



THE TRANSFORMING EFFECT OF A DIVINE PERSPECTIVE

OPENING COMMENT

The letter to the Corinthian Church is full of examples of how the church was failing to understand what the Gospel accomplished. The church did not understand unity, apostleship, sex, law, marriage, idolatry, communion, proper worship, use of gifts, or the resurrection implication. Yet, Paul starts his letter with a resounding thankfulness for the work of God amongst them. It is helpful to clearly understand what Paul is thankful for in the midst of a group replete with failure.

READ THE TEXT: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

¹Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, ²To 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:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. Where does Paul draw his apostolic authority from? (vs. 1)
2. How does Paul identify the church? (vs. 2)
3. Given the reason for Paul writing the letter to the church in Corinth (atrocious sins in the church), why is the way Paul refers to the church significant?
4. What is the reason for Paul's thankfulness for the church? (vs. 4)
5. What was the result of God's grace toward to the Corinthian Church? (Vs. 5)
6. What is the purpose of God's grace being bestowed upon the Corinthian Church? (Vs. 7)
7. In this passage, who is responsible for keeping the church faithful to the end? (vs. 8)
8. Why is the faithfulness of God integral?
9. Summarize this passage in a sentence or two to bring clarity to the group.

APPLYING THE TEXT

1. If you are a follower of Christ, and therefore a member of His body the church, how does Paul's assessment of the church impact you? Is it an encouragement? A shock? Does it feel unwarranted? Why?
2. Paul declares that in Christ the church does not lack any gift (vs. 7). This is not an individual realization, but a corporate one. How has God gifted you to participate in the building up of His body?
3. How do you view the church, pastoral staff, fellow brothers/sisters in Christ? Do you focus more on God's divine work in their lives or their deficiencies?
4. What steps or strategies might you employ to begin seeing the people of God as Paul does here?
5. What comfort does the sustaining work of Christ (vs. 8) bring to our individual and corporate lives? How might this inform our personal struggle with sin and our corporate struggle with brothers/sisters in Christ?

BIBLICAL THREAD

1. Deuteronomy 7:6-11 - God outlines why he chose Israel as His people.
2. Ephesians 1:1-10, Philippians 1:1-11, Colossians 1:1-8 - Examples of Paul employing the same perspective, on the work of God in his people, in other contexts.



3. Hebrews 10:23-25 - an exhortation to not neglect meeting together and encouraging one another all gathered around the hope we have in the faithfulness of God.

CONCLUSION

Paul exemplifies the charge in Hebrews 10:23-25 to be an encourager of the body of Christ. Not neglecting the areas of failure, but attempting to fan into flame (2 Tim 1:6) the gifts God has given His people. His focus is remembering that this work, the work in the church, is a work of God who is faithful and will sustain the church to the end.

SHARE & PRAY

LIFE GROUP VISION:

The goal to meeting together around the word of God is three fold. First, we want to more clearly understand what God is saying to us through his Word and apply it to our own hearts and minds. Secondly, we want to build a loving community with each other to disciple one another toward maturity in Christ. Thirdly, we desire each of us, as ambassadors of Christ, to look outwards to our community and ask how we can bring the truth of the gospel to bear on those whom God has placed in our lives.

