

Life at the Bottom of a Ship

by Steve Higginbotham

Did you know that some ancient ships were driven, not only by wind and sail, but by slaves who rowed in the belly of a ship? These slaves would sit on wooden benches, have their ankles chained to the floor, and spent their life rowing at their Captain's command. A drummer would pound out a beat that these rowers would have to work in unison to maintain. These rowers would spend their life in this ship until they had nothing left to give. Also, being chained to the ship, their fate was tied to the skill and sailing ability of their captain.

I share that brief description because in 1 Corinthians 4:1, Paul said that he was "servant" of Christ. However, this is not the typical Greek word for servant. In fact, Paul only uses it here. The word Paul used here literally means "under-rower" (Gr. *huperetes*). In other words, Paul was likening himself and other Christians to slaves in the belly of a ship.

Now, Paul wasn't comparing the conditions in the belly of a ship to that of being a servant of Christ, but I believe these points would be among the points he was trying to communicate.

Like an "under-rower," a Christian should will:

- Follow the Captain's beat.
- Cooperate with his fellow "rowers," pull together.
- Not expect honor, just serve.
- Be committed for life.

Are you up to the task?