paul took the position of a slave to please Christ his master.

Paul then replies to those who had behaved badly towards him. Paul knew what Jesus taught. And he knew what Jesus did (**Luke 6:28; 23:34**). So, when people insulted him, he prayed that they would be happy. He forgave them. Paul was like Jesus. During his *trial and crucifixion, Jesus had accepted patiently the cruel attacks. People told lies about Paul. But he made a humble appeal to them. He asked them to stop and to be like Christ.

Finally, Paul says that the apostles are like the dust. People swept up dust from the floor. Or they are like the dirt that someone washes from the body. This picture language is similar to **Lamentations 3:45**. It described anything that people thought had no value at all. Isaiah said that people would think that God's servant had no value (**Isaiah 53:2-3**). Paul and the other apostles were like this. People thought that they had no value. If you are truly following the cross, you are subjected to the same manner. Take up your cross and stay with Christ.

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:14-15

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Can't sleep? Count your blessings.