

LESSON 3 — A LIFESTYLE THAT REFLECTS THE CROSS

1. FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPT: WE REFLECT WHAT WE BEHOLD

- 1 Corinthians 13:12

- We see dimly now (limited understanding)

- 2 Corinthians 3:18

- Beholding leads to becoming

- PRINCIPLE:

- We must look at the cross
- So that we reflect the cross
- And see the cross reflected in us

2. CORE THEME: THE CROSS AS THE UNIVERSAL SOLUTION

- This lesson is not only for leadership—it applies to all believers

- KEY STATEMENT:

- The cross has the power to reverse manipulative control

- APPLICATION:

- Unhealthy leadership styles
- Manipulative church dynamics
- Broken organizational culture

- SOLUTION:

- Observing the cross transforms behavior and systems

3. THE LIFE THAT GLORIFIES GOD

- John 17:4 (KJV)

- “I have glorified thee on the earth... I have finished the work...”

- PRINCIPLE:

- A life that reflects the cross gives glory to God
- A life that reflects the cross fulfills God’s will
- This applies to all believers—not just leaders

4. THE ‘THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS’

- Introduced conceptually through 1 Corinthians 4
- Term later emphasized by Martin Luther:
 - Theology of the Cross vs Theology of Glory
- The Cross emphasizes:
 - Humility
 - Sacrifice
 - Dependence on God

5. IDENTITY: SERVANTS, NOT CELEBRITIES

- 1 Corinthians 4:1–2
- **Ministers are:**
 - Servants of Christ
 - Stewards of God's mysteries
- **REQUIREMENT:**
 - Faithfulness
- **PRINCIPLE:**
 - Be a servant, not a celebrity

6. WHOSE JUDGMENT MATTERS?

- 1 Corinthians 4:3–5
- Paul's framework:
 - Man's judgment: insignificant
 - Self-judgment: insufficient
 - God's judgment: final
- Supporting text:
 - Proverbs 14:12 — human judgment can be flawed
- **PRINCIPLE:**
 - Seek God's evaluation, not human approval

7. THE END OF BOASTING

- 1 Corinthians 4:6–7
- Key question:
 - What do you have that you did not receive?
- **PRINCIPLE:**
 - All we have comes from God
 - Therefore, boasting is misplaced
- **ILLUSTRATION:**
 - Moses reflected God's glory
 - The light was not his—it was God's
- **INSIGHT:**
 - We reflect what we behold
 - Beholding the cross eliminates pride

8. THE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL PRIDE

- **1 Corinthians 4:8**
- Paul uses sarcasm:
 - “Now ye are full... now ye are rich...”
- The Corinthians believed they had “arrived”

- COMPARISON:

- Similar to Laodicea (Revelation 3)

- WARNING:

- Spiritual pride blinds us
- Pride prevents us from reflecting the cross

9. THE REALITY OF MINISTRY

- 1 Corinthians 4:9
- Apostles are:
 - Not elevated, but exposed
 - Not celebrated, but displayed
- **PRINCIPLE:**
 - Ministry is not a platform
 - Ministry is sacrifice

10. SUFFERING IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

- 1 Corinthians 4:11–13
- Paul describes:
 - Hunger, thirst, persecution, rejection
- **CLARIFICATION:**
 - God is not sadistic
 - Christians are not masochistic
- **PRINCIPLE:**
 - We are willing to suffer for Christ
- **WHY:**
 - We pursue God's purpose, not personal gain

11. BOASTING REDEFINED: REFLECTING THE CROSS

- 2 Corinthians 11:23–28
- Paul says, "I speak as a fool..."
- He adopts their style—but reverses it
- He boasts in:
 - Suffering
 - Sacrifice
 - Endurance
- **INSIGHT:**
 - Paul reflects the experience of the cross in his life

12. KINGDOM CONTRAST

- The world asks:

- Who gets served the most?
- The kingdom asks:
 - Who can I serve the most?

13. FINAL CONTRAST: TWO THEOLOGIES

- Theology of Glory:

- Recognition
- Power
- Elevation

- Theology of the Cross:

- Service
- Sacrifice
- Surrender

14. FINAL APPEAL

- We do not reflect the cross by looking at ourselves
- We reflect the cross by looking at Christ
- As we behold Him:
 - Our lives begin to mirror His character