

Thanksgiving For A Troubled Church

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

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Let's open our Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. 1 Corinthians chapter 1, and we start a new series tonight on 1 Corinthians. The title of our series is Fool's Wisdom, and you're going to discover why I've titled it that: Fool's Wisdom.

Corinthians, Paul says that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us that are saved is the power of God. And the foolishness of God, excuse me, is wiser than the wisdom of man. So, God's wisdom, as opposed to the world's wisdom, we discover in the book of Corinthians. But tonight's study, we're going to just again, like we did Sunday morning in Ephesians, we're just going to get our feet wet. Nine verses, verses 1 to 9 of chapter 1. And the title of our study is Thanksgiving for a Troubled Church.

Paul was thankful for the believers in Corinth, even though they weren't perfect, and he was giving thanks for them. We're going to see that in these first nine verses. So, Thanksgiving for a Troubled Church, and let's pray together.

Father, thank you for your word. We pray that as we open the Bible that you'll speak to us, and that we would grow and learn and grow in our knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. So, Lord, thank you tonight for this time to study your word. Bless your word to us and change us by the power of your Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. And everyone agreeing said, amen.

The story is told of Oliver Cromwell when he was having his portrait painted, that when the portrait was painted, he looked at the picture and he made that statement, "where are my warts"? And the painter said, well, I thought you'd be glad that when I painted you, I took your warts off the painting. And that's when Oliver Cromwell made that famous statement. He said, "A portrait should include warts and all". If I were having my portrait painted, I would say, fix me up, you know, make me look better than I am, if you can, please. A portrait should include warts and all. Now, I say that because that's exactly what we have in 1 Corinthians, warts and all. When Paul paints a portrait of the church at Corinth, he includes all the warts. The church at Corinth was a troubled church. I am glad God didn't call me to pastor the church at Corinth. Let me give you a little sampling of what we're going to cover in this book.

We see that the church at Corinth had the problem of division. They were a divided church. Look in Chapter 1, verses 10 and 11. Paul says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no here it is divisions among you, but that you all be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment". Verse 11, "for it has been declared unto me of my brethren, by them which are the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you".

Now, Paul is writing to the Corinthians because someone came from, quote, this house of Chloe and told him about the problems in the church at Corinth. So, number one, they were

divided church. I am of Paul. I am of Apollos. I am of Peter. I am of Christ. And we're going to talk about the problem of division. Secondly, they were a defiled church. This is hard to believe but look at Chapter 5 and Verse 1. Paul says, "It is reported commonly". Now, first of all, he says, I got the word from the house of Chloe, but now he says it's common knowledge. Everyone knows it's reported commonly that there is fornication among you, such fornication that is not so much named among the Gentiles that one should have his father's wife. Now, that is radical. See, I told you I'm glad God didn't call me to pastor the church of Corinth. This is one defiled church. This is one messed-up church.

By the way, we'll get there in a few weeks, and we're going to talk a lot through this book about sexual purity. Marriage: it's got a lot about marriage. But the word fornication there is the word *pornea*, and we get our word pornographic from it. It was a general term for sexual immorality. Now, Paul mentions the specific case that was taking place in their midst; he said that "one should have his father's wife." Now, this was probably a stepmother, but it was, in a sense, an incestuous relationship. And the problem was that the believers in the church thought it was okay. Did you hear what I said? They thought, oh, we love you, we'll accept you, God's grace is bigger than that. Oh, praise the Lord, come on in; you can hang out with us. And they were accepting of this sexual sin in their congregation. Instead of standing against it and rebuking it and seeking to purge out the leaven in their church, they were accepting it. And so, the church was defiled, and we're going to look at that as we go through.

And then, in chapter 6, verse 1, they were a disgraced church. Look at chapter 6, verse 1. "Dare any of you having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust or the unbelievers and not before the saints". So, they were actually in the church, suing one another. What a great fellowship, right? They were actually suing each other. And Paul says, you're going to heathen courts; you're going before unbelieving judges, non-Christians. When you ought to have a believer judge it in the fellowship, you ought to be able to work out this problem. So, they were divided, they were defiled, and they were disgraced. And you say, well, John, how could this happen with this church at Corinth? And here's the answer. The church was not only in Corinth, but Corinth was in the church. The church was not only in Corinth... Now it's not a problem for the church to be in Corinth. The problem was Corinth was in the church. The church is in the world, but the world is not to be in the church. It's like a boat. When you put a boat on the water, the boat belongs on the water, right? Everything's great, boats on the water. But when the water gets in the boat, you got problems, right? And then the boat's going to sink. So, the church is in the world, but the world is not supposed to get into the church.

And you say, well, what's the big deal about Corinth? Corinth was the ancient equivalent of Las Vegas. I mean, in every sense of the word. You want a party town. Corinth is your place. Every kind of vice, every kind of sin, every kind of pleasure could be found in the city of Corinth. Now, Corinth was the Greek city. And don't turn there right now, but when you get a chance to look at a map, it's in southern Greece in an area it was known as Achaia. Greece at that time was broken into two areas, North Macedonia and the South Achaia. And in the South, there's kind of a little round area on the map of Greece. I've actually been to Corinth. I visited this area. And connecting northern Greece to southern Greece, there's a little narrow stretch of land. It's called

an isthmus. And there's sea on both sides. It's not very wide, and they actually used to drag boats across from one... See, the Adriatic on one side and the Aegean Sea is on the other side. But they have now cut a canal through it. It's called the Corinthian canal. And we stood on a bridge over the Corinthian canal and looked down. I won't... I shouldn't mention it, but we were hocking loogies down there, you know, through the... kind of spit and seeing how long it would take to hit down there. So just thought I'd bless you with that. You know, if you want to know the distance, you got like, you know, spit and see how long it takes to get. So, we spit in the Corinthian canal. That's that wasn't in my notes. It just came into my brain from the Holy Spirit. Sanctified saliva. So, it's way up high. This great big canal, they cut way down. I was just tripping out looking at this thing. And this is just, this is just amazing. I got to bring some of my pictures for you Wednesday night of Corinth and of the city of Ephesus on Sunday. But in the city of Corinth, they had the temple of Aphrodite, the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. And in this temple, they had a thousand prostitutes, religious prostitutes. Part of the worship of Aphrodite involved prostitution. And so, they were there. And then, at night, the prostitutes would go into Corinth and do their thing. And it was on a major trade route from north to south, east to west. It was kind of a sailor town. It was a party town. It was the modern equivalent, or ancient equivalent of Las Vegas is what it was.

So, Paul is writing to these believers that had let the world come into the church. Now, I believe that this has a lot of application to the church today. The church, in many ways, has allowed the world to come into the church. One of my favorite Bible commentaries is a man by the name of Ray Steadman. Get anything by Ray Steadman. You've got some great reading. Ray Steadman, he was a pastor of a church in Palo Alto for many, many years. He said that Corinthians, first Corinthians could be titled First Californians. Because of the sin and the vice that was in the church at that time, he pastored in Palo Alto, just outside of San Francisco. So, there's a lot of problems in this church at Corinth, and Paul is going to be dealing with them from chapter 1 to chapter 6. But then, from chapters 8 to 10, Paul is actually going to be answering questions.

So, here's how the book breaks down. Chapters 1 to 6, he deals with the problems in the church. Chapters then 7 to 10, and to the end of the book, actually 16, excuse me, he's going to be dealing with the questions that were asked him. Now let me give you a little sampling of what the questions were. They ask about marriage, and we'll deal with that in chapter 7. They ask about food offered unto idols in chapters 8 and 9. And this is the subject of Christian liberty. Can a Christian do this? Can a Christian do that? What liberties can we exercise as believers? And then chapter 11, they ask a question he answered about church ordinances, the Lord's Supper and so forth. And then chapters 12 to 14, spiritual gifts. They had spiritual gifts, but they were abusing and not using them properly. So, he instructs them about spiritual gifts. And then chapter 15, one of my favorite chapters in all the Bible, he deals with the resurrection. It's a marvelous chapter dealing with the resurrection. And then chapter 16, with the offering, giving, and doctrine and teaching about our giving to God.

Now there are two main divisions in our first nine verses tonight that we want to look at. And just quickly and briefly, verses 1 to 3 are Paul's greeting. And then verses 4 to 9 is Paul's gratitude. So, the first, the greeting and then the gratitude for the believers in Corinthians. Verse

1, "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God and Sosthenes our brother. Under the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called, literally just, saints. With all that at every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ". Now, Paul says three things about himself. He says he's an apostle. He said he was called and he is an apostle by the will of God. Verse 1.

Corinthians is written by Paul, written by Paul on his third missionary journey from the city of Ephesus. Corinth was actually founded as a church on his second missionary journey. You can get the background for that in Acts chapter 18. Just write that down. Acts chapter 18, you read that chapter, and you get the story about the beginning of the church in Corinth. But Paul was an apostle, one commission sent out and he was called, not self-appointed, and it was by the will of God. Now he uses this full title because his apostleship was under attack. It was being questioned. And then Paul included the name of a man by the name of Sosthenes. Verse 2. We don't know for sure who this man is. He's mentioned in Acts chapter 18, verse 17, but we don't know if the same Sosthenes that's mentioned in Acts 18 is the one mentioned with Paul here. It's a common name and it could have been another guy. But if it is the same individual that was there in Corinth during the time when Paul ministered to them, then Sosthenes was actually a chief ruler of the synagogue in Corinth. And he was beaten by the Greeks before Galileo's judgment seat. And if he's the same Sosthenes, he's now a Christian. Interesting how God can use this to bring a person to Christ. That's through this situation in his life, he came to know Christ. And he's now with Paul on his third journey in Ephesus, and he joins his name writing to the Corinthians because no doubt they knew who he was. He calls him a brother. Then thirdly, notice Paul greets the church in verses 2 and 3 under the church of God, which is at Corinth. So, I just thank God that in this wicked city, this dark city, there was a church. No city is too dark, too corrupt, too decayed, too defiled for God to have a witness. Amen? I'm thinking of the churches I know about in Las Vegas are amazing. God's doing an awesome work in Las Vegas. Do you know there are actually Christians there? You know that it's been the last about eight years, there's been all kinds of amazing churches God has raised up in New York City. God's doing amazing things in New York City right now. And in the cities of the United States, God is beginning to raise up churches. Where for a long time, the churches abandoned the cities; they went out to the suburbs. God is calling young men to go to the cities and to plant churches and God is blessing that. And God is growing these churches, and they're preaching the gospel, and people are being saved. And it's a marvelous thing. So, no city too wicked, in Corinth, believe it or not. Do you know that the phrase Corinthian became a synonym for anyone that was drunk or debauched, or wasted on the Greek stage? Whenever an actor on the Greek stage was depicted as a Corinthian, he was always drunk or intoxicated. And if you really wanted to chop somebody, don't know if we should revive this or not, but if you really wanted to chop somebody, really give them a real cut, you'd say you Corinthian you. Because I meant you're just wasted, man, you're just a drunk. You're just nothing. You Corinthian you. Try that on your friends and see what happens. You're like, what? Yeah, I learned that Wednesday night. Come to Revival Christian Fellowship. But in this Corinthian cesspool, God saves souls. Just like you and I, God reaches into the pit and pulls us out, amen? And the amazing thing to me is the thing that God saved me out of my sin. God saved you out of your sin. God saved us. He

reaches into the darkest hole and to the darkest pit, and he pulls us out. He cleans us up on the inside, puts a new song in our heart and sets us upon a rock. Praise God for his blessings. And so, Paul is thankful for them.

Now notice in verses 2 and 3, he calls them sanctified. He calls them saints. He calls them the saints who are sanctified. So, they are sanctified; they are saints. And thirdly, they share the same position and Lord as believers in every place. Notice in verse 2, he says, with all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Now, because we're covering the beginning of this book and it very closely parallels Ephesians, I know you weren't all here Sunday morning, but I'm not going to go into a lot of depth here. He calls them sanctified. It means they're set apart. Now, we begin to be set apart when the Holy Spirit convicts us of our need for Jesus. And then he converts us. The theological term is regenerates us. When you are born again, you are regenerated. That means you are given new life. You're made alive in Christ. And then he begins to sanctify you in making you holy and like Jesus. So, he starts the work of the process of making you like Jesus. And then one day when you go to heaven, you're going to be perfectly like Jesus Christ. That's total sanctification. But the term sanctified, and don't let this confuse you, can be used as the generic term for salvation. You are the saved or you are the sanctified. So, God has set you apart unto God. And then he calls them saints, which means holy. So, this speaks of their present position in Christ. It's not a future destiny but a present reality. The Corinthian Christians were called saints. That amazes me. This problem church, Paul knew the problems of the church. If anyone knew the problems of the church, Paul did. If anyone knows the problems of the church, I do. I'm a pastor. And yet they're saints. They're sanctified. And then they have called on the name of the Lord. In every place. So, ask yourself, have I been born again? Have I been given new life? Am I sanctified? Am I living a holy life, a saintly life? And as Jesus Christ my Lord, have I called upon His name? How do you become a saint by calling upon the name of the Lord?

Now, we come to verse 4, down to verse 9. And here we have the gratitude for the Corinthians. Paul's gratitude for the Corinthians. So, first his greeting, and then he was grateful. Now in all the years I've studied and taught Corinthians, I've always kind of glossed over these verses and never really noticed. I'm always jumping verses to the division and to the wisdom of God versus the folly of man and all the issues that Paul was dealing with. And I didn't really notice until recently that Paul was actually thankful for this Corinthian church. In spite of all of its problems. In spite of all the things that were going wrong, Paul was thankful for them. Notice verse 4, "I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ". "That, verse 5, and everything you are enriched by Him in all utterance and knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you came behind in no gift waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end that you may be blameless, or literally it would be, He will confirm you unto the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, verse 9, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord". So again, the amazing lesson that we learn here, Paul wasn't critical, Paul didn't give up on them, Paul didn't say, forget you guys, I'm going to find another church. In spite of the problems, in spite of the faults, he lists the things he was grateful for and thankful for. Let me make this application; too many times, people get critical of the church.

They expect the church to be perfect. Everybody that comes to the church glows in the dark. They kind of glow in the dark, you know, and they have halos, and they smile all the time. Oh, you're a saint, I can tell; you have a halo, you glow, and if I turn the lights off, you glow. And something goes wrong, someone offends him, someone does something to bother them, I'm going to find a new church, I'm going to go to another church. The church is the apple of God's eye. He gave his life for it; he died for it. We should be thankful for the church with all its flaws, all of its warts. Thankful for this church. Warts and all, amen. I'm thankful for what God's doing in this church. Is this church perfect? No, you come here. I'm the pastor; no way is it going to be perfect. But we are saints; we have been sanctified. And here's the cool thought: thank God we're not what we used to be, amen? We're not in the pit bound by sin doing what we used to do; amen for that. We're not what we should be, we're not what we are going to be, but thank God we're not what we used to be, amen? Praise God for that. So, don't get discouraged with the church thinking, why is this church.... now I remember years ago, a woman came, can I come see you, yeah okay, come see me, she says, why is it everyone in this church so carnal? I couldn't believe it. I thought, Lord, help me not to be carnal when I respond to her. Why is everyone in this church so carnal, and you're so spiritual? That just blew my mind; I just couldn't believe that you know. It's like we have this kind of a, I just like that, just blew my mind, I just couldn't believe that, you know. It's like we have this kind of romantic idea of how perfect the church... this is warts and all, but yet Paul says I'm thankful for you.

And again, I'm not going to tarry on these, but if you're taking notes, there are six things that Paul was thankful for. And I broke them into six because this is actually the six things that Paul was thankful for. I could have done three alliterated things, but I want to do six things that are right from the text that Paul was thankful for. Number one, he was thankful for the grace of God given to them. As messed up as they were, they had been graced by God. Notice it in verse 4. "I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ". You got that? Messed up as it is, bad as it is, problems that they had. The church had experienced the grace of God. I love what Donald Gray Barnhouse said. He said, "Love that reaches up is adoration. Love that reaches across is affection, but love that reaches down is grace". That's great. This church had God reach down to them and save them by His grace. Although there were problems still, they were saved people. And though carnal, their living was better than their previous pagan behavior. So, what a blessing that was.

The second blessing they had was in verse 5. They were enriched. They had enrichment. Notice in verse 5, "that in everything you are enriched" or literally you are made rich, again the parallel with Ephesians. It's interesting that he's writing from Ephesus to the Corinthians. You were enriched by Him, that is, Jesus Christ, in all utterance and in all knowledge. The word enrichment means that you were made rich in every way. You were made rich in every way. When? The moment you were born again. The moment you were born again, you were born rich. Praise God for that. You were born into God's family. How can you not be rich? And that riches is spiritual. And it's through Christ and it's by the grace of God. And it's God's grace that brings us all of these blessings.

Now, he mentions two areas they were enriched, in utterance and in knowledge. And in the

context of Corinthians, he probably is speaking of the gifts of the Spirit. You're blessed by these gifts. You have these gifts, and it might be these speaking gifts. It could be the speaking in tongues that they had. It could be that they were able to preach or speak the word of knowledge or the word of wisdom. But you're blessed with this utterance or just a general concept that, as a Christian, you now have God filling your life. You have something to actually talk about. Do you ever notice that the world doesn't really have anything to talk about? It's so crazy when you're talking about, hi... hi... you know... I'm fine... Have a nice day... Have a good year... Have a nice weather... You know, okay, bye. See you later. Christians can talk about God, about Jesus, about heaven, about the Scriptures, about salvation, about what God is doing in their lives. I mean, you never lack for topics of discussion when you're with a Christian, right? There's always so much to talk about. The things of God, the word of God, the grace of God, the mercy of God. People talk about the weather and politics and, you know, their job and their money and their aches and pains and stuff like that. But I mean, when you have the Lord, you have this enrichment and all utterance. You pray, you praise, and you proclaim.

And then knowledge. God has enriched you not only with speech, but it comes from knowledge. God has given you this information in the word of God. They had information; they had knowledge, and they were enriched by the word of God by the Spirit of God. You know, how blessed you are tonight to have a Bible. You know how blessed you are to have a Bible. That's why you ought to all have a Bible; you ought to come with a Bible, and you ought to cherish your Bible. It's God's word. It's God's word to you. A lamp to your feet and a light to your path. Without God's word, you're groping in the darkness. You're walking without a light. I was on an airplane one time. You know those stupid magazines on the airplane where they sell all that dumb stuff? It's like, man, why didn't I think of that? All this crazy stuff they sell. One time, I saw these house slippers with lights in the toes. Little battery-packed house slipper lights. And these had little headlights on them. I thought, what a trip. You walk through the dark at night with these little headlights on your feet, you know. The slippers. But the minute I saw that ad, I thought, lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Yeah. God's word. It keeps me from stumbling, keeps me from falling. He enriches our speech; he enriches our knowledge. And so, Paul was thankful for them.

Then, thirdly, he was thankful that they had confirmation. This is an interesting statement in verse 6. "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed, there it is, in you". Now, what does he mean by that verse 6? I think what Paul is saying is, is that your life confirms that your conversion is real. The testimony of Christ is confirmed in you. In other words, Paul was saying their changed lives confirmed their Christianity is true. How do you know that Christianity is true? Just look at someone with a changed life. You have a front-row seat. And watching God change you. Your speech has changed, your attitude has changed, and your desires have changed. You're like, wow, this is real. God really is real. Remember when you first got saved and you go, wow, it's real. He's changing me. I'm not the person I used to be. And you're like, you're like amazed. It's like, this is unbelievable. I remember when I first got saved, I was 19. I was 19 years old. It was just about three years ago. I was 19. I just got saved. I just graduated from high school. I got saved. And for weeks, I just cried every day. I just cried every day. Just rivers of tears that my sins were forgiven. And I had this overwhelming joy in my heart. I felt this

weight lift off my shoulders and this joy in my heart. I just would cry every day, Lord, I can't believe you've forgiven me and given me such peace and given me such joy. And then He began to change my life so radically. Well, what an amazing... And that's the confirmation of Christ in you. And Paul was referring to that in verse 6 when he said that the testimony of Christ is confirmed in you by the way you live. And he was thankful for that. Can others see Christ in you? Can they see the change in you?

Then, fourthly, verse 7, he was thankful that God had given them gifts. Verse 7, "so that you come behind in no gift, charisma, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ". This was a church specially endowed by the Holy Spirit with charismatic gifts. And I believe the gifts are still for today, that they are to exist up to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, whether that's the rapture or the second coming, I don't know, but it doesn't matter. I don't believe there's any warrant in the Bible to be what's called a cessationist. That the gifts of the Spirit ceased with the last apostle. Or that the gifts of the Holy Spirit stopped with the full canon of Scripture. Here, he says you have all these gifts and that you're waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now when Jesus Christ comes, now we know in part, we prophesy in part, we see in part, but then we will know, even as we'll know and we'll see things clearly. We're not going to need the gifts of the Holy Spirit in heaven when that which is perfect has come, that perfect state and we're with the Lord. But until then, all the gifts exist for all the church. Now, why does God give gifts to the church? He gives gifts to the church for the good of the church, for the edifying of the church, and for the glory of God. They're not jewelry to fight over; they're not toys to play with. The Holy Spirit sovereignly chooses who gets what gift, and every Christian has at least one gift. You go, I don't know what my gift is. Well, he's given you a gift. And you're to use your gift for the good of others, building up the body, and for the glory of God. And you're to exercise that gift in love. It's not for you to show off; it's for you to use for the glory of God. And he was thankful that God had given them that gift, and we're going to talk about the gifts of the Holy Spirit as we go through this book of Corinthians.

Then also he was, fifthly, thankful for their preservation. Verse 8. He says in verse 8, "who also, now the who there is Jesus Christ, or Lord Jesus Christ, shall confirm you". Or the word confirm means preserve you, preservation. He shall confirm you until what? The end. Blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was confident that they would be preserved blameless. Now, blameless does not mean perfect or sinless. Blameless is a legal term that means no charge of condemnation or sentencing can be brought against us. Literally, the word means called in. You will not be called in. The idea of being called into a courtroom and found guilty. Because Jesus took our punishment for us. So, it's our position in Christ. God sees you as a Christian, blameless. It doesn't mean that you're sinless. It doesn't mean you don't make mistakes, but you're blameless. Now again, reminding you, he was writing to the carnal Corinthians. Now, this is no excuse for you to say, wow, the Corinthians can have all this going for them and be carnal. Wheee, I can go out and be carnal, too. The grace of God should motivate us to holiness. Properly understanding God's grace to us, we should want to live a life pleasing to God. We're not to presume upon God's grace. That's a very foolish thing. A very foolish thing, a very dangerous thing. There's so much at stake. But we need to understand that our position in Christ is that we will be presented blameless one day. And Jude says, "unto Him that is able to,"

what? "Keep you from falling", Jude 24. And "to present you," what? "Faultless before His presence with exceeding joy". In Romans chapter 8, Paul says "there's no condemnation and there's no separation to us who are in Christ Jesus."

I want you to notice the sixth blessing, verse 9. He says in verse 9 that he was thankful for God's faithfulness. "God is faithful by whom ye were called into the fellowship, the koinonia, of His son Jesus Christ our Lord". One of my favorite attributes of God is His faithfulness. I like to think about the faithfulness of God. I like to preach about the faithfulness of God. I like to sing about the faithfulness of God. I like to study about the faithfulness of God. God is faithful. And Paul's optimism, listen carefully, concerning the Corinthians is based on God's faithfulness. How is it that he could be so confident that God would present them blameless on the day of Jesus Christ? Here's the answer. God is faithful. Do you notice in all these verses like we saw in Ephesians that it's all about what God does for us, not what we do for Him? God is faithful. God is faithful. He's faithful to save us. He's faithful to keep us. He's faithful to watch over us. He's faithful to provide for us. He's faithful to keep us. God will never abandon you. God will never forsake you. Jesus said that He has us in the very palm of His hand. And He said that no one can pluck you out of my hand. God is faithful. I'm not. I'm unfaithful. We are unfaithful, but God is faithful. You can trust Him with your marriage, you can trust Him with your children, you can trust Him with your health, you can trust Him with your jobs, you can trust Him with your wealth, you can trust Him with all of your life. God is faithful. And God will not abandon you and God will not forsake you. Jesus said, I will never leave you and I will never forsake you. You can rest in the faithfulness of God. God who is here today will be here tomorrow. and He'll be here all through eternity, He'll never change. So, all that Paul is boasting on and grateful for and thankful for in the lives of these believers was based upon the faithfulness of God who has called us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now I wanted to point out something in closing. Paul's focus was on Jesus. You may not have detected it as we went through these nine verses. But in the first 10 verses of chapter one of 1 Corinthians, nine times Jesus is mentioned. He's mentioned in all of the first 10 verses, nine of them by name. But all these verses have a reference to or refer to, in some way, some shape or form, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Six times in 10 verses you find the word Lord. You go, is this just a bunch of numbers or stats? No, it's a lesson for us. Keep your focus on Jesus. Keep your eyes on Jesus. You'll be grateful. You won't be picking at the problems. You'll be thankful for the blessings. The blessings were God's grace, God's enrichment, God's confirmation, God's gifts, God's preservation, and God's faithfulness. And let me tell you something. Every Christian has all of these. They're not just for the Corinthians. You go, okay, this is a nice little Bible study about people who lived in Corinth a long time ago. No, if you are in Christ, if you are a child of God, all of these six blessings are yours tonight. They're all yours. And you don't have to earn them or merit them or deserve them or try to perform for them. They all come to you by the grace of God. And when you get your eyes on Jesus, you can be thankful for Jesus Christ from whom all blessings flow. Let's pray.