

# Sermon Notes

*Belonging to Christ*

1 Corinthians 3:18-23

April 12, 2015

## Introduction : a seeping creeping poison

The problem in Corinth: It may be related to a disease or a storm; as that to which someone may be aware of or completely unaware of until the lab reports are in or the weather report is given. Or, this may be more like small doses of poison, being given & taken without the person being aware of the looming or lurking illness or death. The problem in the Corinthian church is something that Paul addresses; he sounds the warning, he knows the pathology, he is aware of the effects of the venom; and there is no “Mithridatism” possible.

### *Treatment!*

There is treatment. The disease has not yet riddled the body, rendering it inoperable or bringing it to the point of certain death; repentance is necessary. Rejecting the wisdom of the world—the true folly—and acting like those who belong to Christ is both treatment and cure.

### *A Deceptive Poison*

The poison has been their practice of propping up and getting behind a certain teacher. Doing this was to act according to the wisdom of the world, to sow discord among one another (Prov. 6:19), to sell themselves short, and to be deceived: “Let no one deceive himself...” (3:18). The deception is found as congregations often do not see what is going on, or they have convinced themselves that what they are doing is good and supportive, even healthy. Their deception is seen not merely in their getting behind one teacher, but mostly because their propping up of one teacher led to their putting down the others. This is the way of the world’s wisdom; these are the habits of the highly successful in the Roman Empire.

### *That “wisdom” is foolishness with God (3:19-20)*

The Lord has a way of turning this over. The greatest is the servant of all. The Lord’s kingdom starts like a mustard seed and then provides for all the birds (not just one bird), and the Lord lifts up those in the ash heap, bringing them to beauty. Down is the new up.

Paul rebukes them with two passages, Job 5:13 and Psalm 94:11.

**Job 5:13**—this is a fascinating turn around. Whereas Eliphaz thought Job was guilty of following the wisdom of the world and not thinking the Lord’s thoughts after him, the reality is that Eliphaz was guilty of this. This is part of the deceptiveness of the worldly wisdom.

**Psalm 94:11**—those who reject the Lord are busy challenging the Lord’s existence and His presence: Is the Lord there? Does He know *anything!*? The ways of the world are out there, supposedly evident for all to see, and the Lord’s ways are small and negligible.

### *What difference does it make?*

We are challenged with the apparent smallness of the ways of the Lord: what difference does a little water make? What about the bit of bread and wine? What about marriage between one man and one woman? The wisdom of the Empire and the wisdom of the world would call all of this small, but Paul says all that is backwards; it’s not that it’s too small, it’s actually much larger.

“Therefore, let no one boast in men. For all things are yours...” (3:21)

“Temptations often promise more and give less—sometimes in fact, nothing at all. Satan offers the moon, and then laughs at you when you don’t get it” (N.T. Wright).

### *All Things?*

This fits in with last week’s sermon about the impact and the effect of Christ’s death and resurrection upon *all things* (Col. 1:15-20). This fits with Paul’s teaching that the entire creation will be delivered from corruption and placed into the liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:21). Yet, Paul gets specific about the all things...

Paul or Apollos or Cephas—

The world or life or death—

Things present or things to come

### **In Conclusion**

The gradual and the gain

All things? Yes, all things.

“...πάντα ὑμῶν, ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ, Χριστὸς δὲ θεοῦ.” “...all are yours, and you are Christ’s and Christ God’s.”

First Corinthians 3:22b-23

SUOMI. Irregular.

Finnish Folk Melody  
ARR. ULRICH S. LEUPOLD, 1909-

*Reverently*

1. A - rise, my soul, a - rise! Stretch forth to things e - ter - nal,  
Though hid from mor - tal eyes, He dwell in light su - per - nal,  
2. List to the harps of heaven! Hark to the song vic - to - rious,  
To mor - tals is not given To chant its strains all - glo - rious;

And haste thee to the feet of thy Re - deem - er God.  
Yet wor - ship him in hum - ble - ness and own him Lord.  
The nev - er - end - ing an - them sound - ing through the sky,  
Yet sing, my soul, the praise of him who reigns on high.

His ban - quet of love A - waits thee a - bove; Be -  
Who bought with his Blood The ran - somed of God; To

Worship — The Lord's Day

hold, the mar - riage fes - tal of the Lamb is come!  
him be ev - er - last - ing power and vic - to - ry.

Re - joice, my soul, re - joice, To heaven lift up thy voice:  
And let the great A - men Re - sound through heaven a - gain.

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.