

1 Cor. 4 - The Message Bible – “It seems to me that God has put us who bear this message on a stage in a theatre in which nobody wants to buy a ticket. We’re something that everyone stands around and stares at, like an accident in the street. We’re the Messiah’s misfits. You might be sure of yourselves, but we live in the midst of frailties and uncertainties. You might be well thought of by others, but we’re mostly kicked around. Much of the time we don’t have enough to eat, we wear patched and threadbare clothes, we get doors slammed in our faces, and we pick up odd jobs anywhere we can eke out a living. When they call us names, we say, “God bless you.” When they spread rumors about us, we put in a good word for them. We’re treated like garbage, potato peelings from the cultures kitchen.”

2 Cor. 2 The Message Bible – “In the Messiah, in Christ, God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us, He brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breath in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising from God, which is recognized by those on the way to salvation-an aroma redolent with life. But those on the way to destruction treat us like the stench from a rotting corpse.”

Many years ago, when I was in the Air National Guard, a division of the Air Force, I had the opportunity to fly to Germany on a training mission with others from Wisconsin. We went over on one of our refueling planes so it was necessary to have parachutes handy , “just in case”.

One member of our group was a person who loved being right, always boasted about who he was, how much he had accomplished, and why he was better than any one of us. Listening to no one, he always had all of the answers. Biblically he would be called a ‘Fool’.

To make a long story short, because he thought he knew everything, while the instructions about the parachute were being given, he was not paying attention. In fact, as soon as we were in the air, he pulled the wrong handle, and the contents of the bag fell in a glistening white pile on the floor of the plane.

Instantly, this man, knowing now that if anything should happen to the plane he would be in deep trouble, he changed from an arrogant prideful, “having all of the answers” person, to a fearful, humbled man, going from person to person to see if he could attach his harness to theirs should we run into trouble.

I believe that many people who call themselves Christians, have not been listening to instructions. Relying on their own strength, power and wisdom, they have not understood the importance of devoting themselves to those things that the Lord deems important.

Things such as total surrender, absolute obedience, and humble faith in the Lords provision seem foolish to them while these ways succeed, because they haven’t been tested in the fire of affliction. In difficult times, these ways, the ways of the world that have been brought into the church, will not work. Just as the empty parachute case emptied the bravado of the man in the plane, pressures will cause those untrained in the wonder of desperately needing God for everyday in their lives, to run to those who have only listened to the instructions of the Lord as their life source.

Needing to need only Jesus – Jim Corbett