

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

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[0 : 0 0] is a writing of Paul, but when I declare to you which book it will be, it is astounding that that is the very book he was using to affirm his call to me in the ministry. So if you take your Bibles and turn away to the book of 1 Corinthians, the book of 1 Corinthians, and the reason that is astounding was because Corinth is the most wicked church that we find in all of scripture, and it was a study of that church that the Lord was really using to undermine and confirm his calling upon my life into the pastoral ministry. It's not because of what we see of the church at Corinth is really appealing. If we're going to be honest, much of what we see as it pertains to the church at Corinth is going to be appalling. It is really a church that faces more issues than any other church that Paul writes to. It is a letter of rebuke. That is, it is written to correct and to call to account major problems. It is written to a church which Paul planted and spent really nearly two years there after his planting, and not too long after he left, things began to fall apart. And it is written to a people who are redeemed and saved, yes, but sanctification still has a long way to go.

It is not one that gives us warm fuzzies, even though it is ironically the book which we read from in more weddings than any other book, 1 Corinthians 13, the chapter of love. But even that 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians is written to correct a problem that is going on in a local church. It is not written to husband and wives, though it has application to that. It is written to church members. So the love chapter really has its first application here, and then in the home.

And when we read it in that manner, we stand even amazed. It is a letter in which Paul says two times, be imitators of me as I imitate Christ. It is a letter of being held accountable. It is not one that will make us feel good the entire time we're reading it. It is one that will cause us to examine our lives and to really pull back the veil that we put over our own hearts and our own minds. And it is a book that will really investigate who we are internally as individuals and who we are corporately as a church.

It is a book of ruffled feathers, but yet it is one that I really feel like the Lord is calling us to. So this morning, we're going to stand together if we are physically able and desire to do so and read from 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verses 1 through 9. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, will you join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God? Just the first nine verses of this book. It says, Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother. To the church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God, which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for giving us this day, and as we've come to this new portion of your word, Lord, we trust that you have a word for us. We ask that you speak to our hearts and minds, that you shape and conform us to your glory and your image. We ask that it would be done according to your power, and we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

[4 : 35] If I had to pick key verses as it pertained to the letter of 1 Corinthians, and reading through it in its entirety in one setting, and doing it again in a number of manners, I would have to pick 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 12 through 13. You don't have to turn there, but I will read them to you.

1 Corinthians chapter 10, verses 12 through 13 says, Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation has overtaken you, but as is common to man, and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Let me read it again. I believe these are the key verses to understanding the entire letter of 1 Corinthians. Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation has overtaken you, but such as is common to man, and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

The church at Corinth was a church with problems. You can read in Acts chapter 18, I believe it's the first 17, 16 or 17 verses of the 18th chapter of the planting of that church, immediately following Paul's departure from Athens, where he delivers that great message on Mars Hill in Acts 17.

He goes to the city of Corinth, which is not very far away, and there he establishes a church. It is there that he meets fellow believers, and they have the same trade. They're tent makers, and he works as a tent makers until Timothy and some of the other brethren get there, and then he devotes himself full-time. It is there that the Lord Jesus appears to him and settles his soul and tells him, don't worry, I have many people in this place. Stay here. And the Bible tells us he stays there 18 more months. It is also there that the Jewish people revolt against him, that they bring him before the magistrate, and they're trying to try him for illegal activity, and the Roman magistrate says, this has nothing to do with me.

[6 : 48] You're disputing over the wrangling of words, because you're talking about the same person in a different way. And then we meet this individual, Sosthenes, who is probably the leader of the Jewish opposition against Paul, who is being beaten before the magistrate because he brought this kind of crazy claim, wanting to try Paul. But later on, if this is the same Sosthenes, which I mean, it's a unique name.

We don't have any reason to think that it is not. Evidently, I have to agree, as one Bible commentator says, maybe the beating he had is what led him to Christ. We don't know. But Paul here refers to him as his brother. So Corinth was not an easy ministry, but it was a fruitful one. The city of Corinth, you need to understand, even by Roman standards, was very wicked. Corinth is a very instrumental city in the Roman Empire because of its location. It exists on an isthmus in which ships literally were taken out of the water, dragged across the land, and put back into the water because it was considered safer to drag the ship across the isthmus of Corinth than it was to go through the seas because of their volatile nation. So they would have these rolling logs that would bring ships across them, and it was a very large city. It was a city that prospered because of the ship trades, and it had many things introduced there. It was a conglomerate of people. It was a national city.

It wasn't just one group of people that lived there. It was inhabited by various different types of people. But it had such a reputation in the Roman Empire to say that someone was Corinthianizing was to ridicule them and to mock them and to defame them. It was the utmost of debauchery to go Corinthianize in town. It was a city that was vile and wicked. It was full of idolatrous practices, and at one time there were thousands upon thousands cult prostitutes there. It was something that any major metropolitan area today faces, and it was in that city that a church was left behind when Paul eventually left. And as some have said, the problem is that Paul brought the gospel to a city, and a church grew out of it. After Paul's departure, the city began to get into the church, and it began to have problems. Paul heard about this when he was in Ephesus, and he wrote this letter somewhere around the mid-50s A.D., and he wrote it back because of the problems he heard, and because of some questions that were brought to him, and we will address all those questions.

Now, this is the reality. This is the reality of the locale. This is the reality of the people. They were saved, but we would put it in our lamest terms. They were saved, but, you know, barely saved.

Some of you know what I'm talking about. You remember when you came to Christ, you had that. Now, I'm a believer, but I'm just a believer right now. Like, you come to Christ, and we call that spiritual infancy, which means you probably still had a little bit of the old person inside of you. Some of us, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, maybe still have a little bit of that spiritual infancy inside of us. We were saved, but barely saved. That is, we had been redeemed in Christ, but all things had not been made new yet, because we still had this internal struggle going on within us, and the old man kept being resurrected, because he had been crucified in Christ, but we kept giving him CPR, wanting him to bring him back up, and do the things we used to do, and we have this struggle, this problem, and that's what's going on in Corinth.

[10:37] But we need to understand that the hope of the people at Corinth is the hope for the church today. And I want you to see this morning, just in the first nine verses, the powerful position of the church.

The powerful position of the church. Paul wrote his letters very intentionally. His introductory comments were not comments that were given flippantly or lightly. They were given with intentionality.

When Paul is about to address major theological issues, major personal issues, he does not just try to soften the blow. He shares to them a great truth in order to receive what he is about to declare.

We looked at it this past Wednesday when we were looking in 1 Samuel. You remember Samuel, the man's final public discourse when he stood before the people of Israel. He first asked the people to examine his own life and to see what he had stolen, to see how he had defrauded anyone, to see what robbery he had taken. He had put himself open and bare before the people of Israel.

He said, is there anything wrong in me? And it was after the people said, no, you've done us no wrong. You have declared nothing bad to us. You've not taken any money from us. Then Samuel declares the word of God to them because Samuel was using the platform of his own personal life to be that on which he stood to declare a theological truth, right? He was using who he was, what he knew, to declare this truth.

[12:05] Now, Paul is coming with some hard words. Paul is going to come, it says later in 2 Corinthians, in that letter when he writes, there are actually three letters. One of them is lost. We don't know where it is because he references it in 2 Corinthians as the second letter which he wrote, which we don't have, but God didn't want us to have it. So this is what we have. But in 2 Corinthians, we read how he says, you say that my words are powerful, but in person I am weak. He says, what I am in words also am in spirit. And he's declaring his authority to do these things.

But before he declares his authoritative word to them, he reminds them of who they are. Because the reality is, it is much more important for us to understand who we are in Christ before we'll ever be held accountable to how we ought to live because of who we are. You're no longer just a Corinthian, he says. You will notice, and we did not read its entirety if you were to read down throughout the whole first chapter, there's this repetition of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this constant emphasis on the Lordship of Christ. And that is intentional because when you emphasize the Lordship of Christ, then all of a sudden you have the authority and even the right to call the people of Christ to account.

But he does not want to just disparage them. I mean, this is a letter we will read where Paul speaks of handing a church member over to Satan. Paul says, I have handed this believer, this church member, over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that his soul may be saved.

This is a letter in which 1 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul says that church members, believers, were taking the Lord's Supper in such an unfit way that when they came together, many of them were sleeping. That's a good New Testament word of saying that as believers, they were dying. They were dropping dead because of the way they were taking the Lord's Supper.

So it's a letter with power. But he also reminds them that though all this stuff is going on, there's all this wickedness present, they stand in a powerful position as the church.

[14 : 21] That their life should look different because of who they are, that there is a right to expect what is to follow, that what he is going to declare should be living out on a daily basis because of who they are, not where they live, not where they are, but because of who they are.

And more importantly, whose they are. Because it is their position which dictates their behavior. Friend, one great application.

Who you are in Christ absolutely dictates what you do in life. The position you have in Christ is the most important or should be the most influential thing of how you live daily.

You stand in a powerful position. You're not working to earn a position. You're not seeking to acquire a position.

You're not moving up the ladder. In Christ, we have already been put on the top rung. And we need to live like so. This essentially is what he's declaring to the people of Corinth.

[15 : 31] And he does it in three great ways. Number one, he reminds them of a common experience. There is a common experience.

It says, Paul, now pay attention to the wording, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Paul, called as an apostle.

So Paul here references his calling, right? I'm not just Saul who is persecuting the believers. I'm not Saul of Damascus or on the Damascus road.

I'm not Paul who's set at the feet of Gamaliel who was from Tarsus. I'm not the Jew of all Jews, a Pharisee of all Pharisees. I'm not any of those things I have gained. I am an individual who has been called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.

So the calling upon my life dictates and determines who I am. Right? He says, because he has called me, now I am different. He does not define himself as being a Roman citizen.

[16 : 32] He does not define himself. Listen, he is writing to a mixed multitude of church members. There are both Jews and Greeks. There are Romans and Jews. And Paul is uniquely fit that he could relate to each and every one of them.

As a matter of fact, some Bible scholars say that even in his greetings where he says, grace and peace to you, those are both the Roman greeting and the Jewish greeting. That he could appeal to the congregation.

That he could speak to a wide array of people because he was a Roman citizen by birth. And he was the Jew of Jews of all Jews. Right? He had both ends of the spectrum covered. He alone stood unique.

But when he refers to himself, he highlights not how he was born or where he was raised or whose feet he sat at and learned. When he references himself, he says, called as an apostle.

I've been chosen by God. So therefore, my calling and my choosing dictates who I am and what I write. And then he moves on.

[17 : 32] And Sosthenes, our brother. Now think about this just for a moment. Sosthenes, the last time he was in Corinth, or maybe he's still there, we don't know. But the last time we heard anything about him, he was in Corinth standing before the magistrate going against Paul.

Bringing an accusation against Paul. He was one who said Paul was wrong. He's a Jew. But he was a Jew who said that Paul is really undermining our faith. And we need to persecute him to the fullest letter of the law.

Here is Sosthenes who is saying that we need to get rid of this man. He was Sosthenes who was beaten because he brought this before this court. And now Paul refers to him as his brother.

Wonderful. And his brother. And now move on. To the church of God, which is at Corinth. Friend, the wording of scripture is absolutely important.

Currently, I'm reading a book called Christian Disciplines of the Faith. Christian Disciplines are not something that we really enjoy, or really we talk about or we promote much anymore.

[18 : 39] But it's the Christian Disciplines of the Faith. Fasting, prayer, scripture memorization, study, meditation, Bible reading. Disciplines, right? Things that we do. Because you are to discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.

And bodily exercise profits a little bit. Godliness profits much. And you need to live a disciplined life. And we live such an undisciplined life in spiritual matters, whereas in other matters we live a pretty disciplined life.

So why not deal with Christian Disciplines? But the author of that book says, pay attention to the wording of scripture. And this is a convicting thing for me. Don't just remember scripture in generalities. Remember it in its peculiarities, in its wordings.

Now, the words of God matter. Look at what it says. He is writing to the church of God, which is at Corinth. He is not writing to the Corinthian church.

He is writing to the church of God, which is at Corinth. Which means God is in the possessive position. The church is God's church, not the Corinthian's church.

[19 : 40] Right? That matters. This isn't a Corinthian church. This is the church of God, which is at Corinth. Which means the one who possesses it dictates what it should look like.

God is the possessor of the church. It is his church. Therefore, he has the right to dictate. It is the Corinthians just happened to be a part of his church, which is at their city.

It is not their church. It is his church. So therefore, it is the church of God, which is at Corinth. And therefore, God has the right to determine what it should look like.

That matters. That absolutely matters. That's why I'm always very careful to say, well, at my church, if you ever come upon the church of Billy Joe Calvert, flee.

Leave it. Don't do it. It won't get you anywhere. It's his church. And now we begin to get this common experience because now he reminds them, Paul is called, Sosthenes was called to the church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, set apart in Christ.

[20 : 59] So he's writing to people who are set apart. That's what sanctified means. Set apart in Christ Jesus. I love this. Saints by calling. The most wicked church that we find in the New Testament is the only church which Paul refers to them as saints.

Now, why does he do it? Because he refers to them as saints, not by practice. Oh, I'm just a sinner saved by grace. You're absolutely right. You're a sinner saved by grace. So am I, each and every one of us.

For by grace you have been saved, not by works, lest any man shall boast. Right? We are sinners saved by grace. But my friend, listen, we are saints by calling. He has saved us by grace, but he has called us to be saints.

You say, well, I'm no saint. You are in God's eyes. That's how he called you. And Paul references his calling because that dictates how he lives.

And now he reminds the people at Corinth, the believers at Corinth, of their calling. Because their calling should dictate how they live. And look at what it says.

[22 : 04] Saints by calling with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. So now all of a sudden we begin to see this common experience.

The common experience is God is not unique in Corinth. The experience that the Corinthian believers had is not unique. God has called them to himself the way he calls anyone to himself.

That those who profess the name of Jesus Christ are saved by grace. And they're called to be saints. So now how they behave in Corinth dictates how everyone perceives the church everywhere.

Because they are just as much saved as anyone else is saved. Let's bring that application down here. We have a common experience. That is, we come to Christ the same way anybody else in the world comes to Christ.

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. They are called by him, to him, and for him. And they are saints by calling.

[23 : 09] So that is, my actions reflect how others view other believers. How I live and what I do is a representation and a reflection of every other believer around the world.

This is why Paul also says in this letter, What have we to do with judging the world? Do we not admonish and judge our brothers and sisters in Christ? Because what Paul is reminding them is, You and I came to Christ the same way, So the way you behave in dictates how people see me.

That is not judgment unto condemnation. This is judgment unto rebuke. That is correction. It is not trying to condemn someone to a Christless eternity. It is to correct someone to live right temporarily.

Paul says, Because the way people view me is how they view you. Because we share a common experience. Do you know why you ought to disciple one another?

Walk with one another? Hold one another accountable? Do you know why we ought to walk beside other brothers and sisters in Christ? And to lift them up? Why we ought to carry their load when they cannot carry it themselves?

[24 : 25] And we need people to carry our load when we cannot carry it ourselves. It is because the way people view me is how they view you. And the way they view you is the way they view me. And the way they view every other believer, Every other true believer around the world, Is the same way they view us.

We share a common experience. And this is a powerful position. Because it gives us a unity that none other has.

The second thing we see is a full equipping. They have a common experience, But they have a full equipping. You say, well, now God may call me a saint, But I can't be a saint. Watch out.

Remember our key verses. For no temptation has overtaken you as is common unto man. And God is able. God is able.

There's a full equipping. See, they say, well, Paul, you may say we're called saints, But I don't look like a saint. I don't feel like a saint. And I don't believe that I am a saint. And he said, well, that's fine.

[25 : 27] God has given you everything you need to be a saint. But look at what it says. He said, you have been fully equipped. He says in verse 4, I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God, Which was given you in Christ Jesus.

Now, you can't argue with the grace that has been given to you. Grace is a free gift at God's expense. Right? Some have defined it as God's riches at Christ's expense. That is something that was given to you freely.

You didn't earn it. It is by grace that these things are given to you. And it says you have been enriched by his grace. That is the moment we come to Christ. Look at what the next verse says. That in everything you were enriched in him, In all speech and knowledge.

The Corinthians thought that they were pretty good at public speaking. As a matter of fact, that's one of the corrections we get to when we come over here, To the gifts of the spirit in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, And which leads to 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 Corinthians 14.

It's kind of a correction of that. Like, we got some good speakers around here, right? We have some speaking in tongues. And we have some prophets. And we have some admonition. And he said, well, you gifted in that, all right. But you have been gifted and equipped in all things.

[26 : 27] It says that by grace you are enriched in all ways by him. Think about this. The moment you come to salvific knowledge of Jesus Christ, It is a moment you are truly believed. The moment you truly believe with all your heart, The vilest of sinner when he truly believes is in that moment completely redeemed.

Do you remember that? Right. So the moment we believe in Jesus Christ with all heart, You are enriched by him with his possessions. He does not give you what you have from yourself. He gives you what he has out of himself.

That is, he equips you with his riches. You are given from the storehouses of Christ. He does not dig through your life and see what you got that he can use. Now, he is going to glorify and magnify how he made you.

If he made you with extroverted personality, Then he is going to glorify that. He is going to temper it a little bit sometimes. And he is going to use it. And he is going to, if you are with an introverted personality, He will glorify that and let you do things that other people can't do.

How he made you and fashioned you and formed you. Those are important. But he uses what is at Christ, is enriched by Christ's expenses. It's his things.

[27 : 36] He says, you are enriched in him in all speech and knowledge. And the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you. Look at this in verse 7. I know I'm going fast, but stay with me. So that you are not lacking in any gift.

You're not lacking in any gift. What he is saying is you are saints by calling, O church that is at Corinth. And you can be that because every gift that you need to fulfill what God is calling you to do, you have.

You're not lacking anything. Now, this is a powerful position. The church with all the problems, all the stumblings, all the hindrances, is the church with all of the mistakes, the church with all of the failures, is the same church that Paul says, God has equipped you to do everything he's calling you to do.

The things that are going to come. How to pray. How to live as a husband and wife, right? How to raise up your children or to make an impact on the generations around you. How to love brothers and sisters in Christ.

How men should behave. How women should behave. How to live pure. In a wicked society. How to be undefiled from the things of the world. How to be separate from that yet make an impact on it.

[28 : 52] He says all of those things, you already have everything you need to do them. You are fully equipped. My friend, listen to me.

We don't set up here or set in this place and try to paint a picture better than it is. This world is a hard place to walk in godliness.

And it's getting increasingly harder every day. It is a hard place to walk in faithfulness and in sincerity.

There's temptation after temptation after temptation after temptation. Some of it is temptation to complacency. Some of it is temptation to open sin which you know is wrong. Some of it is temptation to just doing nothing.

To idleness. This world is a difficult place. This world is a difficult place. For mothers, it's getting harder at home than it's ever been. There are more things coming into the home and infiltrating the home than they have ever done in any other point in history.

[29 : 53] For mothers and grandmothers, what used to be the battleground in the public forum is now the battleground in the home living room. We have to be on our guard. And mothers and grandmothers, this thing that we don't like to talk about a lot, homemakers, that's a harder job than it's ever been in any other time in history.

In the workplace, there's more temptation to kind of just skirt by and to do what you do for your own sake, not to fulfill the biblical command to do as you do unto the Lord, not unto man.

Because you look around as the author of the book of Proverbs says, and it looks like the wicked are increasing and the righteous are hurting. So in the workplace, it's easy to take shortcuts and to go the easy way around.

You just do you, right? It's a hard place. It's harder than it was for the church that was at Corinth. But the reality is, is that everything we need to do, all that God has called us to do, we already have.

We are fully equipped. We have been enriched in Christ to live at this time in history, at this place in history, to do what he's called us to do.

[31 : 05] And we have it clearly revealed to us in the word. It's not because we lack the means to do it. It's because quite often we lack the desire and the discipline to trust in those means as we do it.

We're fully equipped. And that's a powerful position. This world, if you're in the world and you do not know Christ, you're going to give it your best efforts, and you're going to fall short every single time.

You're going to know in the very gut of your being, I am not doing what I should do. You know that. It's called conviction. And when you don't know that, that's a dangerous place to be, even more dangerous.

You've been given over to a debased mind. But for those who know Christ, we're not doing it by the best of our abilities. We're doing it with all that Christ has enriched us in. Our work and our labors and our efforts now flow from his provisions, not our actions.

And that's glorious. Which leads us to the third and final position that the church has. There's a common experience, there's a full equipping, and there's a secure eternity. There's a secure eternity.

[32 : 17] To the church with problems that if, I mean, honestly, if the church that was at Corinth was right down the road, beyond a shadow of a doubt, I would almost say, most of you would not want to join it.

I mean, they had, there were schisms in the middle of the church. Some people say, well, I'm of Paul. Well, I'm of Apollos. Well, I'm of Christ. And that's the first schism. So, you know, it depends on, you know, which flamboyant leader you were following.

There was incest. There was unfaithfulness. And it was being praised. Every time they had the Lord's Supper, they were expecting someone to die.

I mean, that where you want to go join church? First time they had the Lord's Supper, like, I think I'm leaving. Right? Close communion today, I won't take it. Thank you. I mean, that's our natural feeling.

It is not a church that we would want to join. But yet, this church, this church, are full of people who have been sanctified in Christ, in the middle of a wicked society.

[33 : 30] The society still has the influence over them, but they're saints by calling. And Paul reminds them they have a secure eternity. I mean, honestly, if we were looking in, we would say, that church is full of lost people.

And if we were basing salvation upon the works of man, we would agree. Because the works they were reflecting definitely did not pertain to godliness.

And we would say there's no way they're going to get into heaven looking like that. Right? But guess what? No matter how good we are, no matter how much good we do, there's no way we're getting into heaven looking like that. All of our righteousness, Paul said, is like filthy rags.

So our best works are not enough to get us there. Paul tells them, look at what it says. This church, with all the problems, he says in the second half of verse 7, that they were awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now you would think, they would say, well, we don't want Jesus to come anytime soon. No, he says you're awaiting eagerly. Why? Because that spiritual promptness inside of you, that which cries out inside of you that he is, that Christ is Lord.

[34 : 39] That nudging of the spirit also produces a desire to see Christ. He says, you're awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Look at this. Who will also confirm you to the end?

That is, he'll keep you secure until the end. Blameless. Blameless. Oh, no, no, we got a lot we can blame them for. I mean, did you just not hear everything they were doing?

There's a lot we can blame them for. People were literally coming to take the Lord's Supper and getting drunk at the Lord's Supper. What?

Paul says, you're blameless. Paul's giving someone over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. So that he may be saved.

Blameless. Blameless. Look at what it says. Blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. He does not say you're blameless now. You'll be blameless then.

[35 : 41] The faults of the present do not dictate the expectation of the future. He says, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful. Through whom you were called. This reminder of the calling. For whom you were called into the fellowship. The church. With his son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Why does he remind them of a secure eternity? Because the reality that eternity is taken care of should dictate how we live out daily lives.

So much of us get discouraged because we say, well, if I can't do it good enough, I'm just going to give up. Anybody ever do that? I'm that way. If I can't excel or succeed in something.

I know a friend of mine. He says, somebody asked him one time. He said, man, you're good at every sport you play. He said, no, I just don't play the sports I'm not good at. Made a lot of sense. Right?

[36 : 41] He said, I just don't play the sports I can't do. We have that way, right? So when we realize it, and we just give up. And when we give up, things just fall apart. And there are so many people in the Christian walk that they're trying to be good enough.

They're trying to be good enough. They're trying to be good enough. They're trying to do enough. They're trying to do this work. They got to get this problem fixed. They got to get this over here taken care of. And their efforts and their efforts and their efforts. And then there comes a day where they just keep stumbling.

They keep falling. And you know what? I just give up. That's what's going on in Corinth. They just said, well, forget it. If we can't overcome it, let's just embrace it. Right? Let's just let it come all the way in. And we'll live like that. And we'll just go.

Paul reminds them, your eternity is secure in Christ. So you need to live differently today. You're not working for something. You're working because of something.

Huge difference. You're not trying to reach heaven. You're already going there. So you need to live like you're going to be there.

[37 : 41] And he calls them to account. Because they're in a powerful position called the fellowship of the church that reminds them. In Christ, they're blameless.

In Christ, they're redeemed. In Christ, they're forgiven. In Christ, they are settled and secured in all of eternity. Which means there'll be a day where they stand before their Lord Jesus Christ.

And give an account for how they've lived. And since eternity is settled, let's quit working for eternity and let's work because of it.

Then when you stumble, you thank him that that does not change where you're at eternally. And you beg of him, but change how I live temporarily.

All the difference in the world. Because, and I'm wrapping up. Here this last thing.

[38 : 42] If I thought it was up to my own works and efforts, I would have given up a long time ago. I would have. But when I realize eternity has already settled.

Then let the world hear his voice as it flows through praise from my mouth. My failures become a platform for his grace. My stumblings become a testimony to his mercy.

My life looks different. Because eternally, eternity is already taken care of. And I stand in a powerful position even in the midst of a wicked world.

Because I'm a part of the fellowship. The world is strong. But it's not as strong as what I'm a part of. I'm a part of the fellowship in Christ Jesus called the church.

What a powerful position of the church. Let's pray. Lord, we come before you with thanksgiving for your word.

[39 : 57] Lord, acknowledgement that it comes to us sometime in difficulty, with much penetration. Lord, we pray that you have your way and your work by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

I ask that whatever you want to do in my heart, in my life, Lord, you have the freedom to do it. Lord, I pray the same for each and every one that is listening to the sound of my voice.

Lord, I pray that you draw us by your love and you move us by your commands. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

[42 : 25] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.