**INTRODUCTION.** Paul came to Corinth on his second missionary journey, and he was there establishing the work for a year and a half (Acts 18:1-17). Corinth was the capital of Achaia, and one of the wealthiest cities of Greece, but it was also known for great licentiousness. About 59 AD, Paul wrote this letter to the believers in Corinth as a response to a letter he had received from them (1 Corinthians 7:1). The salutation is found in the first nine verses of chapter one. In the process of greeting the Corinthian believers, Paul well presents the believer’s position in Jesus Christ.

**1Corinthians 7:1**, “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me…”

1. **THE AUTHOR. Verse 1**
2. **“Paul, called to be an apostle…”** Paul is very clearly the human author of this epistle. Though he was not one of the twelve, Paul was an “apostle of Jesus Christ.” He claims to be “born out of due time” in chapter fifteen referring to his unique conversion experience. His ministry was primarily to the Gentiles, but it was confirmed to the Jews with apostolic signs. His calling was “through the will of God.” For this reason he had confidence to face opposition and persecution.
3. **“…and Sosthenes, our brother…”** Sosthenes was “the chief ruler of the synagogue” in Acts 18:17, but he was apparently saved later. He was among Paul’s companions, and he is presented as a co-author of this letter. Sosthenes was probably very well known and influential in Corinth.
4. **THE AUDIENCE. Verses 2-9**
5. **“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth,”** (Verse 2) This epistle is historically addressed to the local church in Corinth. Though this was a “Gentile” church, it was made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers. All of the terms used to describe them in verse two refer to salvation.
6. **“…to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus;”** (Verse 2) This letter is largely a rebuke for many things. There were divisions in the church. There was fornication in the church. They sued one another. They abused spiritual gifts and the Lord’s Supper. The church at Corinth would hardly be thought of as “sanctified,” but that is how Paul addressed them. They are said to be “sanctified in Christ Jesus.” Sanctification is synonymous with “holiness,” and they were “holy” in Christ Jesus. This refers to positional sanctification. All who are “in Christ” are “sanctified” by him. See Hebrews 10:10. Because of “positional” sanctification, believers should endeavor to “practice” sanctification. For this reason, Paul corrected them concerning many things in this letter.

**Hebrews 10:10**, “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

1. **“…called to be saints,”** (Verse 2) They were also “called…saints.” Sainthood is not something that a few achieve, but the position of every believer. They were called “saints,” even though they did not always behave in a very saintly fashion.
2. **“…with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,”** (Verse 2) The Corinthians are included among “all that…call upon the name of Jesus Christ.” This is another reference to salvation (Romans 10:13). An individual believes and then he calls upon the Lord. Salvation is by grace, but that grace is manifested when one calls upon the Lord (Romans 10:10). This letter is addressed to the Corinthian believers, but it is also addressed to “all that…call upon the name of Jesus Christ.” So this letter is addressed to “all” saved individuals.

**Romans 10:10**, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

**Romans 10:13**, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

1. **“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;”** (Verses 3-5) The New Testament is about grace, and the time in which we live is commonly known as the *Dispensation of Grace*. We are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8) and we are sustained by grace (verse 3). In verse four, Paul acknowledged thanksgiving for the “grace of God” bestowed upon the Corinthian believers, and he continues in verse five. Believers are “enriched by him in all utterance,” and this refers to everything our Lord said (Colossians 3:16). They are also “enriched…in all knowledge,” and this refers to everything the Lord knows. Jesus is the “fulness of the godhead bodily,” and all of this is to the benefit of the believer.
2. **“…the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:”** (Verse 6) As mentioned, there were serious problems in the Corinthian church, but they were sound concerning salvation. This cannot be said of all. See Gal. 1:6-7.

Galatians 1:6-7, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”

1. **“So that ye come behind in no gift;”** (Verse 7) The Corinthians boasted about “spiritual gifts” and they abused “spiritual gifts.” And Paul rebuked them for this (1 Corinthians 12), but he desired for them every sincere “gift” that God would provide. The purpose of “spiritual gifts” is to exalt the Lord and to edify others. They should not be displayed for the glory of the individual, but they should be used as one “waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” See 1 John 3:3.

1Corinthians 12:1, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.”

1John 3:3, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

1. **“Who shall also confirm you unto the end,”** (Verse 8) The believer is not only “saved by grace,” but he is also kept by “grace.” Many believe that one is saved by grace but kept by works. Matthew 24:13 is a “tribulation” text, but it is often cited to defend this belief. Please note Paul’s question in Galatians 3:3. The Corinthian believers were “confirmed…blameless” in spite of their many areas of disobedience (and so are we). The individual who believes on Jesus Christ is confirmed “unto the end,” and in this verse “the end” is “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Again, this refers to position and not practice. Because believers will be “blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ,” they should strive to be “blameless” in practice even now (Philippians 2:15).

Matthew 24:13, “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Matthew 24:3, “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

Galatians 3:3, “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

Philippians 1:6, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”

1Thessalonians 5:23, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 2:15, “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;”

1. **“God is faithful,”** (Verse 9) The Corinthians were not so “faithful,” and neither are we, but “God is faithful!” And he who is “faithful” has called us “unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Now that is a wonderful position!

Numbers 23:19, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”

**CONCLUSION.**

As we shall see, the spirituality of the Corinthian church is much the norm for our day. Let us profit from our study of 1 Corinthians and let us thank God for his grace by Christ Jesus but let us also seek to please him.