

Because the Grace of God

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[0 : 00] So, Acts chapter 18, we'll read verses 1 through the first part of verse 18. This will be from the ESV.

This is God's Word. After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. He found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome.

And he went to see them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked, for they were tent makers by trade. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the Word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, Your blood be on your own heads.

I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles. And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titus Justus, a worshiper of God.

[1 : 17] His house was next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing Paul, believed and were baptized.

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, Do not be afraid, but go on speaking, and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many people, for I have many in this city who are my people.

And he stayed there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them. But when Galio was pro-council of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying, This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.

But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Galio said to the Jews, If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint.

But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things.

[2 : 33] And he drove them from the tribunal. And they seized, and they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal.

But Galio paid no attention to any of this. After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria and with him Priscilla and Aquila.

We're privileged to hear the Word of God preached. Let's pay close attention. Well, you can turn over in your Bibles with me to 1 Corinthians 1.

We're going to be looking at the first nine verses in this letter. 1 Corinthians.

Well, I don't know if you know this about my wife and I, but we are rather art collectors. In many rooms in our house, you can find pieces of art on the walls.

[3 : 43] Lots of pieces of art. You might be thinking, I've been to your house. I don't remember seeing all of this art on your walls. How did you miss it?

How did you miss the marker and crayon-filled, eight-and-a-half-by-eleven standard printing pieces of paper that our kids taped on the walls, calling it art.

Now, sometimes our kids will ask for help, and it's no surprise. I can tell when my kids have had help. As they get older, it does get harder to tell, but I can tell when mom had a hand in the latest horn masterpiece.

She doesn't always get credit, though, for her contribution. The younger ones especially, they will find their way into my office, and they will show me something that they drew, and they take great pride in it.

And I'll ask them, did you draw this? And they will say, clear as day, with confidence, yes! And yet, you look at it, and pretty quickly you can see, not just that somebody else had a hand in it, but basically, no, no, no, Casey drew that.

[4 : 46] And that child wants to say, I did it! He is going to claim this great work as entirely his own doing. We can treat God like this, can't we?

We can take pride in His great work in us. So how do we remain humble? Well, we give credit where credit is due.

We remember what God has done, what God has accomplished in us. And our passage this evening does just that. We're going to highlight two times where Paul gives credit where credit is due.

Or you could say, in our passage, we're going to see two needed reminders that will keep us humble. They'll keep us humble, but they will also make us to be wonderfully confident.

Humble, yet wonderfully confident. Not confident in ourselves, but confident in our God. We are confident in Him as we see that He is very much at work in us.

[5 : 54] So let's look at this first needed reminder together. And it is this. God calls us. God calls us. Read with me 1 Corinthians 1, beginning in verse 1.

Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. And our brother, Sosthenes, to 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.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Then just drop down to verse 9. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

So here in this greeting, we are introduced to both the author of this letter and the recipients. Paul wrote it. And as we heard in the reading of Acts chapter 18, Paul had planted this church in Corinth.

This was during the second of his three missionary journeys that he took throughout the Roman Empire. So before Corinth, Paul had been in Athens. And he left Athens and came over to Corinth, not too far away.

[7 : 20] But even though they may have been close-ish in proximity, Athens and Corinth were vastly different cities. Athens was very historic, but somewhat stuck in the past.

Corinth, on the other hand, was the up-and-coming city. It was the place to be. It had actually been destroyed by the Romans, and then rebuilt by the Romans not long before.

So it was modern. It was brimming with opportunities to move up in social status, to gain influence, and especially for many people to gain wealth, to become rich.

Perhaps it was a little bit like San Francisco in the days of the California gold rush. Lots of opportunities in Corinth. And Paul saw the opportunity for the gospel as well.

He came, and he immediately began preaching Christ in the synagogue. Every Sabbath. Then he faced opposition from the Jews. So what did he do? Took the gospel to the Gentiles, teaching the word of God.

[8 : 25] He stayed there for a year and a half, we heard. And during that time, this church was established, both believing Jews and believing Gentiles. So now Paul is writing to this church, and he says that he has Sosthenes with him.

It seems that he expects the church to know who Sosthenes is. Because he calls him our brother. And that makes it seem like this Sosthenes is perhaps the same Sosthenes that we heard in Acts 18.

If you remember, about a year and a half after Paul had come to Corinth, trouble came to town looking for Paul. The Jews in Acts 18 say that they made a united attack upon Paul.

They brought him before Galio, that proconsul of Achaia. They were trying to get these charges against Paul to stick. But they wouldn't. Galio was like, I'm not interested in your disputes.

And so when he drove the Jews from the tribunal, what did they do in their anger? They seized the synagogue ruler, and they beat him in front of the tribunal.

[9 : 36] That is a strange thing to do. Here are these Jewish people beating the synagogue ruler, a Jewish leader in their community. Why would they do that?

Well, the text doesn't exactly say. But if that synagogue ruler was already somewhat sympathetic to the Christian community, maybe he had heard the preaching of Paul during all of those Sabbath days when Paul was in the temple, or in the synagogue, or perhaps this synagogue ruler was earnestly seeking to know how Jesus is the Christ.

Perhaps he was on the cusp of professing faith in Christ. And if that were the case, it makes sense that the Jews would beat this man. And who was he? What was his name?

Sosthenes. So we don't know for sure, but it's entirely possible that the Sosthenes of Acts 18 was now the Sosthenes, our brother who was with Paul, which would have been an encouragement to the Corinthians.

They would have known that Sosthenes well, a dear brother who had come to faith. Now, it's been a few years since Paul was in Corinth.

[10 : 48] He's writing now from Ephesus. And he's in Ephesus much like he had been in Corinth. He was in Corinth for that year and a half. He's going to be in Ephesus for three years.

And during that time, he's writing to the church. Now, even though it's only been a few years, the church is in poor spiritual health.

It had actually previously written to Paul with what seemed to be a list of questions and concerns. He's going to make reference to some of these questions and concerns in his letter.

It's as though the church is saying, Paul, we need your advice. We need your counsel. We need your input. We need your help on these matters. And Paul had already written to this church once before.

We don't have that letter. You could call it 0 Corinthians since it came before the letter that we now have called 1 Corinthians. So now Paul is writing to the church again.

[11 : 47] He's addressing all of these areas of concern. So this letter isn't like, say, Ephesians. Ephesians is more broad and general.

It gives us this gospel truth and then applies it in somewhat universal ways. This is a very particular letter written to a very particular church.

It's more like we're reading the mail of the church in Corinth or we're listening in on this back and forth conversation, but we're only hearing one side of it from Paul as he's writing to address those very particular concerns.

So 1 Corinthians is not like Ephesians. 1 Corinthians is also not like Paul's letter to the Romans. If the letter to the Romans emphasizes the clear gospel presentation, the letter in 1 Corinthians emphasizes the clear gospel application.

The Corinthians were failing to live in light of the gospel. They were failing to see how the gospel transforms every aspect of the Christian's life.

[12 : 54] They were still allowing worldly values and worldly priorities to take precedence over the gospel. It was as though their Christian identity was just kind of tacked on to their lives.

Can you relate to this at all? We are tempted with the same kind of misplaced values and priorities. Do you want to grow in living out the gospel with values and priorities that are aligned with God?

Well, good news! Paul, carried along by the Spirit, is going to help the Corinthians and us. He's going to help us to see how the truth of Christ impacts a variety of areas of life.

So we may not be the original audience, but God had this written for us. That's why it's in our Bibles. Zero Corinthians didn't make it, and that's no mistake.

1 Corinthians is just what we need to teach us. It's just what we need to reprove us, to correct us, to train us in righteousness. So there is much that we need to hear from 1 Corinthians, just like the church in Corinth needed to hear.

[14 : 07] So what Paul reminds us of first is a very basic and yet foundational truth, a reminder that keeps us humble and yet confident.

God has called us. God has called us. Now Paul makes a point of weaving this idea of calling throughout these opening verses. It's part of the reason that our passage tonight is the first nine verses because we see the idea of being called or this calling found throughout.

Now Paul covers all of his bases. He leaves no one out when talking about calling. He says that he himself was called. He says that the church in Corinth was called.

He says that all Christians in the universal church have been called. There is no one who is in Christ that has not been called by God.

You can't be a Christian without a calling involved. It just, it doesn't happen any other way. So we really need to know what is this calling? What does that word, that idea mean in the Bible?

[15 : 20] Because we find it throughout the Bible. We find two types of callings. So we need to think about each of these callings and distinguish between them. So the first way we can understand calling is the gospel call.

And we're also going to consider a second way to understand calling. And that is the effectual call or the calling that has its intended effect. It works and it always works.

So we need to distinguish between each of those to understand what Paul is talking about here in 1 Corinthians. So the gospel call. That call is indiscriminate, meaning that it's meant to be spread to as many people in as many places as possible.

It is like the farmer in Jesus' parable, sowing seed on all types of ground. It's a scattered seed. It's a proclamation. It's an invitation.

It's a beckoning to the listener to hear and to receive the good news of salvation that is only found in Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ models this well for us.

[16 : 31] Like when Jesus says in Matthew 11, 28, Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I'll give you rest. Or when he stood up in the midst of this great crowd of people, great crowd of Jews on the last day of the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem.

People are all around and he stands up and he cries out in John chapter 7, verse 37, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. That is the gospel call. That is the proclamation to turn to Christ, to repent of your sins, to trust in him.

That call goes forth. And people can accept it or they can reject it. It's like when you make a phone call. The person on the other end of it, they can accept that call or they can look at their phone and say, maybe not.

And they can reject that call. Or kids, like when you're playing outside and your parents call you in or maybe multiple parents call all at once.

[17 : 44] And that call goes out to the whole group of kids, the bunch of you all playing outside. Some may respond rightly and obey as they should, running in right away.

Others may choose to ignore and keep playing. They face the consequences for that. So have you believed the gospel call tonight?

tonight? Have you believed the good news that Jesus Christ came to save sinners by dying on the cross for their sins and rising again?

You've heard it. The call has gone forth. If you are outside of Christ, I urge you, turn from your sin. Trust in him. Hear the gospel call.

Don't plug your ears. Repent. Believe the good news of the gospel. It is truly good news for sinners lost in their sin.

[18 : 42] So when the gospel is proclaimed for the ear to hear, when it's meant to be spread to as many people as possible, that's the first way that we understand calling.

It goes out to all. And while some may accept the call, others may reject it. That calling, though, is not the calling of 1 Corinthians 1.

Paul here is talking about the effectual call, that calling that has its intended effect. And this is not a call that is heard with the ear like the gospel call, though it is only through the gospel call that the effectual call comes.

But this effectual call is an internal reality. It is the call of God in the heart. And this call is unique in that it doesn't go forth to all people.

Romans 8 helps us to understand this. You may be familiar with this verse. Verse 30. It says that those whom God predestined or chose before the foundation of the world, those whom God predestined, He also called.

[19 : 56] And those whom He called, He also justified. and those whom He justified, He also glorified. We talk about that as the chain of salvation. And none of the links in that chain can be broken.

So, for example, you can't have someone who is predestined, but then who is not ultimately glorified. Or you can't have somebody who is called, but who has not already been predestined.

Those who are called are justified. But we know that not all are justified. Not all who hear the gospel call with their ear are effectually called by God.

So, two callings that we must understand. The gospel call, the effectual call. The gospel call heard with the ear as Christ is proclaimed. And the effectual call as God is at work in our hearts, drawing us to Himself for His glory, and He never fails to draw those whom He calls.

That calling is effectual. It has its intended effect. And that is the calling that Paul has in view here in 1 Corinthians. So first, he talks about that calling in reference to himself.

[21 : 18] Look again at verse 1. He has himself in mind. Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. So, Paul understands first that he was called, and it was by the will of God.

God willed it. God determined to call Paul, and so his calling was going to be effectual. It was going to work upon Paul.

We read of Paul's conversion in Acts chapter 9. Paul met the Lord on the Damascus road. And by met, I mean that he was blinded by this brilliant light, that he fell to the ground, and the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to Paul.

That is quite the gospel call that goes forth. And God also was certainly at work in his heart. Here was a man who was breathing threats, murderous threats against Christians, who now became a Christian.

God had a very special purpose for Paul. Paul says here that he was called to be an apostle, or as God described him in Acts 9.15, a chosen instrument of mind.

[22 : 36] Now, let's be clear. Not everyone hears the audible voice of Jesus. Not everyone is blinded as part of their conversion. But part of the reason for that was because of Paul's special calling, that he was called to be an apostle.

This particular calling that was for a select number of men in the first century. Men who were set apart by Jesus himself to be his ambassadors.

Men who were taught by Jesus himself. They were then sent in the first century to do what? To take the gospel to Jews and Gentiles.

To see the establishment of local churches throughout the known world. So Paul is one of those apostles who laid the foundation for the early church.

That was Paul's calling described for us in verse 1. Then Paul describes the calling of these very Corinthian believers in verse 2.

[23 : 38] But they're not called to be apostles. No, their calling is rather different. They are called to be saints just as all believers are called to be.

Those who are meant to be holy. Those who are meant to be set apart by God for himself. Or as verse 9 says, called into the fellowship of his son.

So no one secretly sneaks into the kingdom of God. Nobody gets into God's kingdom unnoticed by God.

Nobody accidentally finds their way into God's kingdom. Like when your GPS fails you and you accidentally find yourself on private property and the owner doesn't know you're there and the owner doesn't want you there.

That's not how entering into God's kingdom or coming into the fellowship of his son works. God calls all who enter. He draws them in.

[24 : 40] He calls his elect, his chosen people and it works every time. It never fails. We see this throughout the New Testament.

Jesus calls his sheep by name in John 10 and he leads them out. And it's not like there's one straggling sheep behind who was called and missed the trail of other sheep or was left behind.

We read in another one of Paul's letters to the church in Rome. He describes that congregation as those called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Those who belong to Jesus have been called. So the church in Corinth was called to be saints, holy, set apart for God.

But they're not the only ones. We are included here in this passage because what does Paul say? To the church of God that is in Corinth to those sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints together together with all those in every place who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[25 : 53] Together with all of those who call upon his name. That includes the church today. That includes us. So Paul just keeps widening the circle.

First he talks about how he was called and then he talks about how the church in Corinth was called and then all Christians are included, Jews and Gentiles alike. And you see the wordplay there in verse 2, don't you?

We who have called upon the name of the Lord were first called by the Lord. That we who cried out to him for salvation were first drawn to him by his spirit.

So what is your testimony? When you tell others about how you became a Christian, where do you start? Who do you say took the initiative?

We see here in 1 Corinthians that God is the great initiator of our faith. He called us into the fellowship of his son.

[26 : 57] He called us into this ever increasingly joy-filled relationship with Jesus. That's the fellowship we've been called into.

And that means that he's called us out of something and somewhere else. If he's called us into the fellowship of the son, where did he call us out of? We'll listen to Ephesians 2, beginning in verse 1.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

So before we were in fellowship or entered into the fellowship of the son, we were in the fellowship of the world, following the course of this world.

We were in the fellowship of Satan, following him as the prince of the power of the air. We were in the fellowship of the flesh, living in its passions, carrying out its desires.

[28 : 16] We were outside of Christ, but we who were outside of Christ have now been brought near. We have been brought into the fellowship of the son because God, in his great mercy and grace, called us to be saints.

He called us to himself. We once had been wandering in the darkness of our sin with no hope of finding our way out. And then God shone that brilliant light of the gospel into our hearts.

His glorious light came flooding into our hearts that we might then repent and believe. So yes, your testimony certainly involves you.

God has commanded that all people everywhere repent. You and I had to do this in order to be saved, but we did it because God called us and his calling had its intended effect.

And so that repentance was granted to us, that faith was given to us as a gift. And the more that we understand that, the quicker that we are to humbly and yet confidently say, look at what God has done in me.

[29 : 33] Not look at what I have done in myself, not look at what I have done in my calling out to God, but look at what God has done in that he called me, even me, to himself.

So that's the first needed reminder for us this evening. God calls us. Now we consider the second, the second needed reminder that keeps us humble and yet wonderfully confident.

God makes us rich in Christ. God makes us rich in Christ. Read with me beginning in verse 4.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. So Paul here moves from the greeting of his letter into an expression of thanksgiving.

[31 : 04] And who is Paul thankful to? Well, he's thankful to God. And what is Paul thankful to God for? The grace of God that was given to the Corinthian church?

He's saying, I am thankful to God because he has shown his grace toward you. And how is God presently doing that for those Corinthian believers?

He is enriching them in Christ in every way, in all speech and all knowledge, so they are lacking in no gift.

Have you ever gone on vacation and that vacation was all-inclusive? Everything that you need or maybe everything that you want, paid for, taken care of for you.

All the food, all of your lodging, recreational activities, all-inclusive. Well, if you haven't had that kind of experience on vacation, we get it here, and it is way better, spiritually speaking, in this very text.

[32 : 14] We, like the Corinthians, have been given the grace of God in Christ Jesus, enriched in him. Then notice the modifiers. In every way, in all speech, in all knowledge.

Verse 7, not lacking in any gift. This is the all-inclusive package deal, and as wonderful as vacations are, it beats any vacation that you could take.

You don't have a sampling of God's grace that's been given to you. Kids, you ever gone to get ice cream or yogurt with your family and you say you want to try a certain kind?

They don't give you the full, like, cup of yogurt or ice cream. They give you this little tiny spoon. You barely get any on it and that's the sampling they give to you. God does not give his grace to his people on those little tiny spoons.

We don't get a little bit of God's grace. The grace of God has been giving an overflowing abundance. What a generous gift of grace that he's given to us who are in Christ.

[33 : 22] So now we need to pause for a moment. We need to consider, well, what exactly is Paul talking about here? What is this grace that God has given?

What does it mean to be enriched or to be made rich in Christ? What does it mean to not be lacking in any gift?

There's two ways that we should think about this and they both start with G. We should think in terms of graces and we should think in terms of gifts.

So we should think in general about the graces of the Christian life or the Christian virtues that God brings about in his people. And then we should think more particularly about the spiritual gifts that God gifts to his church by his spirit.

So we think in terms of graces and gifts. Let's talk first about those graces or those virtues of the Christian life like faith, hope, love, thankfulness, gentleness.

[34 : 28] The list could go on. Paul has that in view here. We have the spirit of God at work in us. We have God's spirit molding us into the image of Christ, sanctifying us in Christ, making us more and more holy.

We see that grace that has been at work in us as we bear more and more fruit, as we grow in patience and love and humility and gentleness and all of those Christian virtues.

That's a product of God's work in you. That's something of what it means to be enriched in Christ in a broadly general way.

But Paul also has in view here spiritual gifts when he talks about God enriching us. In fact, your translation might actually say in verse 7 that you do not lack any spiritual gift.

Paul is drilling down here from the general to the particular and spiritual gifts are going to be a major theme of this letter. We often see in the New Testament when letters are written those introductions kind of give us those clues, those hints to what's going to come.

[35 : 40] We see that here when he speaks of not lacking any gift. He's got a lot to say about spiritual gifts and a lot of it has to do with how the Corinthians had been misusing their gifts, especially gifts related to speech or utterance or gifts related to knowledge and so we're going to save that until we get to that part of his letter.

But the Corinthians had been boasting in their gifts. They had been boasting in the grace of God that had been given to them. They had been using their gifts improperly. They had been using them sinfully for their own gain.

And Paul in due time is going to address all of those problems. How we use our gifts and the attitude that we have towards our gifts matters greatly.

Serious problems arise when we boast in ourselves. But here though, Paul is talking much more positively. Here he isn't talking about the problem with us but about the generosity of God.

God has abundantly graced us so that we are not lacking in any gift. that's a needed reminder that ought to humble us. You and I have no room to boast.

[36 : 57] We have no reason to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. We have no reason to think highly of ourselves as the graces of the Christian life are on display in us.

We have no reason to think highly of ourselves as the spiritual gifts that God gives to us are on display in us. We have no reason to boast in ourselves.

Because it is God who makes us rich so that we can then live out the Christian life faithfully. So that we can then serve the body of Christ.

So we can then share our faith with those around us. So we can honor God with our lives. The grace needed for all of that has been given to us by God.

And so that humbles us. And yet that also makes us all the more confident. I'm not depending on myself to receive that gift.

[37 : 56] God has gifted it to me. And as we're, God is the one who ensures that we have no lack. So the question is are we living in a way that demonstrates that we've been enriched in these ways?

We should be. And here's the truth that should fuel us in those efforts. The confidence that God has gifted us. He has enriched us in Christ in every way.

We can rest in that revealed truth. We can be reassured that God didn't call us into the fellowship of His Son and then just leave us. God didn't call us there and then turn around and walk away like a child whose parents are trying to drop them off at preschool and then get out of there quickly so they don't see that they've left.

We don't turn around and God's not there and we wonder what's happened. No, He called us into the fellowship of His Son and then He has enriched us in His Son as well. He is presently, graciously at work in us who are in Christ.

So do you see His grace at work in your life? Are you bearing fruit? Are you exercising the gifts that God has given you?

[39 : 11] And are you quick to see that grace at work in your brothers and sisters? Are you quick to give thanks to God as Paul does here? And then to encourage those brothers and sisters to point out to them how you've seen growth in their lives?

To point out to them have you seen Christ formed all the more in them? To point out how they've spurred you on in your faith because of how God has been at work in them?

Isn't it easier to criticize? Isn't it easier to find fault? To point out the sin of others to make ourselves feel better?

Let's take to heart what Paul does here. He gives thanks for the work of God in the lives of fellow believers. Have you done that lately? Even in your own time of prayer with the Lord have you given thanks to God for what He's done in others?

Do we have others on our mind in that way? Paul says in verse 6 that the testimony about Christ was confirmed among the Corinthian believers.

[40 : 23] Well how was it confirmed? How was the testimony about Christ? Or you could say the gospel message confirmed as having been believed on by these Corinthians?

Well there was visible evidence among them of true saving faith. These were not the same people that they once were. We just heard it this morning. We are new creations.

There was fruit that backed up their professions of faith. Now as we dive into this letter we're going to see that's a little bit surprising for Paul to say about this church.

Would have been easy for him to start his letter by saying you bunch are a mess. You bunch are a mess. They had all kinds of sin problems and yet Paul could say the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you.

The grace of God at work in us and among us testifies to the reality of our salvation. It is an evidence that we have indeed been called into the fellowship of his son.

[41 : 30] It's a confirmation that the testimony about Christ has fallen like seed in good soil. Look at the harvest it produces. Make note of it. See it.

Give thanks to God for it. Give glory to God for it because he is the one who has so generously enriched us. So let's encourage one another in that.

I see the grace of God in you. Paul saw it even in the Corinthians. Let's see it in one another. Let's encourage one another with the work of God in our lives.

And that good work is going to continue to the very end. We see that in verse 7. We are waiting for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the end. The day when he returns. We will not lack any gift as we wait for his return. We are enriched in Christ in every way until we see him in all of his glory.

[42 : 32] Now how can we be so sure of that? How can we be so sure that God will see us through to the end? How can we be sure that God will sustain us to the end?

Because verse 9 says, God is faithful. He keeps his word. And so he keeps doing his good work in us.

Philippians 1.8 Very well known. When Paul says in that letter, and I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Same, reassuring, comforting truth here in 1 Corinthians chapter 1. The God who calls us into the fellowship of his Son, the God who grows us in grace, he is faithful and he will sustain you to the end.

We don't just say he will sustain us to the end. We have to see he is faithful. If he was not a faithful God, perhaps he wouldn't see us through to the end.

[43 : 38] And what an end that will be when we will be found guiltless, when we will be found blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That seems too good to be true. Especially for those Corinthians. We see their sin all over this letter and we think there's no way that they could be guiltless on the day of Christ.

And then if we stop and think for just a second about our own hearts and we see that we're shot through also with our sin and we think how can that be for me? how can it be that I will be found blameless in the end?

It's because we remember the one who calls us. We remember the one who has showered us with his grace. We remember he's the one who will sustain us to the end and in that day when we stand before his throne he will see us as he sees his son.

His perfect, righteous, sinless son. We will be clothed in that same righteousness standing before his throne and we will be found faultless.

[44 : 52] God is faithful. He will do it. So God in his word here he has struck this perfect balance for us in these opening verses.

He's like this power, high powered vacuum cleaner. He's sucking the pride out of our hearts but he's not leaving this empty void. Now he's filling our hearts with confidence.

Not confidence in ourselves but confidence in him and that confidence should energize us. That confidence in him, it's our motivation to then live out the graces of the Christian life.

It's our motivation to then be all the more desirous to live out the gifts, to use those gifts for the benefit of the body. To work out our salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in us.

It is God who is at work in you. So he who called us in his grace has enriched us in his grace in every way he will sustain us until the very end.

[45 : 57] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we come into your courts and our only plea is Jesus. We thank you for him.

What a gift of grace he is that you've given to us. We pray, Father, that we would live to magnify his name. We pray you'd strengthen us by your spirit for that even this week that we would go from here to work out our salvation with fear and trembling for it is you who are at work in us.

We pray all these things in Christ's name. Amen. Philippians 2 beginning in verse 12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.