

Saints by God's Grace Outline

1st Corinthians 1:1-9

- I. 1st century letter writing: 1st Corinthians is a letter.
 - A. Letter were a very special form of communication in the 1st century.
 1. Because of the tedious work to write on papyrus, letters were mostly dictated to secretaries. All of Paul's letters were written this way.
 - a. Paul's letters were much longer than the average letter written in that day, an average of 1300 Greek words compared to 90 for the average letter.
 - b. Paul signed his letters to authenticate that the letter contained his words (see 1st Cor. 16:21).
 2. Delivery of the letter was usually through traders or travelers taking many days or weeks (years!) to deliver.
 3. A letter was very expensive to write and send. In today's currency the letter of Romans would have cost around 2000.00 which included the secretary, writing materials and delivery.
 - B. Paul's letters are often referred to as "epistles" meaning a message or letter.
- II. Paul's introduction—1st Corinthians 1:1-9
 - A. Paul's introduction is a celebration of God's grace through the church at Corinth.
 - B. "...**The grace of God**..." (1:4). A theology, doctrine of grace:
 1. The gospel is all about God's grace.
 2. The gospel is an essential part of God's character.
 3. Grace is God's favor towards the unworthy—"unmerited favor."
 - C. Why we need God's grace:
 1. We were born in sin—Psalm 51:5
 2. We were guilty of breaking God's holy laws—Romans 3:23
 3. We were enemies of God—Romans 5:6 6
 4. We are deserving of death—Romans 6:23a
 5. We were unrighteous—Romans 3:10

D. But then came God's grace!—Ephesians 2:8

III. The depth and breadth of God's grace.

A. As shown through Paul.

1. **“Called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God...”**

a. Paul did not choose to be an apostle (apostle = One who is sent out.)

b. God's grace was shown in Paul's conversion.

-- from persecutor of the church (Acts 8:1-3).

-- to being saved on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-15).

B. The scope of God's grace flowed out of Paul to others as he preached all the way to us today.

C. God's grace extends to all believers--- the church at Corinth (1:2).

1. The church at Corinth are those who are “saints”—*Hagios*.

a. All true Christians are saints.

2. The church at Corinth are those who have been “sanctified”—*Hagiozo*.

IV. Sanctification.

A. Sanctification is an act of God.

B. Sanctification is done by the Holy Spirit.

C. Sanctification has everything to do with the cross of Jesus Christ—not me.

1. 1st Corinthians 6:9-11.

D. Sanctification means you've been set apart from the consequences of sin, death and hell—Made holy in the sight of God

E. The Christian will be fully sanctified **“at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”**—the second coming—1st Thessalonians 5:23.

F. Sanctification is a moment in time as a result of what Jesus did on the cross on our behalf—Hebrews 10:10.

V. **“Grace to you and peace from God our Father...”**

A. Grace = favor

B. Peace = a fruit of grace.

C. You cannot have true peace outside of God's grace.

Saints by God's Grace Pastoral Notes

1st Corinthians 1:1-9

This morning we will have our third introduction to 1st Corinthians... in our first introduction I centered on an essential truth to put at the forefront of our minds as we go through this book... for us to have truly satisfying lives... lives where we truly find peace, fulfillment and even ultimate pleasure... That which is only found in Jesus Christ...

But what stands in our way of that is sin... The apostle Paul writes his letter to a very sinful church... the Corinthian church... a church that is forfeiting all the blessings that are found in Christ... throughout the letter he admonishes them to knock it off!

The essential truth for us to keep at the forefront of our own lives... in light of what we will see in 1st Corinthians is... is summed up, borrowing the title of Puritan George Swinnock's book *The Fading of the Flesh and the Flourishing of Faith...*

The more we are victorious over sin in our lives... our faith will flourish.... Last week we spent the morning looking at the background of the church at Corinth... we saw how God in His sovereignty and in His will weaved together all the events... placed people where He needed them... He put all the pieces together to bring about this unlikely church in perhaps the most sinful city of that day...

So this morning we're going to now let the apostle Paul himself give us an introduction in his own words... 1st Corinthians 1:1-9 is Paul's introduction.... The problem is that Paul gives us way too much for one Sunday.... Lord willing we will get through the first three verses this morning.

The first thing for us to recognize is that this is a letter... not many letters are written today... email has destroyed that art... but letters in the day of Paul were very special... especially when you think about all that it took to write and send and receive a letter in the 1st century...

You couldn't just grab a pen and a piece of paper, jot it all down and put it in the mailbox and a couple days later your recipient would be reading it....

Paul did not write his own letters... he most likely dictated them to a secretary... this was because to write down everything that Paul wanted to say would have taken him too long because of the tedious process of writing letters in that day... Paul's letters were much longer than the average letters of the day... the average letter was about 90 words...

Paul's were usually around 1300 words... the secretary would have sat down with Paul and would have written down the dictated words on a large piece of wax or erasable parchment treated with wax... and then go and spend maybe days writing the final copy on parchment with a mixture of ink and a stylus.

When finished... the secretary would bring the final copy to Paul and he would sign his name... look at 1st Corinthians 16:21... **The greeting is in my own hand.** ...the greeting was at the end of letters not the beginning... basically that would be his signature on the letter...to authenticate that all the words are his..."Breathed" by God.... but transcribed by a secretary.

In Romans 16, at the end of his letter... he greets a gazillion people for 16 verses... then it says in verse 22 **I Tertius who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord....**

After it was written... Paul had to find some means of delivery of the letter... Paul is in Ephesus when he writes 1st Corinthians... he had to find a boat... or a trader... or someone from the church... to travel the 353 miles...about a eight day trip....

It wasn't cheap either... for example... in today's rate... a letter from a sailor to his mother would cost about 50 dollars... the book of Romans is estimated at around 2000.00 ! That would include the secretary, writing materials and delivery fees...all that to say... letters were very, very special!

1st Corinthians is a very special and important letter... your Bible may say it's an "epistle"... an epistle is simply a Greek word that means "a message" or "a letter"... so if you really want to impress someone, nix the email and tell them you're writing them an epistle!

We read through these nine verses of introduction and they may seem just a typical introduction to a letter...especially these three verses... no meat in it...that's coming... just your typical letter conventions.... But not so... these verses are packed with wonderful truth that I'm sure edify you this morning...

These nine verses are really a celebration of God's grace as demonstrated within the Corinthian church... God's amazing grace!... Grace is all through these nine verses... and you know what?... we need to spend time on and in God's grace.....

Preachers are guilty of taking this book and pound it over the heads of his listeners... *this is how you are to live!...these are the things you are to do... these are the things you should never do... you wretched sinners!* ... yes there are times for such admonishings...but we tend to go light on the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ is about grace...God amazing grace...a grace that cannot be achieved by our behavior or things we should or shouldn't do.

Grace is an important word throughout the Bible... the word grace is found at least 301 times in the Bible... the Greek word "Charis"...we get the word "charismatic" from which refers to

gifts... Charis here refers to “the gift of grace” or being in the state of grace... all of God’s people are found in the state of grace.

24 times in the New Testament... and only in the New Testament we find the phrase “**The grace of God**”... as here in verse 4... **I thank my God always concerning you... for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.**

This morning I want to bask in this verse (even though we won’t get to it!)... this truth... the Christian life is all about HIS grace!

How about a quick theological doctrinal exposition on grace?

Grace is an essential part of God’s character. Grace is closely related to God’s benevolence – “Hesedness”... His lovingkindness, helpful, caring... His love, and mercy. Grace can be defined as “**God’s favor toward the unworthy**” or “**God’s benevolence on the undeserving.**”... we say **God’s unmerited favor**.... In His grace, God is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, in spite of the fact that we don’t deserve to be treated so well or dealt with so generously... we don’t deserve anything but eternal death!

To fully understand grace, we need to consider who we were without Christ and who we become with Christ. **We were born in sin** (Psalm 51:5... **Behold, I was brought forth in guilt, and in sin my mother conceived me.**),

and **we were guilty of breaking God’s holy laws** (Romans 3:23 **For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God**; 1 John 1:8–10 **If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.**).

So good Christian... you’re not so good!

We were enemies of God (Romans 5:6 **6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.**; Colossians 1:21 **21 And although you were previously alienated and hostile in attitude, engaged in evil deeds,**),

Deserving of death (Romans 6:23a **23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**) **We were unrighteous** (Romans 3:10 **as it is written: “There is no righteous person, not even one;** and we are without means of justifying ourselves. Spiritually, we were destitute, blind, unclean, and dead. Our souls were in peril of everlasting punishment.

But then came grace. God extended His favor to us. Grace is what saves us (Ephesians 2:8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of**

God;). Grace is the essence of the gospel.... Grace gives us victory over sin.... Grace gives us “eternal encouragement and good hope” (2 Thessalonians 2:16 **Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace**).

Paul repeatedly identified grace as the basis of his calling as an apostle....1 Corinthians 3:10 **According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each person must be careful how he builds on it.**

Jesus Christ is the embodiment of grace, coupled with truth (John 1:14 **And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**).

Grace really gives us what we don't deserve...yet what do we do?... we can't seem to help it but we are always trying to justify ourselves... prove that we are good.... We know we are not good so we try to be good...AND WHEN WE ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING GOOD... SOME GOOD DEED... WE START BELIEVING WE'RE ACTUALLY GOOD...

but the truth is... we can't ever be good enough all of Christian life stems from God's grace... Just within these nine verse are seven wonderful truths about God's grace...we'll get one of them this morning.

Grace is a gift... that's what Charis means right?... Gift.... We can't earn it... we can't be good enough... we can't impress God to get it...Grace isn't achieved by praying...by reading your Bible... by giving up smoking, chewing or drinking... grace isn't “achieving” PERIOD!..

And the opposite... we do not forfeit God's grace because we sin... we could say that grace is outside of “omission”...not doing something.... Or “commission” doing something.... it is a free gift that He has GIVEN to those who embrace Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Most of you know this.... But most of us grapple with this... we actually would rather run fifty laps if we thought it would put us in God's favor than to receive a gift we can't do anything for... JUST GIVE ME A LIST!.....so the first thing we see here is what I will call:

1. The depth and breadth of God's grace...borrowing the words from Ephesians 3:18. Or *the scope of God's grace*...

It begins with Paul himself...In Paul we see God's grace...back to 1st Corinthians...

Read verse 1

The first word of this letter is “**Paul**”.... This morning... you will leave this place having memorized the first word of all thirteen of Paul's epistles.... All 13 begin with “Paul”.... The story of Paul is a vivid illustration of God's amazing grace.

Paul was **called as an apostle...** in other words... he didn't volunteer... he didn't decide "*I think I'll be an apostle*"... "*I'm getting a little old now and tentmaking is starting to wear me down... I hear apostles don't have to work all that much... think I'll become one of those*" HE WAS CALLED....rather... he was attacked by God!...God literally put Paul's senses in disorder mode....

I don't know if you've every realized just how loving and full of grace God was to Paul in making him blind.... We briefly saw last week that after the stoning of Stephen the first martyr of the early church... Paul was standing in the shadows.

In Acts chapter 8 it says in verse 1 **Now Saul (Paul) was in hearty agreement with putting Stephen to death**, not very deserving of God's grace! **and on that day great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem...**a couple of verses later, (3) **Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, delivering them into prison...**

You wouldn't think God would have anything to do with such a man as Saul...

Paul... a Jew... a Pharisee... well... we can read Paul's own description of himself in Philippians 3... talking about the futile attempt to have a "righteousness of our own" by having **confidence in the flesh**... another way of saying "our works"... rather than having confidence in the righteousness we can have through Jesus Christ.... His righteousness... which.... Is an act of what?....GRACE!... we don't deserve Jesus deeming us righteous when we are pathetic unrighteous sinners..... but He does!

This is how Paul describes himself prior to his salvation...Philippians 3:4-6

4 although I myself could boast as having confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he is confident in the flesh, I have more reason: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel.... Such pride being a descendent if Abraham... performing external ceremonies.... Things that made Paul feel good about himself but couldn't save him.

Of the tribe of Benjamin...one of the elite tribes of Israel..., **a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee** the Pharisees were the legalistic fundamentalists of Judaism... all about keeping the law... and if you were having a hard time keeping the 10 commandments, they gave you 22,345 more laws to help you along!

6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church...for the Jew, "zeal" was the highest single virtue in the religion... it combines love and hate... Paul loved his Judaism and hated whatever might threaten it...; **as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless...** blameless on the outside... nobody is blameless on the inside... Paul outwardly kept the law so that no one could accuse him of any violation..... **ALL OF THAT DOES NOT ACHIEVE ACCEPTANCE TO GOD!.... NONE OF THAT YIELDS ETERNAL SALVATION...**

God could have left Paul right there... in the law... “blameless”... but a blamelessness that doesn’t save a thing!... you can keep the law and still end up in hell.... **But by God’s grace...**

Read Acts 9:1-15

Paul was a “CHOSEN INSTRUMENT OF MINE” Jesus said..... “Paul called as an apostle of Jesus Christ”....interesting... but Jesus could have chosen someone a bit more qualified than Paul to reach the gentiles... gentiles the non-Jew...he was over qualified to teach the Jews... but gentiles?

Paul was a Jewish scholar... a Pharisee.... Paul understood the law...his life was with Jews... he persecuted gentiles... he taught regularly in the synagogues to Jews...he knew the Torah maybe better than anyone else.....

Yet Jesus chooses Paul to reach the gentiles... I thought about that this week... **when you are chosen by God to work in His kingdom He doesn’t look much at your resume**.... And don’t get too comfortable in your profession... God may move you to a place and position outside of your expertise...to a place and ministry you never dreamed of...

Many of you know of Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones... famous theologian/pastor in the mid 20th century... He’s known as Dr. because he was a doctor...a medical doctor... and a very successful one... in England.

He was assistant to the highest medical position in England “The Royal Physician”... He was a member of the elite Royal College of Physicians... yet God tugged and tugged at his heart and he knew he had to preach the word...I don’t think he had a choice!....it really wasn’t an easy decision... he left being a doctor and became a preacher... not for the money!

I love his explanation for leaving the medical profession...leaving financial comfort, prestige and social position... speaking to his church

It is not often that I make any kind of personal reference from this pulpit but I feel this morning that I must speak of an experience which bears on this very subject. When I came here, people said to me: ‘Why give up good work – a good profession – after all, the medical profession, why give that up? If you had been a bookie, for instance, and wanted to give that up to preach the gospel, we should understand and agree with you and say that you were doing a grand thing. But medicine – a good profession, healing the sick and relieving pain!’ One man even said this, ‘If you were a solicitor [lawyer] and gave it up, I’d give you a pat on the back, but to give up medicine!’

‘Ah well!’ I felt like saying to them, ‘if you knew more about the work of a doctor, you would understand. We but spend most of our time rendering people fit to go back to their sin!’ I saw

men on their sick beds, I spoke to them of their immortal souls, they promised grand things. Then they got better and back they went to their old sin!

I saw I was helping these men to sin and I decided that I would do no more of it. I want to heal souls. If a man has a diseased body and his soul is all right, he is all right to the end; but a man with a healthy body and a diseased soul is all right for sixty years or so and then he has to face an eternity of hell. Ah, yes! we have sometimes to give up those which are good for that which is the best of all – the joy of salvation and newness of life.

God's scope of grace exponentially spreads.... We define grace as "unmerited favor"... finding favor in the eyes of God when we do not deserve it... it is all that but more... grace also refers to God's transforming power and God's faithful love...

Dr Lloyd Jones through the realized grace he received from God is transformed to God's mouthpiece to the lost... as the lost embrace the gospel message they have heard.... By God's grace they are offered salvation....

From Paul being a persecutor of the church received God's amazing grace in his salvation then through God's transforming power he becomes an apostle of Jesus Christ... to the gentiles.... and to us today!... the scope of God's grace is endless!

(1) Paul called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother...... most likely Sosthenes is the Sosthenes in Acts 18, we stopped short talking about Sosthenes....

Paul's gospel had infiltrated the Jewish synagogue and a man named Sosthenes... the leader of the synagogue became a follower of Jesus Christ... how did that happen?... by God's grace!!! God extends His grace into places you would think He would never extend to!... a hostile Jewish synagogue!

Some of you here this morning are thinking "*that's for sure... for me to be in church is a miracle!*"... that's all because of God's grace.

The Jews in the synagogue are not happy about that so they beat Sosthenes So for Paul to include him in this letter suggest Sosthenes fled town with Paul and both were in Ephesus together... the church there at Corinth would have enjoyed hearing his name mentioned.

Read verse 2

So now we see that God's extends His grace to all believers.... As seen here with the church at Corinth... did you catch their description?... it's **a church of God**... who have been *sanctified in Jesus Christ*... and called as what?

Saints!

Throughout history... and even in some denominations.... And certainly in the Roman Catholic Church... they have a view of a saint being one who's good... really good.... Really, really, really good.

To them a saint is one who does amazingly good works and whose behavior is above reproach.... And there aren't many of them!... in fact... there are so few of these good people that you can fill stain glass images of all these guys in one large cathedral!

My best friend in the 3rd grade was Gustavo... we called him Gus... his parents came to the U.S. from Honduras... They were *really good* Catholics.... His mother would not let Gus play with me because, as Gus told me, I was a "protestant".

"What's a protestant?...I'm not a protestant!"... one day at school Gus pulled out of his pocket this nickel size, coin like pendant...he said it was his "St. Christopher"...I asked him *what a "St. Christopher* was and he said he didn't know... I said *"you go home and ask your mom who St. Christopher was and I'll ask my parents what a protestant is...."*

I can't remember what my parents said about protestant... but I remember Gus coming back and said this guy "Christopher" helped a child he did not know get across a river to the other side... the child, as the story goes turned out to be Jesus..... even though this was 251 AD!

So Christopher was a good man...a really, really, really good man. he is considered by many the "*patron saint of travelers*", and small images of him are often worn around the neck, on a bracelet, carried in a pocket, or placed in vehicles by some Christians.

The world basically view saints as extraordinarily good people who have lived exceptional lives....one who died as a martyr for Christ would be up for sainthood. **But that is not what a biblical saint is!**.... Especially if Paul addresses the Corinthian church as...saints!... if sainthood is based on goodness... the Corinthian church would not make even the waiting list!

What does the Bible say about saints?... "Saint" is the English translation for the Greek word "*Hagios*"... appears 231 times in the New Testament... 13 times in 1st Corinthians.... Attached to the word "saint" is the word "sanctified"... **to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus (sanctification in just a sec) called as saints... with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:**

In other words... ALL CHRISTIANS...TRUE CHRISTIANS ARE SAINTS!.. "*hagios*" is linked to the word "holy"...in the sense of being set apart for God... so friends... if you are in Christ... YOU ARE A SAINT!.... and from this moment on... it's ok to call me St. Dan!

Another Greek word... that has the same root as "Saint" is "*Hagiazō*"... translated as "*sanctified*"...sanctified is also the idea of being set apart for God—holy....Those in the

Corinthian church are “*sanctified in Christ Jesus*”...boy is there a lot of confusion over sanctification!

[my admission, even last night...]

Some denominations believe that you DO NOT become “sanctified” when you become a believer... they believe you get sanctified by what you do... “*if I pray more...read my Bible more... if I witness more... if I go to Bible studies more... I will be sanctified!*”

What does the Bible say?... **Sanctification is an act of God** (by His grace)...not an act of man... **sanctification is done by the Holy Spirit... not by me... sanctification has everything to do with the cross of Jesus Christ and has nothing to do with what I can come up with.**

Turn over to 1st Corinthians 6:9-11

Read 1st Corinthians 6:9-11

You are sanctified through God’s grace by the Lord Jesus Christ!... **WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?** ...it means **you’ve been set apart from the consequences of sin, death and hell**...but it’s more... Romans tells us that we are set apart from the **POWER OF SIN THAT CONTROLS YOU**...

As the Holy Spirit works within you... your sanctification works out in your life... and eventually... you will be **COMPLETELY SANCTIFIED!** (1st Thessalonians 5:23 **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**)

We were sanctified in a moment of time... the Holy Spirit continues to work in us bringing us eventually to complete fulfilled sanctification. “**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory**” (Colossians 3:4). This glorified state will be our ultimate separation from sin, a total sanctification in every regard. “**We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is**” (1 John 3:2).

When will we be totally sanctified?... at the coming of our Lord Jesus! Sanctified in EVERY way!...my body, my brain, my soul... set apart from ALL sin forever and ever!...AMEN?...why?... because of something I’ve done?...NO!...**BECAUSE OF GOD’S GRACE!**

Sanctification is rooted in what Jesus did not from anything I do or can do... look at Hebrews chapter 10...

[the confusion of sanctification--- continuous progressive sanctification]

Here, sanctification is a moment in time as a result of what Jesus did on the cross on our behalf...Hebrews 10:10 **By this...**by what?... in that the law can’t save a goldfish... Jesus came

to do what the law could not do... what was that?...to be the perfect sacrifice... the only sacrifice that would pay the price of our sins...

(9) **He**, Jesus, **takes away the first**—the law that cannot save... **in order to establish the second**—the perfect sacrifice of Himself on the cross... which DOES save.

BY THIS...will we *have been sanctified through the offering of the body* ONCE AND FOR ALL!

Is that what it says?..... YES!

Again... if the Corinthian church is sanctified... it couldn't be from their obedience to God!! The Corinthian church is made up of flawed, sinful believers who are sanctified saints! ... all this stuff makes me dizzy!

I will truly be glad to get to heaven and not worry about how all this works anymore!...how God sanctifies messed up people and makes them saints... I was thinking what it will be like to get to heaven and run into someone I couldn't stand on earth and know they're redeemed...deemed perfect, cleansed in Jesus Christ..... and I won't resent it!...I won't even have a thought of wishing they weren't there!....I'll be happy they are there!...spending eternity with them!

Read 1st Corinthians 1:3

Peace cannot exist without God's grace... Grace is God's favor... peace is one of its fruits... a peace that only a Christian can have... a peace that surpasses all comprehension Phil. 4:7

What I really want us to see this morning is that Corinth in all their sin... in all their carnality Through the grace of our God through His Son Jesus Christ.... Are seen as 100% righteous in God's eyes!....

And what is true for them can be true for you... it is true for you if you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior... if you haven't...isn't this good news?...you're not too sinful...to wicked to have God extend His grace to you!

You can have your eternity secured by the work of Jesus Christ...outside of your performance!