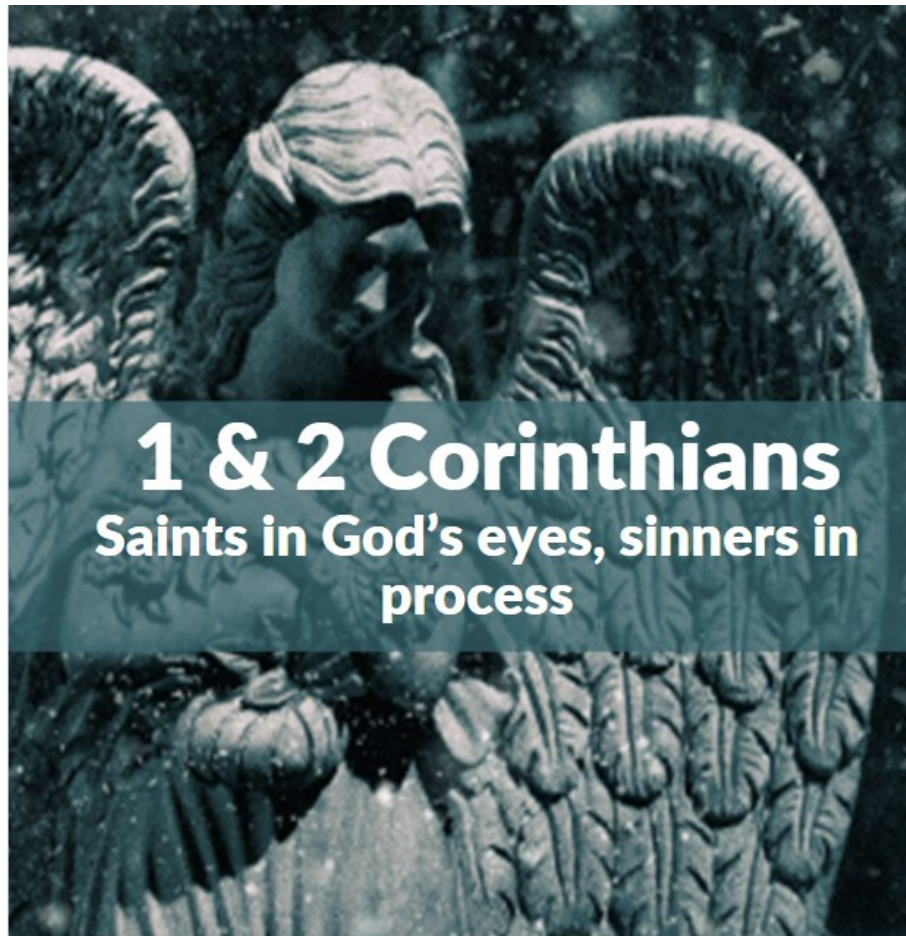


Handouts

Including
Notes, Questions,
and Infographic



1 & 2 Corinthians

Saints in God's eyes, sinners in process

Your Notes

The book begins with an intriguing reality and a challenging question

- *1 Cor. 1: 2, KJV* *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called to be saints**, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's:*
- Much has been made of this verse in that Paul refers to the people in the church of Corinth as “saints” even though as we go into the book we find their behavior—a man living with his stepmother, people getting drunk at communion, divisions and fighting in the church—
- Anything but what we would describe as saintly behavior.
- What is going on?

Dig deeper into the phrase, “called to be saints” to understand

- **CALLED, κλητός, kletos**, means in the Greek **invited** (as to a banquet)
 - a. "invited (by God in the proclamation of the gospel) to obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God through Christ"
- **It is important to remember that our salvation is not something we initiated—we were called to it—and that calling is described as—**
- **SAINTS ἅγιος ἁγιος**, in the Greek meaning sacred (physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated)—(most) holy (one, thing), saint.
- Paul reminds them that they were called, for a purpose, for a new identity, called to be set apart, “physically pure, morally blameless”

And not only are they called to be saints

- They have everything they need to live into that calling, as Paul reminds them
- *1 Cor 1:4* *I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— ⁶God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. ⁷Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- And yet.....

They obviously are not always acting saintly now

- It is a reflection of what people are called to be, holy, set apart for God's purposes and what, in practice they are now.
- That's like all of us—we know to varying degrees, what we should be, what we should do.
- But like the Corinthians, we are often not where we want to be.
- Let's now go through Paul's letters to them as people haven't changed much in 2000 years and we can learn from them.

Setting of the Corinthian church

- Corinth was a major seaport, a very wealthy, cosmopolitan city.
- Many pagan idols, temples, one alone was estimated to have over 1,000 sacred priestesses or prostitutes.
- Corinth has been described as “New York, LA, and Las Vegas in one”
- Again, it is important to see that it was not some quiet, little village, but an urban center with many of the same challenges we face in our cities today.

Start of the church

- Paul left Thessalonica, went to Berea, and then after a short stay in Athens, went to Corinth where....
- *Each Sabbath found Paul at the synagogue, trying to convince the Jews and Greeks alike. . . .⁶ But when the Jews opposed him and blasphemed, hurling abuse at Jesus, Paul shook off the dust from his robe and said, “Your blood be upon your own heads—I am innocent—from now on I will preach to the Gentiles.”*
- *⁷After that he stayed with Titus Justus, a Gentile who worshiped God and lived next door to the synagogue. . . .⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him, “Don’t be afraid! Speak out! Don’t quit!¹⁰ For I am with you and no one can harm you. Many people here in this city belong to me.”¹¹ So Paul stayed there the next year and a half, teaching the truths of God.*
- He was joined by Aquilla and Priscilla, who had left Rome because of persecution, and were also tentmakers. They were also later joined by Apollos who had the gospel clarified to him by Aquilla and Priscilla and he becomes a leader in the church.

Setting of the book

- The church had a year and a half of teaching from the Apostle Paul.
- They also had another one of the greatest teachers in the history of the church teaching them also, Apollos.
- And yet.....like us all, they weren’t always consistent in applying good teaching.
- We can’t go over all the issues raised in both books; we will discuss some highlights.

The goal in this lesson is to help us all live as the set-apart people we are called to be

- The best way to do that is not to focus on your problems.
- You want to focus on God’s calling, what He wants you to become.
- One of the best analogies for why this is the most effective way to grow spiritually is how trees get new leaves in the spring.
- It is simply the new growth that pushes the dead leaves still hanging on out and they fall away.
- When you focus on God’s Word and His goals for you, much of your old life will fall away.

A few issues to consider

- Some loyal to one teacher or another, this simply shouldn’t be
- Summary verse--*^{1 Cor. 3:5} What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. ⁹For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.*

No matter who laid the foundation in our lives, we are responsible for what we build on it

- *^{1 Cor. 3:10} By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. **But each one should build with care.** ¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. ¹⁴If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a*

reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

- The “Day” is the Judgement Seat of Christ, when each of us will be evaluated for how we built our lives on the foundation of our salvation.

Buildings don’t come together quickly or magically

- You plan what you want the outcome to be—your blueprint is to become a person clearly identified as a “saint” a person set apart as belonging to God and used for His purposes.
- You assemble the materials needed for it—God’s Word, being part of the church, being in a group, listening to teaching—live, online, etc.
- You budget for it***financial is part, but even more, are you budgeting your TIME, attention to it?
- All those things go into building the life that will win eternal praise from Jesus!
- And it is never too late to do a remodeling job if you feel that is necessary.

Example of an area that needed work in the church—food offered to idols

- Background of this situation—
- In that time and culture, sacrifices were made in pagan temples and the meat from them was sold in marketplaces attached to the Temple.
- To those who came out of the pagan culture, out of practices which often involved “sacred” sex with temple prostitutes, eating the meat reminded them of that world.
- Many felt they shouldn’t do it at all.
- Others felt that they now knew there was nothing to the pagan worship and so why not enjoy a cheap steak?

A classic example of how to handle “questionable” practices

- These have varied tremendously in the history of the church (smoking, movies, dancing, long hair were all horrible sins in the past) and I’m sure will continue to do so.
- Probably one of the most obvious today is that of drinking alcohol.
- Paul’s advice then is what we need to practice today which is—
- We know that the Bible does not forbid drinking alcohol, but only forbids drunkenness.
- It is OK for believers to drink alcohol, but they don’t need to.
- HOWEVER, as Paul said, there are times to abstain, even when OK, for the sake of some who might be harmed or offended.

Paul’s summary of how to handle these situations

- ^{1 Cor. 8:9} Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. ¹² When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.
- Always be thinking about others before yourself.

Some of his concerns and advice rather obvious

- It was wrong for a man to be living with his stepmother—the church was to discipline him, not being proud of their lax attitude, in this instance by putting him outside the church for it—
- The good news is that in 2 Corinthians we see this caused him to see the seriousness of it and he repented.
- In this section and others where he reminds them that they shouldn’t be having sex with temple prostitutes, as last week in Thes., Christians should have a

higher sexual ethic—no matter how OK things are in the world. For Christians sex is to be between one man and one woman in marriage only.

- Compassion and kindness are always commanded, but God’s guidelines are for our best good.

Incorrect worship—inequality during communion

- Maybe it was a carryover from the pagan temple feasts, but in c. 11 he talks about at their communion services, which at that time also included a meal
- Some got drunk and ate a lot; some went hungry.
- Obviously, this is not how we are to observe the Lord’s supper, communion.
- We must approach it humbly, first always examining ourselves to make sure there is no unconfessed sin in our lives.

Focus now on the positive—the area of Spiritual Gifts—let’s get the dead leaves out of there!

- *1 Cor 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

How to determine your spiritual gift?

- **Also sometimes referred to as your “calling” the bigger picture of how God wants you to use your life – when you focus on fulfilling your calling, you “don’t sweat the small stuff.”**
- Rick Warren developed something he labeled **SHAPE** that many people have found useful in finding out how God individually wants us to fulfill these verses.
- **SHAPE stands for (and we’ll look at each one)**
- Spiritual Gift
- Heart
- Abilities
- Personality
- Experiences
- All help us determine our calling, the greater arena of our Spiritual Gift

Spiritual gift—I’m not a big fan of the “tests”

- In some ways I think determining your **Spiritual Gift** might be the last one in this list as the others will help point to it—but then it wouldn’t spell “SHAPE” but here we are, so let’s start with it--
- **Look over the lists of Spiritual gifts in the Bible—some will appeal, and some won’t**
- Some listed—pastors, teachers, administration, helps, prayer, healing, tongues, giving, encouragement, evangelist, discernment, knowledge and others.
- There are all sorts of sub-categories. E.g., “teacher” can be with adults, kids, in person, writing, social media, video, etc.
- Once you have an idea, then consider your.....

Heart, what are you drawn to?

- What do you love to do?
- Some people love to pray, to teach, to serve, to evangelize, to do support work—no right or wrong.
- What is it you always volunteer for?
- Or wish you could do better?
- Or do no matter what?

Abilities

- What are you naturally good at?
- Some people can sing—most of us can't.
- Some are simply good organizers—others great talkers, other's prayers always seem to help, some always discern correctly, and others are often incorrect.
- Some are great helpers or encouragers
- Be honest as you evaluate your abilities; ask for feedback if necessary.
- Secular world skills often transfer into spiritual areas.

Personality

- Some gifts and calling require certain personalities.
- Might be difficult to be an evangelist if you are an introvert, but you may be surprised—many teachers I know, myself included, are introverts in the extreme.
- If I'm not teaching, being around people is very draining for me, even though I might really enjoy it and love the people.
- I've realized being an introvert is necessary in the kind of teaching I do as I need large amounts of alone time to study and write (I write all my own materials).
- And I love solitude (and recognize it would drive many insane).

Experience

- What has worked for you in the past?
- What did you enjoy?
- Or what difficult situations have you experienced that God can use?
- People with lives without problems seldom do well in pastoral, counseling ministries.
- Very important, what did God bless, bring fruitfulness in?
- ***Expand your experiences! A great way to find out your calling, your spiritual gift is simply to try different things.***
- Some might turn out well, some you might say, "this is NOT for me."

Cautions in the process of discovering your spiritual gift

- Don't mistake the need to practice a spiritual gift with simply being obedient or not in godly living--
- For example, we are all supposed to share our faith, all supposed to give, all supposed to pray, all supposed to teach the children entrusted to us, all supposed to serve.
- You can't say, "I wasn't called to be an evangelist, so I won't share my faith" or "My spiritual gift isn't prayer."
- At the same time, some are called to have a wider, more public gifting in a certain area (like evangelism, giving, teaching, whatever) and sometimes you won't know what yours is until you try various things.

Two questions on spiritual gifts, 1) women preaching/teaching;

2) tongues

- On women preaching/teaching—
- *1 Cor. 11:4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. ⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. ⁶ For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head.*
- In this passage Paul uses exactly the same words, in his language for men and women as he describes HOW they are supposed to practice the gift of "prophecy" which was the gift of teaching in the church.

No where in ANY listing of spiritual gifts here or elsewhere....

- ***Is there any distinction between gifts that are given to men and those given to women.***
- *What is at issue in this passage (earlier one) is that the teaching be done in a proper, culturally respectable way.*
- In that day it was with a head-covering.
- See catacombs images—some of many showing women teaching in the early church***With a head covering***
- Today it is to dress modestly, appropriately to the situation.

Further clarifications

- When Paul talks about forbidding women to speak (“in the congregations”¹ Cor.14:33-35) since he has already set how teaching should be done, this must be a different situation— “in the congregation.”
- We don’t want people speaking out when someone else is teaching today and I suspect this is the same situation.
- The passage here it seems obvious has to do with asking questions and he is advising that (with the cultural background that most women of the time would not have had much education) that they ask their questions at home.
- Also, this passage and others regarding teaching do not equate it with the pastor/leader/overseer role of the church—those are different situations and ought not to be combined or confused.

On tongues and other sign/miraculous gifts

- They have not ceased.
- You may sometimes hear that “when the perfect is come” or when canon of scripture completed, they are not necessary. That is simply not true.
- HOWEVER—it is also clear that all gifts should be practiced according to scripture.
- Not every gift is given to every person.
- Tongues not a sign of salvation—not a second blessing—the Holy Spirit is given to all believers at the moment of salvation.
- ***Titus 3:5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.***
- If tongues are spoken in a church setting, they are ALWAYS to be accompanied by an interpretation as 1 Cor. 14-33 makes clear.
- Or the person receiving or worshipping or praying in tongues should remain silent.

Indwelling the Spirit and being “filled, controlled” by the Holy Spirit—see the chart 1 Cor 15—no matter what our Spiritual gift or challenges we face, what is most important

- We must remember the primary importance of our salvation, as expressed in what is often described as one of the earliest creedal statements in the church (from the Latin: *credo*—“I believe”)
- ^{1 Cor. 15:3} ***For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.***

The foundation of everything is our salvation in Jesus

- Because He died and conquered death for us all
- We can face all of life and death peacefully, joyfully. Here is a quote from one of the last writings of C.S. Lewis in his final days when he knew he didn't have long to live.
- *Think of yourself just as a seed patiently waiting in the earth: waiting to come up a flower in the Gardener's good time, up into the real world, the real waking. I suppose that our whole present life, looked back on from there, will seem only a drowsy half-waking. We are here in the land of dreams. But cockcrow is coming. It is nearer now than when I began this letter.*
(part of a quite wonderful essay on the last days of C.S. Lewis life by Trevin Wax at <https://mailchi.mp/6313f3e21db4/the-last-days-of-c-s-lewis?e=2cd4fe713c>)
- *With all that in mind as Paul ends 1 Corinthians—*
- *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. 15:58, KJV*

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 & 2 Corinthians—Saints in God’s eyes, sinners in process

Important suggestions: be sure everyone in the group gets a chance to contribute—freely share YOUR thoughts, insights, questions—truly interact with each other and God’s Word.

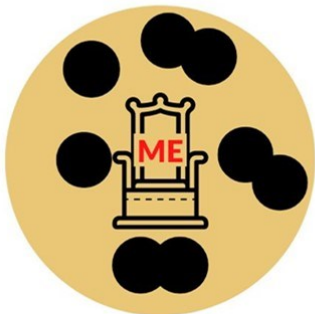
1. What does it mean that we are “called to be saints?” How is this different than the idea most people have of what a “saint” is?
2. How can we build a spiritual life that is pleasing to God on the solid foundation of salvation that He’s given us? Do you live with the reality that how you build your life is important to the Lord?
3. How can we put into practice thinking about others more than ourselves when it comes to questionable issues? What are some areas that people disagree on as Christians that fall into this area and how should we act based on Paul’s advice?
4. Have you thought about your Spiritual Gifts prior to this lesson? What are some ways that made the most sense to you to discover your spiritual gifts/your calling/ how you are supposed to express your faith in God? Why is this important?
5. What Spiritual Gift or gifts do you think you have? (just guess if you haven’t thought of this before) How do you have an opportunity to practice them?
6. In the midst of all the questions and teaching in this book, what is the most important thing for us to focus on in our faith?

The Holy Spirit and Stages of Christian Growth

Becoming a Christian is often referred to as a "new birth" and that is an accurate way to describe it. When a person is born again, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in that person's life. Like any new baby, the young Christian has a lot of growing to do and that means getting to know God's Word, so our minds are transformed into how God wants us to think and act.

However, knowing isn't enough, we must continuously be obedient to it. This process of growing in our faith is often referred to as "sanctification." This process is often not a straightforward one, but one where at times we allow God to be in control, and other times we take control (and usually make a mess of things).

The Holy Spirit doesn't leave us when we sin, which is why we now feel so guilty when we do bad things and we didn't in the past. As we grow in our faith, hopefully, more and more we will be filled with the spirit, instead of being filled up with "me, me, me" and what I want to do. To be "filled with the Spirit" doesn't mean anything extra or more or a second blessing but that the Holy Spirit is in control and/or especially empowering the Christian for service.



Unsaved

ME (my ego, will, etc.) is in control and all the other parts of my life scattered and without purpose



New and Growing Christian

The Holy Spirit is now in control and my life is gradually growing to be like Jesus.



Immature or Carnal Christian

ME (my ego, will, etc.) is once again in control and all the other parts of my life are not as God wants them to be.



Growing, filled with or controlled by the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is in control and all the other parts of my life are in line with God's Will.