



## **1: Intro to 1 Corinthians** (1 Cor 1:1-9)

Today we begin a study through 1 Corinthians, a Church full of saints who are compromising with their sinful culture - a Beautiful Mess

### beourguest

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### teachingnotes

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VISUAL NOTES



### today'steaching

The Church in Corinth was...**a Beautiful Mess**, similar to so many churches in our culture, with maturing believers who loved Jesus, and others who were very young in the faith with an immature understanding of what God wants. The Church in Corinth had rivalries and factions - where some in the Church were even taking one another to court, while some were living in sexual sin. This Church was in a city that was full of idols and temples to false gods.

#### **The City of Corinth**

- Corinth was a growing and prosperous city because of sea trade; the third largest city in the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup>
- Located on an **isthmus** that separated the Aegean Sea from the Adriatic Sea, the goods would typically be unloaded from one ship and then carted to the opposite port to be put on another boat.<sup>2</sup> Some smaller boats were even transported across the 4 miles to the other body of water.<sup>3</sup>
- Corinth hosted the **Isthmian Games** (named after the *isthmus* = "land bridge") every 2 years, dedicated to Poseidon (god of the sea).<sup>4</sup> This event brought spectators, money, and even more prestige to the city.
- All the goods and seagoing visitors passing through this region made Corinth an economic boom town for craftsman to take advantage of the many shops to sell their wares (44 shops uncovered in archeological digs).

#### **Paul's Introduction to Corinth**

Paul made his way to Corinth (around AD 51), meeting Aquila & Priscilla - a married Jewish couple who were also followers of Jesus. This couple had recently left Rome when Emperor Claudius ordered all the Jews to get out. This couple brought their tent-making business to the Corinthian shops where Paul both worked with and lived with them (Acts 18:1-3).

As was Paul's custom, he went to tell about Jews about the Gospel first. Paul invested much of his time attempting to persuade other Jews in the synagogue that Jesus was their Messiah (Acts 18:4-5). Some listened - for example - **the leader of the synagogue** (Crispus) and his family believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8). But others became so abusive, that Paul left them to go to the Gentiles in town (Acts 18:6).

Corinth was full of Gentiles who participated in the many pagan temples of false gods. A historian notes that in Paul's day there were at least 6 temples and 26 sacred places devoted to various gods in Corinth.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John D. Barry et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> David A. deSilva, "The Social and Geographical World of Roman Corinth (Acts 18:1-18; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1)," in Lexham Geographic Commentary on Acts through Revelation, ed. Barry J. Beitzel, Jessica Parks, and Doug Mangum, Lexham Geographic Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 467.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew S. Beal, "Corinth," ed. John D. Barry et al., The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UK4C44yulBU>

➡ The Church of Corinth was a combination of Jews and Greeks who were confronted with the truth of Jesus.

📺 Check out the full video of Northridge Church in Rochester, NY for good background on the Corinthian culture of Paul's day. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UK4C44yulBU>)



This was the immoral, idolatrous culture that the young Corinthian Church was living in, and they were in danger of being squeezed into its mold. Sounds alike like the melting pot of America in 2022 and the condition of the American Church - does it not?

1 Corinthians is actually the 2nd letter Paul had written to these people (1 Cor 5:9), but we do not have a copy of the previous letter.

### God's Grace to His Church

#### 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 (NIV)

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, **To the church of God** in Corinth, to **those sanctified in Christ Jesus** and **called to be His holy people** [saints], together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul will have to confront the mess of this Church, but first Paul reminds them of their BEAUTY - WHO they ARE in Christ Jesus.

- These people are **the church of God in Corinth**. The Greek term *Ekklēsia* is what we translate as “church” - meaning gathering or “assembly”. It never refers to a building, but to the Body of Christ (a phrase Paul will use in this letter - 1 Cor 12:27).
- This assembly/church is **sanctified** - meaning, set apart for service to God.<sup>6</sup>
- These people are **His holy people** - often simply translated as “saints”.
- ✓ Paul points to their *POSITION* in Christ - set apart, God's holy people. Paul reminds them WHOSE they are! Paul will later confront why their *PRACTICE* is not matching their *POSITION*, why those who had been made holy aren't walking in holiness.

This church is full of people who have experienced **grace and peace from God**. Those who used to live for sin have NOW been transformed into **sanctified, holy people, God's church**.

### Who is Sosthenes?

- The next synagogue ruler after Crispus (who left and followed Paul) was named **Sosthenes**. He and other Jews later brought Paul before the governor to be tried and punished. WHY? They were tired of Paul talking about Jesus to everyone (Acts 18:12-14).
- The governor didn't care about religious matters and told them to settle it themselves. He let Paul go, so the crowd beat **Sosthenes** instead (maybe by the people of the synagogue for bungling the case OR by Gentiles in the crowd who used this as an opportunity to punish Jews who had already been ousted from Rome).
- Unless this was a different Jewish man with the same name, **Sosthenes** later trusted Jesus with his life and was on mission with Paul in Ephesus when this letter comes to Corinth.

### God's Gifting to His Church

#### 1 Corinthians 1:4-6 (NIV)

I always thank my God for you because of **His grace given you in Christ Jesus**. For in Him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you.

These people are forgiven! They have experienced God's **grace** through the payment **Jesus** made for them. God has given them **knowledge** of WHO He is and what He says and the **speech** to make Him known to others in their immoral and idolatrous culture.

**What is Paul's point?** God has empowered the Church to do what He expects them to do - to live, think, and talk in the purity and humility because of God's grace given to them, until Jesus returns.

## God's Faithfulness to His Church

### 1 Corinthians 1:7-9 (NIV)

Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. **He will also keep you firm to the end**, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **God is faithful**, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul's ultimate hope is not that the Corinthian Church is faithful, but that **God is faithful**.

- It is our hope in our **faithful God** that allows us to be confident that **He will also keep us firm to the end**; we trust that we can stand before Him **unblemished** because of God's grace given to us - that Jesus took our sins and gave us His righteousness ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)). Those who turn from sin and TRUST in Jesus are part of God's Church, God's sanctified, holy people.

Our hope is NOT in our good works, our knowledge or speech. Our hope is in Jesus - His good works - His perfect life & His sacrificial death on our behalf.

❓ Are you certain that you BELONG to Him? If not...call us or talk to another Christian for help.

## TAKE SOME NOTES HERE

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## heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

\* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!

\* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

## discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? Explain your answer.
2. How does understanding the historical background of Corinth help us to better understand what is written in Scripture?
3. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-3**. Take some time to discuss what God's Church really is, what it means to be sanctified, and how sinful people who call on Jesus can really be "his holy people". How might it change our actions if we started by trusting that Jesus has really made us holy...and then we live like we have been made holy? Explain how should that impact your words, thoughts, attitudes, & actions this week.
4. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:7-8**. What 4 promises are given to us and how do these promises inspire/challenge you?
5. Imagine the return of Jesus...as He comes to get YOU! Explain what it means to be "blameless" before Him.
6. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:9**. God is faithful. Take some time to share some evidences of God's faithfulness in your life thus far.
7. Share prayer needs. Continue to pray for the Supreme Court decision that could overturn Roe v. Wade. Pray for our governing leaders and spiritual leaders. Pray for Ukraine.