

**“Lives Worthy Of The Call”**  
**1 Corinthians 1:1-9**  
**Jerry Grey 2-23**  
**Message 1**

**Introduction:** We have a problem in the NT church today, as it has been in the past I am sure. I know that the preachers of old dealt with the same issues but nothing like what we are seeing today. Christian people, saved, bought by the blood, and redeemed, have not taken their calling and responsibilities seriously. The body of Christ is an online church today. Many Christians are not even online.

As Paul begins this letter to this gifted and called church, he also recognizes the many problems that it has. This is a carnal church that was gifted in all spiritual virtues and gifts. Sounds like the church in America doesn't it? We are rich, blessed and lazy. The church at Laodicea is here.

Notice as we read the opening text how many times Paul uses the word **“called.”** Notice these words Paul uses: Called, God's will, sanctified, Lord, grace, peace, enriched, confirmed, do not lack, eagerly wait, strengthen, blameless, faithful, and fellowship. All these words relate to what God had given the Corinthians and the historical New Testament Church.

In Ephesians 4:1 Paul describes what our response should be to this great calling from Jesus.

**Eph 4:1**

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to **live a life worthy of the calling** you have received.

NIV

Can you say with me today that you are living a life worthy of the calling you received? Look at this verse closer with me.

- **Prisoner- δεσμιος.** To be in bonds, captive, jailbird, one in chains. Are you that captive to Christ?
- **Worthy- αξιωος**– This is after a godly sort, weighty, worth in one's deeds.
- **To walk- περιπατεω**– To walk in a vocation. To walk in a calling. How you walk in what God has called you to do. My favorite, that with which you are occupied. A Life's work.

Here is the message today... some folks forgot they were called as prisoners of the Lord. Your calling is to be occupied with His will and business. ***Our calling is a blessing, not a curse.***

**Context of this passage and this book:** The essence of this book rests in Paul's efforts to teach these Christians, in that pagan city of immorality, that they must submit to the Lordship of Christ and display His glory. All the spiritual problems that the Corinthians had were due to their failure to submit to Christ. We have the same issues today.

### **Paul uses two techniques to deal with the Corinthians:**

1. Paul uses praise and thanksgiving. Before he deals with all the problems the church faced, Paul brings a positive message of praise and thanksgiving.
2. Paul reminds the church about *calling and standing*. The Christians had a calling due to their standing in Christ. The teaching was that... *responsibility comes with privilege*. We all love privilege, but we don't like responsibility.

**Verse 1:** Paul uses the word **called** here. **Kletos** is our word. This is from the noun form that is used as an adjective here.

This means that one has been invited or called to something. The noun ***kletos*** is always used in the NT to refer to the origin, nature, and destiny of a calling which is heavenly; it is especially used of God's invitation to man for salvation. The call to salvation is never to be taken lightly or for granted. Salvation is the greatest call that comes from heaven.

This is the same word used in verse 26, which speaks of salvation. Paul says, ***“think of what you were when you were called.”***

**1 Cor 1:26-27**

26 Brothers, think of what you were when you were **called**. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

NIV

**Application:** Paul reminds them that their calling came from heaven. All the Corinthians problems and confusion did not come to them as a part of God's invitation to salvation. Lack of submission was the root cause of all their problems. Many Christians are ignorant to the fact that they have been called.

**The Call of God:**

- The call comes from heaven. The origin of any call comes from above.
- The call of God is a grand and glorious invitation to enjoy the benefits of a life with Christ.
- The call of God consist, not only of a call to salvation, but also a call to a specific task in the kingdom.
- These privileges demand responsibility for the call.

**Paul's Call:** The apostle to the Gentiles

**Apostle-** *αποστολος*. This is simply a delegate. Paul was an ambassador. He was an ambassador of the gospel and heaven. **So are you.** Paul was specifically commissioned to the apostolic ministry with power and miraculous ability. An apostle was one who was called, commissioned, had a message, and was sent. Just that simple! We are all sent by Christ to the world.

Christ Jesus- The sender!

### **2 Cor 5:17-21**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 **We are therefore Christ's ambassadors**, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

NIV

The will of God- The passion, will and purpose of the call. A floundering Christian has not found God's will or doesn't care to know it. If you are a captive or prisoner of Jesus, you will not be distracted by the world. Christians are to be consumed with the will of God.

### **Side note on Sosthenes:**

He was a ruler of a synagogue in Corinth (Acts 18:17). He apparently assumed the post after Crispus, the former chief ruler, became a Christian under Paul's teaching (Acts 18:8). When an attempt to prosecute Paul legally failed, the citizens of the city took revenge and beat Sosthenes. Tradition holds that Sosthenes later was converted and became one of Paul's helpers

(1 Corinthians 1:1). Whether the two are the same person cannot be determined from existing evidence. It is my belief that the two are the same individual.

**Verse 2:** “To the church of God in Corinth.” Paul writes to a church. Why a church? Why not to some para-church organization? This letter was not to the clerk or some priest. The letter was to a church.

Paul writes to the church because the church is the dynamic, living, breathing, entity in which God chose to display His glory. God works in and through the church of Jesus Christ.

The word is **ἐκκλησία**. This word refers to a gathering of people. The word assembly is a good translation. In the spiritual sense it is a group of God’s Saints meeting together for any purpose. We are also described as the scattered church when we are not together. The NT also uses this word to describe an unspiritual gathering, e.g. a group assembled for a riot or some political meeting. When referring to the church it is not just any group of people, but it is the church of God.

### **Eph 3:7-11**

7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. 8 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. 10 His **intent** was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, 11 according to his **eternal purpose** which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NIV

Paul has told us the purpose of the church and that God's purpose is eternal. *Therefore, Paul is writing to those who are called, sanctified, Holy and a part of the assembly of believers.*

All the words that are used to describe the church are of the same idea... moral purity, ceremonial purity, pure, holy, or set apart.

By the way... that was a holy bomb of a theological statement you just heard.

The question that needs to be asked is if our purpose for being in the assembly (Church) is what God intended. Is God's desire for the church our desire as well?

Paul writes to the **sanctified**. This is our familiar word *'αγιαζω*. Paul writes to those who are sanctified and called. Not only have we forgotten we are called servants but that we are also to be **holy** and **separated** from the world.

This verb is a *perfect passive participle*. Our holiness comes from an outside source; the act of making us holy was done in an instance with continual progress. When you are saved, you are sealed and put on the sanctification rail. If you are saved, you never get over it.

If you were saved then, you are saved now. I am not as concerned about what you did back then as what you are doing right now. What you are doing right now tells me what you did back then.

Paul says that we are sanctified **IN** Christ. I think this is a locative, which refers to location. If you are not **ev** Christ, and I mean **in** Christ, you are not sanctified.

Paul also addresses all the people everywhere that call on the name. That's a great phrase. Calling upon the name of Jesus sets us apart. I don't mean a colloquial calling but a passionate and relational call.

**Illustration:** Mary Round told a man you got to call on someone that knows you after he said it didn't help to call upon God.

When you call upon your god that identifies who you are. I call upon the One True God.

**Verse 3:** This can be identified as a prayer. Paul seeks to send grace and peace towards this church in Corinth. No one in the house will get tired of hearing this prayer.

**Grace- χάρις.** Refers especially to Divine influence upon the heart. This is benefit, favor, a gift, pleasurable, or graciousness. Grace is getting everything in heaven that we don't deserve and not getting all of hell, which we do deserve. The world doesn't understand this type of spiritual virtue.

**Illustration:** Clara Barton was engaged in Red Cross work in Cuba, during the Spanish American war; Theodore Roosevelt came to her desiring to buy some delicacies for the sick and wounded men under his command. His request was refused. Roosevelt was confused and troubled; he loved his men, and was ready to pay for the supplies out of his own pocket. "How can I get these things?" he asked. "I must have proper food for my sick men." The reply was, "Just ask for them Colonel." "Then I do ask for them." The food was supplied at once; but you notice that he got them through grace, and not through purchase- *onward*.

**Peace- ειρήνη (eirene).** A unique NT word. It refers to setting something at one again. Quietness or rest. This is not the absence

of trouble but quietness in the trouble. You know God is with you and He gives you quiet assurance.

The prophets called Jesus the Prince of Peace and Isaiah tells us to keep our minds stayed on Him for peace.

Jesus said blessed are the peace makers.

We need peace **with** God and then learn to have the peace **of** God.

### **Illustration: Martin Luther on Peace:**

Luther would speak of how the Christian should be willing to suffer inconvenience and even injury for the sake of maintaining peace. Martin Luther told a story of two goats that met upon a log over a deep stream. They could not go back; to fight it out would have been sure disaster for both of them. After a short parley (talk, conference, or meeting), one of them lay down and the other walked over him to safety; then the other goat did the same. No harm was done to either goat. The moral of the story is quite simple. "Be content if thy person is trod upon for peace's sake. Thy person, I say, not thy conscience."

We are never to compromise truth or our conscience for peace, but if I may let you trod upon me for both our safety, then so be it.

### **Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (Prayer for Peace)**

#### **Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:**

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,  
 to be understood as to understand,  
 to be loved as to love.  
 For it is in giving that we receive,  
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

**Illustration:** Swindoll, Ultimate Book of Illustrations, p. 431.  
 Horatio Stafford- “It is Well With My Soul.”

Horatio Spafford, a businessman in Chicago, sent his wife and three daughters to Europe by ship while he remained back in the states, intending to join them later. En route there was a terrible storm and a shipwreck during which their three daughters drowned. Mrs. Spafford made it to safety and wired back saying “All of our daughters have been lost. Only I have been saved.” He took the next vessel. As they came near the place where his daughters drowned, the skipper of the ship pointed to the place where the other ship had gone down. It was there on the deck of that ship that he wrote these stirring words:

“When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
 When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
 Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
 “It is well, it is well with my soul.”  
 (Swindoll p.432)

If you have been predestined, called (saved), sanctified, soon to be glorified, given grace, given peace, and have the Father and the Son with a church family that calls on the Name... would that be enough to live a life worthy of the call?

If that is not enough then let's continue...

**Verse 4:** Paul was overjoyed and thankful for their faith and salvation. Paul was excited they were saved. God had given them grace and had enriched them greatly.

**Thankful-** ευχαριστεω. I believe that this is the number one sin of lost people and saved people. We are not thankful. This word means “to say grace or express gratitude.” This is to express appreciation. This is what we do at meals. We thank God for the food and let God know He is more important than the food. Right in the middle of this word is the word **χαρις**. This is the word grace. This is unmerited favor. Everything we have is undeserved.

Paul was grateful to God that He had extended His hand of salvation to the believers in Corinth. Think of all the problems with which Paul will deal in the rest of this book. Yet, at this point, Paul is speaking about all the blessings they have been given; ***you would think that a church this blessed would not have a problem living a worthy life for Christ.***

**Verse 5:** Paul actually uses the word **enriched** to describe of all the grace gifts they were given. **πλουτιζω** is the word for **enriched**. This refers to riches and abundance. To bestow wealth upon someone. Paul says that God had made them rich in speech and in wisdom. The Corinthian church was rich in *knowledge* and *spiritual gifts*. Used metaphorically of spiritual riches, the best kind.

**Question?** Have we, have you, been enriched from knowing Jesus? Are you thankful for the dignity, holiness, salvation, grace, and peace you have been given? Are you grateful for the fruit of the spirit and the spiritual gifts you have been given. Are worldly wisdom and material blessings more important than Jesus?

Are you grateful for the removal of guilt and the wrath of God? Are you grateful for eternity, hope in that eternity and seeing your loved ones again? We have not even mentioned rewards and strength for today.

If you are not in a state of **charis**, joy, and thankfulness, then you are not a prisoner of Jesus Christ. **You have no chance of living a life worthy of your calling.**

What breaks my heart is that those who have it the best are usually the most unthankful.

**Illustration:** You may have seen this clip on FB recently. A mother brought her daughter to see Dr. Phil. The girl wanted her mother to raise her allowance. This girl was college age and had no job and was not interested in going to college or getting a job. She was getting a thousand dollars a month to live on. She wanted two thousand dollars but would not go get a job. She said the life style she was accustomed to required two thousand dollars a month and demanded it be given to her. Dr. Phil agreed with the mom, of course, and said, “you need to go get a job girl.” At that statement, the girl broke down in tears and had a melt down on the stage. A total temper tantrum. May I say that if she lived with me, we would not have needed to go on the Dr. Phil show to fix the problem.

When I think of all the changes that have taken place in my life after I have been enriched by my Savior, I must live a life worthy of His call. I am spiritually blessed.

- **Speech- logos.** Speaking, preaching, communication, word or words, used of Jesus/Christ in John 1:1, words that come from thoughts or knowledge. Knowledge expressing itself in words. Words always come from thoughts. Jesus is the eternal mind.

- **Knowledge- gnosis.** A common NT word that means knowledge, revelation.

Paul says that the Corinthian church was enriched with everything they needed to share the gospel and for daily spiritual success and survival. The church had the capacity, through the Holy Spirit, to speak and understand the truths of God's word, and truths about Jesus. ***They were given everything they needed to live a life worthy of their calling.***

~ That's the ministry; that's the job of the church; that's the job of every Christian.

**Verse 6:** Let's read verse 6 together and I want you to tell me what it means. I want you to take a second right now, read it, and give me an interpretation.

**In this way- In what way?** The way God had enriched them in word and knowledge. In all the ways that I have preached about since we started.

Paul says that he had seen how they were enriched and it confirmed that they were saved. The testimony about Christ was confirmed because Paul saw the evidence. Am I correct? That means that Paul saw lives worthy of their calling that proved they were saved. Correct?

**Confirmed- βεβαιω.** The root of this word means stable, firm, steadfast and sure. This word means establish or confirm.

Paul says that he saw confirmation of God's grace in their lives. The testimony was seen in them. When the message of salvation establishes itself in a person's heart... we call that salvation!

### Matt 13:3-9

3 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, **where it produced a crop — (Confirmed)** a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 He who has ears, let him hear."

NIV

**Produced- didomi.** To give, produce, bring forth, yield, bestow, deliver. If you are saved and living a life worthy of your calling, you will produce the goods.

**Verse 7:** The word for **lack** here is **hustereo**. This means to come up wanting, destitute, lacking, wanting, fail, or suffer need.

The confirmation was a certainty that they lacked no spiritual gift- **χαρισματα**. Again, notice the word grace at the beginning of **charismatai**. The spiritual gifts from God are by grace. They are spiritual and come from God as a gift. They cannot be worked for, prayed for, or given to a select few. The Corinthian church was enriched with all the **grace** gifts. These are miraculous faculties that are spiritual in nature. These are qualifications of endowment that come from the Holy Spirit. They are miraculous because they come from the Spirit. These enriching gifts cannot be received from anywhere else but God.

Now, let's translate: Paul says that the church in Corinth had been given every spiritual gift, endowment, and qualification, that God had to give, in order to live lives worthy of their calling and to

wait for Jesus from heaven. No other church had been gifted as they.

If that is the case, and it is... then the American NT church is in serious trouble for its apostasy.

### **Luke 12:47-48**

47 "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. 48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

NIV

The Revealing of the [αποκαλυψις](#) will bring it all to light. What is 7b talking about? Somebody shout it. Jesus is Coming!!!

The word for waiting here is [ekdechomai](#) (PM/PP) and it refers to eagerly waiting or expecting. More of an expectation than eagerly waiting, but similar. Obviously we are eagerly waiting. The word eagerly is not in the original text.

**Verse 8:** God has promised to keep us or strengthen us until the end. I know that at times we may think we are just not going to make it, but God has promised strength to endure.

Remember that I just preached three messages on this very subject. Notice all the elements are here.

### **James 1:2-5**

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith

develops perseverance. 4 **Perseverance** must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

NIV

The ESV uses the word *sustains* instead of *strengthen*. The perseverance of the Saints refers to the blameless Saints as they are presented in the last Day. If He called you, and saved you, He will sustain you, unto the end.

### **Two great theological blessings are here: Present and Future.**

1. I need help moment by moment and day by day on this journey. I need help being established every day. If not for the grace of God each day I fail and disgrace His name. A bruised reed He will not break. A smoldering flax He will not put out. He knows we are just dust.

#### **2 Cor 4:7-10**

7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

NIV

#### **2 Cor 4:16-18**

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

NIV

2. In the future, when you see Him face to face, you will be made perfectly holy and finally blameless.

***That is two great reasons to live a life worthy of your calling in Christ.***

**Verse 9:** A reminder to the church that the God who allows us fellowship with His son, and who is our Lord, is also faithful.

Why does God have to remind us that He is faithful?

After all these wonderful spiritual virtues we just learned about, how could we ever doubt our Lord?

You see, many people still fell and think that God is not always faithful. They doubt God. James says that a man that doubts is unstable in all his ways.

People won't do for their own children what they expect God to do for them, but they call Him unfaithful. If He called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus- He is faithful.

**Closing:**

**Eph 4:1**

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you **to live a life worthy of the calling** you have received.

NIV

**Illustration:** 233 Naismith- Contrast of Alexander The Great and Jesus The Messiah

With three centuries intervening, these two outstanding men died at approximately the age of 33, one in Babylon and the other outside Jerusalem. Jesus, the Son of God, was called great before

His birth in Bethlehem: Alexander, the son of Philip of Macedonia, was given the title “The Great” by historians after his death.

### **Jesus and Alexander both died at 33:**

- One lived and died for self, One died for you and me.
- The Greek man died upon a throne; Jesus died on a cross.
- The Greek’s life seemed to be a triumph; the Messiah’s life seemed to be a failure.
- The Greek led vast armies to war; the Jew walked alone.
- The Greek shed a whole world’s blood; the carpenter shed His own blood for the world.
- The Greek won the world in life and lost it all in death; the Christ gave His life to win our love and faith.
- The Greek gained all for himself; Jesus gave Himself for all.
- The Greek conquered every throne; Jesus conquered every grave.
- The Greek made himself a god; God the Son, made Himself a man.
- The Greek lived to blast the world; the Savior lived to bless the world.
- When the Greek died, so did his throne; when the Lord died, His throne was established for eternity.
- The Greek made all men slaves, but the Messiah set all men free.
- The Greek built his throne upon blood; the Lord built His throne upon love.
- The Greek was born of earth, and the Savior born from above.
- The Greek won the whole earth and lost both heaven and earth. Jesus gave up heaven and earth and all to Him was given.

- The Greek lies in a cold and worthless grave. The Lord of glory lives and intercession is made.

Which man had a worthy calling?

**Mark 8:36**

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world,  
and lose his own soul?

KJV