

1–4, and calls attention especially to 4:6-21 as foundational to Paul’s understanding of Christian existence in community.

This implies another question: is 4:6-21 in a similar relationship with other sections in 1 Corinthians? On the one hand I hesitate to answer affirmatively because I think the thematic correspondence between 4:6-21 and 8:1–11:1 is extraordinary. On the other hand I think that echoes of 4:6-21 may be heard often in 5–15. Paul’s treatment of lawsuits (6:1-11) provides an example. The themes of brothers competing with brothers (6:1, 8; cf. 4:6; also 3:3-4), the wise man (6:5; cf. 4:10; also 1:26) and eschatology (6:2-3, 9-10; cf. 4:8; also 3:12-15) are present in both 4:6-21 and 6:1-11. But 6:1-11 is especially anchored in 4:9-13. Rosner states that ‘in asking the Corinthians to be wronged and defrauded rather than compromise Christian standards of love Paul is, in effect, urging them to imitate himself. In 4:16 the exhortation to follow his example involves in its immediate context suffering for the sake of Christ (see 4:11-13).’⁶⁹ It may prove particularly fruitful to investigate the links of each of the arguments of 1 Corinthians to 4:9-13. Paul may be summoning the Corinthians throughout the epistle to conform their lives to the pattern of Paul’s life – to embody the message of the cross themselves.

⁷⁰ Brian Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7* (Leiden: Brill, 1994): 116. See also Pickett, *Cross in Corinth*: 113-114.