

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

1 Corinthians: Gospel Living

If Paul were to write a letter to the evangelical, Bible-believing churches of late twentieth century America, I believe it would be much like I Corinthians. Their world was like our world: the same thirst for intellectualism, the same permissiveness toward moral standards, the same fascination for the spectacular. And their church was like our churches: proud, affluent, materialistic, fiercely eager for intellectual and social acceptance by the world, doctrinally orthodox but morally and practically conforming to the world. (Dr. James Boyer)

In the opening salutation Paul lays the groundwork for the entire letter.

One of the main questions that has to be considered as we study the letter to the Corinthians: **is the *church* influencing the *city*, or is the *city* influencing the *church*?**

1Co 1:1 (ESV) Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

1. Paul's authority as an apostle is being called into question. He reminds them he has been called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. Paul was called by God. The Lord had determined that Paul was to be an apostle. He was to be sent out as a messenger from the Lord, sent out with a specific task of taking the gospel to the world. The church in Corinth is beginning to drift from the doctrines and practices that Paul had established. He needed to remind them that all that he called them to when he proclaimed the gospel and established the church, he was speaking as a representative of Christ Jesus.

1Co 1:2 (ESV) To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

2. Paul also needed to take great pains to remind them who they are. They are the church of God. The word for church in the Greek is *ekklesia*. It's a term that means "called out ones." It has the implication of "belonging to God", called together as a gathering for worship. Do we have the proper understanding that we were bought with the blood of Jesus? We belong to God. We don't belong to ourselves. We've been called out of the world and the world's passions and desires. We've been called to belong completely to the Lord. This proper understanding of our position and status in the Lord reminds us to see ourselves as belonging to God and not to the world. We've been called out of the cultural influence of the world.
3. The church of God in Corinth is also "sanctified in Christ Jesus." Literally separated from the world to God. We are set apart in and through our relationship in Christ. It is Jesus who makes us holy. It is Jesus who makes us the church. We are called out from the culture to gather together in his name. We are set apart from the world—made holy by Christ. We are called to be saints. Called by Christ to be made holy.

1Co 1:3 (ESV) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. The salutation closes with Paul's transformation of the normal greeting of his day. Paul made a change from the typical salutation which in Greek meant "to rejoice" and "greetings". Paul shifted the Greek greeting from *charein* to *charis*. So instead of "greetings", it is "grace to you—and peace." (Gordon Fee) "In a sense this sums up the whole of Paul's theological outlook. The sum total of all of God's activity toward his human creatures is found in the word "grace"; God has given himself to them mercifully and bountifully in Christ... And the sum total of those benefits as they are experienced by the recipients of God's grace is found in the word "peace," meaning well-being, wholeness, welfare." The one flows out of the other, and

both together flow from “God our Father” and were made effective in human history through our “Lord Jesus Christ.” (Gordon Fee)

5. As we prepare to take the Lord’s supper together this morning, there is one last thing I need you to see. There is a theological thread that runs through these opening verses. In fact, I’ve entitled this study of 1 Corinthians “Gospel Living” because for us to truly become the people, the church, Jesus saved us to be, we must understand that all we are is of Christ, in Christ, from Christ, through Christ, and dependent upon Christ. There is no other way for us to do life than completely because of and for our Lord Jesus Christ. **“Paul is an apostle of Christ Jesus; the Corinthians have become believers “were sanctified” in Christ Jesus; Christians universal are designated as those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; and grace and peace from God the Father are effected through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Gordon Fee)**

Questions to Consider for LifeGroup

- A. is the church influencing Ponca City, or is Ponca City influencing the church?
- B. What does it mean for the church to be the “called out ones?”
- C. Why do you think Paul addresses the church as “the church of God in Corinth?” What difference does that make to us to understand that we are the church of God?
- D. Talk about the significance of being made holy, “separated to God” through Christ. You are already made holy through Christ and are being made holy right now through Christ. If holiness is the goal, how does that impact how you determine to live your day today?
- E. Gordon Fee said that you can sum up all of God’s activity toward humanity and the benefits of all Christ has done for us in two words: Grace and peace. Discuss that idea.
- F. Close with a prayer of thanks for the grace and peace you have through Christ. Thank him for saving you and making you a part of

his church. Thank the Lord for declaring you holy and for constantly calling you to pursue holiness as you call on his name.