



“Called, Gifted, and... Worldly”

I Corinthians 1:4-9 (ESV)

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, 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.

Learnings from 1:1-3:

- God has established spiritual authority in His Church to direct and protect it, and He calls His people to respect it (1:1)
- The church belongs to God (1:2)
- God calls people to salvation and holiness through Christ, then gathers them together into local assemblies within a city in order to reflect his beauty and holiness to that city (1:2)
- All true believers are ‘saints’ in God’s eyes—holy ones, set apart for God—but still need consistent challenge from spiritual shepherds to live up to their high and holy calling (1:2)
- Every church exists in two dimensions: local and global (1:2)
- Grace and peace are wonderful blessings of sainthood, available and accessible to all believers through Jesus (1:3)

A SHEPHERD’S PRAYER: GRATEFUL FOR HIS GRACE TO YOU

1 Corinthians 1:4 I 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 spiritual 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. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Observations:

1. Paul regularly prays for this church and thanks God for His gifts of grace given to them (1:4)
2. Paul is grateful to God for how He had ‘graced’ this church—enriching them in every way (1:5) and gifting them with the full range of spiritual gifts (1:7)

3. This church was especially rich in gifted speakers and knowledgeable people (1:5).
4. Paul notes that the genuineness of God’s work of grace in them was evidenced by how they received the message of Christ (1:6).
5. Paul reminds the church that the same Jesus who saved them and gifted them would one day return for them (1:7).
6. Paul declares that God will keep true saints believing in Jesus all the way to the end, guaranteeing their ultimate and complete holiness at Jesus’ return (1:8)
7. Paul declares that his ultimate hope for their holiness was not in them, but in the faithfulness of the God Who had called them (1:9).

Questions for New Life Church:

COMPROMISE OR COUNTER-CULTURE?
CRITICS OR LOVERS?
CONSUMERS OR SERVANTS?
OUR FAME OR HIS FAME?
OUR AGENDA OR HIS AGENDA?
JESUS OR US?

Brother’s Keeper Thought:

Share with your small group or spiritual partner the ways you believe God’s grace has been poured out in your life. What spiritual gifts do you believe He has given you? How are you using those gifts to serve His church? Do you believe that the ‘consumer mentality’ of our culture has seeped into your own mindset? Be honest about these matters.

Bible Reading Plan

Sun.: Acts 21 Mon.: Acts 22 Tues.: Acts 23
 Wed.: Acts 24 Thurs.: Acts 25 Fri.: Acts 26
 Sat.: Acts 27 Sun.: Acts 28