

1 Corinthians Series #1

"The Faithfulness of God" - 1:1-9

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Guarantees

1. Recently looked thru Consumer Reports
 - a. rating products
 - b. large ticket items (cars, appliances) listed warranty information
 - c. important to many people
2. Important to me
 - a. if you are going to invest a large sum on something, smart to see how well the maker stands behind it
 - b. would you buy a new car that had a 2-day guarantee?
- a refrigerator with a 1 hour guarantee?
3. A long guarantee usually means the maker believes in the quality of his product
4. A short guarantee usually means a con-job
 - a. friend who bought a car stereo at the swap meet
 - b. tried to take it back the next week; guy gone
5. If investing a lot; want guarantees
6. What are you investing your life in?
 - a. what are you spending your interest, time, and resources on?
 - b. are there any guarantees that that thing will pay off?
 - 1) will it last?
 - 2) will it leave you high and dry in the end?
 - 3) will it cheat you?

B. God's Guarantee

1. God has promised to come through for all who invest themselves in Him
2. His guarantee is clear and eternal
 - a. won't run out in a year or 12,000 miles
 - b. don't have to buy an extended service contract
3. You see - God is faithful
4. And He's made a promise to keep us to and through the end.

C. Today -

1. New study in 1 Corinthians
2. Much to learn from this letter
3. Begin with the first 9 verses
4. Paul's greeting

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 1-3

1 Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,

2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. This follows traditional form for a letter
 - a. who from
 - b. who to
 - c. a greeting
2. While it seems rather straightforward, he actually is laying the groundwork for what he is going to be sharing
3. The church at Corinth was mess-up!
 - a. word had reached Paul in Ephesus from a friend of his there in Corinth named Chloe, that there were serious problems.
 - b. also, the church had written him a rather pointed letter
4. In order to understand why Paul wrote 1 Corinthians & why he uses this particular greeting - we need to understand the situation in Corinth.

B. Corinth

1. Located on a small strip of land that linked Central & Southern Greece.
2. Had two excellent harbors - one on the Ionian Sea, the other on the Aegean.
3. All N-S & E-W trade passed thru Corinth so it was both wealthy & diverse.
4. People from all over the world could be seen there as ships would load & unload.
5. They brought their religions with them
 - a. many temples, cults, groups
 - b. eclectic city
6. As is true with most port cities, it had a reputation as a sailor's town.
7. In fact, Corinth was best known for its loose moral climate.
 - a. it was a put-down to call someone a "Corinthian".
 - b. meant they were an immoral & corrupt person of the worst kind.
8. Well, the immorality & sin of the city of Corinth had infected the church in Corinth.
 - a. Paul found out & wrote a letter to them before this one.
 - b. we don't have it, but from what Paul says here, we

- can infer he tried to correct them.
- c. but they resisted
- d. they responded by justifying their position
- e. then word reached Paul that the church in Corinth was denying Paul's right to address them.

C. That's Why He Writes...

V. 1 - Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother.

1. Paul was called to be an apostle, not by man but by God
2. Notice "to be" in italics; not there
3. God called Paul an apostle.
 - a. He appointed Him
 - b. set him in his office
4. The evidence for Paul's calling by God were abundant
 - a. from the miracle on the Road to Damascus
 - b. to his phenomenal success at spreading the gospel
 - c. it was clear he was an apostle of Christ

V. 2 - To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

5. Paul hits the nail on the head with these descriptions of the Corinthians.
6. They are the Church of God.
 - a. Church - a called-out people
 - b. the church is a "people apart"
 - c. in the world but not of the world
 - d. problem in Corinth was not only that Corinth was in the world, the world was in the church.
7. They are sanctified in Christ Jesus.
 - a. sanctified = set-apart from the common to the special use of God.
 - b. same word as holy.
 - c. The Christian is set apart from the merely common to God Himself.
 - d. we are His special people.
8. They are - again - called saints.
 - a. not call "to be" saints.
 - b. God calls His people saints.
 - c. a set-apart one.
 - d. men call certain people of the post - "saints".
 - supposed to have been specially holy.
 - used of God.

- Christopher, Barbara, Francis.
- e. some saints that ain't:made up
- f. really - every Christian is a saint because God calls them so
- g. what God declares - is!

V. 3 - Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. Grace & peace = the Siamese twins of the gospel.
10. Paul's favorite greeting.
11. Greeks met = "Charis!" = Blessing; Grace.
12. Hebrews met = "Shalom!" = Peace.
13. Paul joins them because in Christ, Greeks & Jews are one.
14. Always in this order.
 - a. grace first, then peace.
 - b. no peace without grace.
 - c. without God's favor & acceptance.
 - d. any pursuit of peace - globally, nationally, or personally apart from God's grace is doomed to failure.
 - e. but where God's grace is - peace reigns.
15. This is why so many "religious" people have so little peace.
 - a. they are struggling & striving to please God, to make Him accept them.
 - b. they are never certain how they stand with him - so there is no peace.
 - c. God's grace is not something that can be earned.
 - d. it is a free gift given by God to all who simply believe & receive.

D. Vs.4-7a

4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,
5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge,
6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,
7 so that you come short in no gift,

1. Things were pretty crazy at Corinth, but Paul wisely begins by identifying the things to be thankful for.
2. They may be messed up both doctrinally & practically, but at least they were saved.
3. Their conversion to Christ, while now cloudy & in question, was at one time sure.
 - a. V. 6 "even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,"

4. Paul was confident about their salvation but he was concerned for their continuing in the faith - that's why he wrote.
5. Maybe you got a good start with Christ some time ago.
 - a. your witness was confirmed, sure
 - b. but now, things have fallen back
 - c. these words are for you
 - d. there's hope & forgiveness & grace in God.
 - e. 1 John 1:9
6. Vs. 4-8 = one sentence
7. Paul's thoughts seem to jump around a bit
8. V. 5 & 7 go together
9. they were enriched in everything & came short in no gift.
10. Will examine this a bit more in a latter chapter - for now..
11. Corinthian church a rather exuberant Charismatic fellowship.
 - a. they had all the gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - b. and they were all being used - at the same time.
 - c. chaos
12. Paul doesn't tell them to stop or that the gifts were wrong.
13. He merely tells them how the gifts were to be used & what they were for.
14. As we'll see, the Corinthians took pride in their expression of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and considered some gifts more _____ than others.
15. A spiritual elitism developed; then factions, envy, strife.
16. The very thing the gifts were meant to bring about - a mature unity - had degenerated into an immature disunity & in-fighting.

E. Vs. 7B-8

**7b eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,
8 who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day
of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

1. Jesus will confirm us to the end.
2. Jude 24
3. Phil 1:6
4. "confirm" - to guarantee
5. What Christ has begun - He will finish
6. Story of inventor who never finished a job: full workshop of gadgets - not one worked.
7. Jesus not like that He always complete what He begins
8. You have God's guarantee on that.
9. It's written in the Blood of the Cross

**9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.**

1. So much more in these verses!
2. Have done them a grave dis-service by failing to dig deeper.
3. Feel like a miner who strikes a vein of pure gold & is forced to reach in and take just a few nuggets when there are buckets full to be had.
4. But time is running out so let's grab the richest & biggest nugget of all.
5. God is faithful!
 - a. that's why His guarantee is so good!
 - b. He always keeps His word!
 - c. He cannot lie & He does not change!
 - d. What He has said He will do - He will do.
 - e. He will confirm you to the end.
6. He will not fail
He will not break
He will not disappear
He will not get distracted
He will not get sick
He will not run out of resources
He will not forget

III. CONCLUSION

- A. God is Faithful.
 1. We know this intellectually.
 2. But we struggle with it practically.
 3. Story of teaching kids to swim.
 - a. sit and ask them "will I protect you, watch out for you - do my best to keep you safe?" "Yes"
 - b. in pool - "Jump to me & I will catch you." Fear
 - eventually; they do
 - over & over - gets easy
 - then back up & go through fear all over again
 4. God is beckoning you to learn to swim
 - a. jump to Him.
 - b. He'll be there!
 - c. but then He'll back up.
 - d. jump to Him! He'll be there.
- B. Pray