

Christ, The Church's All

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 January 2025

Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0 : 00] The sermon text for today is 1 Corinthians 1, verses 1-9.

! At the conclusion of the reading, I will declare, this is the word of the Lord, and the church in joyful response to his revelation given to us, will together say, thanks be to God.

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. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus.

Then every way you are 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.

[1 : 31] God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the word of the Lord. Father, we come before you once more in childlike faith and dependence upon you.

As Rob just prayed, would you speak, O Lord? Speak, O Lord. You're speaking to us. You've spoken to us decisively in this word. We pray that you would speak a word to our hearts today individually and corporately, that we might become more like Christ for your glory in this world. We pray in his name. Amen. Well, good morning, Shoreline. So glad to have you all here this morning. Recognize most of your faces, but there are some I have not recognized.

I would love the opportunity to meet you after this service. So I just want to extend a special welcome to you. And if you're new here this morning, I just want to say we're so glad that you finally found the perfect church.

All the members are laughing because they know how far from the truth that statement is. I'm actually afraid that you found your way into just another community of Christians that is imperfect and wrought with all kinds of problems.

[2 : 54] So aren't you glad you're here? You know, Charles Spurgeon, the great 19th century English preacher, once said, If I had never joined a church till I had found one that was perfect, I never should have joined one at all.

And the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it. It's Charles Spurgeon talking.

So if you can never find the perfect church, then what kind of church should you look for? Now, many of you in this room, you're Navy, you're Coast Guard, you're here for six months or three years, and you're going to be going to other parts of the country after this.

What should you be looking for when you move? What should you be looking for in a church? Now, there's certainly a lot of things that we could say that you should be looking for, a lot of things we could put on that list.

But there's one thing above and before everything else. You should look for a church that is centered on Christ. A church that is centered on Christ.

[3 : 57] A church that is filled with love and affection for Jesus. A church that is devoted to Him and to His Word. A church that is always looking to Him, always talking about Him, constantly thanking Him and praising Him.

And by God's grace, may Shoreline become a church in 2025 that is increasingly centered on Christ. Now, why is that?

Why should that be the thing that you look for? It's because the church, I'm sorry, Jesus Christ is the church's everything. He's the church's everything.

The title of today's sermon is simply this, Christ Our All. Christ Our All. And the main point is this, that Jesus Christ is eternally by grace, the source, the sustenance, and the satisfaction of the church.

He is eternally by grace, the source, the sustenance, and the satisfaction of the church. And we're going to unpack that as we move forward today. Since we're beginning the book of 1 Corinthians today, a little context is helpful.

[5 : 02] So, the Apostle Paul is the author of this letter to the church of the city of Corinth, a city in Greece. And during Paul's second missionary journey, he had spent a year and a half ministering in Corinth, founding and establishing the church.

And the port city of Corinth at that time was this bustling metropolis. Okay? So, it was situated in Greece as a major crossroads.

It controlled trade from east to west. So, basically from Europe into Asia. And it also controlled travel from mainland Greece down to the Peloponnesian Peninsula. So, this was this ideal port city, bustling hub.

And because of that, it was a thriving center of commerce and tourism, of entertainment, and also pagan worship. And so, picture the church of the city of Corinth in this environment.

And they were prone, like us. I mean, you notice a lot of the things that I said sound a lot like America even. Now, we're not, you know, New London is not Corinth. America is not ancient Greece.

[6 : 06] But there are a lot of similarities between our environments. And the church at Corinth was prone, like us, to allow worldly culture to infiltrate and infect its redeemed gospel culture.

And so, a couple years after Paul's departure from Corinth in the early 50s A.D., troubling reports reached his ears about the church. He also received a letter from them specifically asking a bunch of questions.

And it indicated they were confused. They were misguided about certain topics. And so, Paul writes this letter, largely corrective in nature, to draw them back to right gospel doctrine.

This is what the gospel says. And then to show them how that then informs, it leads to right gospel culture. So, that's just a quick overview of this book.

And here, in these first nine verses of the letter, is how Paul chooses to begin his response to the serious problems plaguing the church of Corinth. And how does Paul choose to begin this letter?

[7 : 10] By re-centering their gaze on Jesus and on the gospel. That's what Paul does here. And by reminding them of their identity in Christ.

By reminding them that Jesus Christ is eternally, by grace, the source, the sustenance, the satisfaction of the church. So, those are the three overarching headings that we're moving in today. And under those, we're going to see seven different characteristics about the church. Seven characteristics. So, if you were here last week. Last week was a topical sermon about the identity and the purpose of the church.

If you didn't get to listen to that, I'd encourage you to. In many ways, though, this sermon is about the identity and the purpose of the church. So, you're going to hear a lot of similar language as we move forward here. So, the very first thing we see.

Christ, our source. Christ, our source. And by that, I mean that Jesus Christ is the author of the church. He's the origin of the church.

[8 : 08] He's the fountain, the wellspring of life. Right? The church's life is derived in Christ. And here's how we see that. The first characteristic of the church is that it is called by God.

Look in your Bibles. 1 Corinthians 1, verse 1. And I meant to say there are also Bibles in the back table. And they are not bookmarked to today's passage like I normally say.

Because I didn't move the bookmarks. But, if you don't have a Bible, you're welcome to grab a Bible off the back table. And we are in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 1. Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus and our brother Sosthenes.

Sosthenes. So, Paul names himself right at the front, the author of this letter. And you notice the opening of this letter is very similar to other letters. There's a greeting. There's thanksgiving. And that's how Paul begins here, with a greeting.

And he also mentions this dear brother Sosthenes. Now, we cannot know for sure. But Sosthenes is likely the same Sosthenes in Acts 18, who was the ruler of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth, who was beaten by the Jews in front of the Roman officer Gallio.

[9 : 19] You can read that riveting story in Acts 18. But the point is that the gospel's power was bringing even prominent Jewish leaders to faith in Jesus, if it's the same Sosthenes.

And even if it's not, the apostle Paul was a supreme example of the power of the gospel to bring prominent Jewish leaders to faith in Christ. Paul says here that he was called, by the will of God, to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

So, you can read about Paul's dramatic conversion story in Acts chapter 9. And then he goes and repeats it in testimony form in Acts 22 and 26. And Paul, as we know, was a zealous Jewish leader and persecutor of Christians.

He was killing Christians for their faith in Jesus. And he was met one day on the road to Damascus. And a blinding light came from heaven. And it was the risen Lord Jesus Christ calling Paul to faith in him.

And then sending Paul out to go and preach the gospel to the nations, to the Gentiles. Now, the word apostle, it means messenger, means ambassador, one who is sent.

[10 : 25] The apostles were those who had seen Jesus and were sent out by him to be his representatives and his spokesmen in the world. Now, it's important for us to understand, you know, when we read a statement like this, that there are many ways in which the role of the apostles was unique, never to be replicated.

For example, the writing of the New Testament gospels and epistles, right? It's through the apostles that the full revelation of God's word was given to the saints.

Jude says the faith once for all delivered to the saints. That was through the apostles. That was a special role that God called them to. And also, there are ways in which the pattern of the apostles would become the pattern for all disciples of Jesus Christ.

For example, how every disciple of Jesus is called by God. Now, how do we know that this called is talking about us too? Because Paul is saying he was called by the will of God.

Well, Paul uses this word called three more times just in chapter one. And each of the instances in which Paul says called, he's talking about all the saints.

[11 : 35] All the saints, the church. And Paul's going to go on to use that word called similarly all throughout the rest of 1 Corinthians. So if you look in verse two, it's to those called.

Called to be saints. In verse nine, God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his son, Jesus Christ. So this language, called, is significant.

All right, it's significant. Scripture teaches us that we're born in sin. All right, we're born dead in our trespasses. As Paul says in Ephesians 2, by nature, children of wrath.

So we don't just need to be patched up, right? We don't just need to be fixed. We need to be reborn as something entirely new. And it's God by his sovereign will and his sovereign grace that does this supernatural regenerating work in our hearts.

Now, certainly we have a role to play, right? We must believe in Jesus. Scripture's clear about that. So the apostle John writes, but to all who did receive him, that is Jesus, the word made flesh, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

[12 : 48] That's those who believed in his name. But God, I want to say this, but God, by his grace, is the primary agent in our salvation. He's the primary agent.

We are agents in our salvation. But he's primary. Like, he's the foundation. So John would say next, right? The same verse here, or the next verse, John 1, 13. Who were born, so talking about the children of God who believed in his name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Yes, it is the will of God fundamentally. It is the grace of God fundamentally that calls us to repentance and faith in Jesus and eternal fellowship in him.

The church is called by God. And this has so many important implications for us. I'm just going to mention two this morning. Since we are objects of grace, called by God to eternal life in Christ, we have no grounds for boasting in anything except in Christ.

No grounds for boasting in the flesh. In fact, Paul, if you read Philippians, Paul is going to deny all the worldly things that would make him a highly successful Jew in his day.

[14:03] He said that's all rubbish, that's dung, compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. We have no grounds for boasting. And Paul is actually going to say this explicitly at the end of chapter 1.

So church, let's magnify God's grace to us in Christ by continually thanking him for it, praising him for it, by boasting in nothing but Christ.

That's the first thing. Second, if the saint's calling in Christ is by the will of God, then our efforts to reach the lost with the gospel will be futile apart from his grace.

Like, they'll be futile. Like, our job as the saints, our job as the church is to be faithful, right, and heralding the good news of the gospel and showing the world the good news of the gospel. But we cannot transform hearts, right? We can't transform the hearts of sinners and draw them to the Lord. Only God can. So that means for us that we need to be dependent on the Lord.

[15:05] Like, you know, we continually hold out the hope of the gospel to people, and then we continually seek the Lord's grace and his mercy towards others in prayer. And parents, this includes, first and foremost, our children, right?

Our children, we can't change their hearts. We're called to faithfulness. We're called to discipleship, to discipling our kids. God, by his sovereign grace and power, he needs to do the work of regeneration in their hearts.

So we've got to be dependent on him. The church is first called by God in Christ. He's the source. Right? He's the source. Second, the church is sanctified in Christ.

Sanctified in Christ. Look at verse 2. Paul's writing, Okay, so Paul makes it clear.

His recipient is the church of God that is in Corinth. All right, so he's writing to a particular local church, a group of believers who were called by God and belonged to God, the church of God.

[16:14] And Paul describes them as those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. Now, that word sanctified and the word saints, they're from the same Greek root.

They're part of a holiness word group. Sanctified means made holy. Right? Saints means holy ones. The church is made up of those who have been set apart.

Right? Made distinct from the world around them. Made holy like Jesus. In other words, the church is those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, reborn to become a new humanity and a new Israel.

That's what we were talking about last week when we walked through, you know, the redemptive narrative of Scripture. God's called us to become a new Israel, a new humanity that can rightly bear God's holy image in this world.

So this sanctifying work, it's first a one-time act of God. That's what it is first and foremost here. A one-time act in which we are forever made holy in Christ.

[17:18] Forever made perfect by his blood. Consider the fact that Paul is writing to a very messed up church. Now, I want to encourage you all.

We did this in the email. I want to encourage you all to just read through 1 Corinthians. It takes like one hour. Read through the whole book and you'll get an idea of kind of how messed up the church was. They had a lot of problems going on.

Paul's writing to that church with all those problems and he says that they have been sanctified in Christ Jesus. And Paul can say this because the redeeming work of Christ applied to the hearts, the souls of believers by the Spirit, is something that cannot be revoked.

It cannot be revoked. You know, we sing sometimes the hymn in as well. One of my favorite lines, probably in any song, is my sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul. And you know, in the place of my sin, what do I get? Righteousness. I get the righteousness of Christ. We were just in Isaiah 53.

[18:28] I get peace. That's shalom. Wholeness. I get healing. He's talking about spiritual healing, a spiritual wholeness. We're forever joined to Christ and made holy like him.

So, sanctification is first a one-time act of God. And second, it is at the same time a lifelong process. Right? A lifelong process of increasingly becoming more like Christ in our individual and our corporate lives.

Called to be saints. In other words, called to be holy or called to be the holy ones. We're called to live lives of holiness, lives worthy of the gospel, lives that reflect that image, the holy character of Christ.

You see, if someone points out sin to you and you say, well, it's all good. I've been forever sanctified in Christ. Then you're actually missing a key element of the gospel. Right? Because the gospel doesn't just save us from something, but also for something.

To once again be the holy people of God that humanity and Israel was meant to be. Right? To display his glory. Display his character. His likeness to the universe.

[19 : 39] And you know, what this is saying, what Paul is saying here, and this is kind of a major theme throughout the whole letter. He's saying, be who you already are in Christ. You hear that?

Be who you already are in Christ. You're already sanctified. Now be holy. Right? Be who you already are in Christ. Now this is both an encouragement and an exhortation to us this morning, church.

If you're here and you're currently mired in sin, if you're overwhelmed by guilt for your shortcomings and your failures, be reminded today, be encouraged today, that when God looks at you, son and daughter of God, when he looks at you, he sees sanctified in Christ.

Right? He sees holy like my beloved son. That's what God sees. Your sin, past, present, future is gone. Right? It does not define you any longer.

And Paul's going to go on to say in chapter 6, listen to this. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

[20 : 52] And such were some of you. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Be encouraged, saints. Your sin does not define you. You're made holy, sanctified forever in Christ. Christ. And their exhortation today is be who you already are in Christ.

Where we are the holy ones, so let's live like it. Now I want you just to consider this for a second. If we are the remade image bearers of God in this world, then when we tolerate sin in our midst, we are lying about God.

Right? We're lying about God. And we're saying God is someone who's okay with a little gossip here. Right? He's okay with a little pornography there. God is someone who lets a profanity slip every now and then.

Right? He's a God who loses his cool in anger when his children are rebellious. Right? God might occasionally lash back in prideful defense. Yeah, that's what God is like.

[22 : 00] We're lying about God when we allow sin to go, you know, unconfessed, unrepented of in our midst. And of course, church, we're not called to perfection.

We cannot be perfect. Right? God has made us perfect. We cannot live perfect lives in this world. We're going to sin over and over again. But we've got to regularly call sin, sin.

And confess it. And repent of it. Turn from it. And in reliance on the Spirit, pursue lives of holiness in Christ. The church is called. The church is sanctified.

And thirdly, we see here just in the greeting, the church is united in Christ. 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.

All those in every place. Paul is saying to the Corinthians here, look, Corinthians, I want you to get your eyes off yourselves for a second and realize what God is doing in the world.

[23 : 09] And it's a lot bigger than your church. Right? It's a lot bigger than just your church in Corinth. It's a lot bigger than just the city of Corinth. As amazing as Corinth is. Right? It's a lot bigger than you guys. What God is doing in this world is calling sinners from every walk of life, from every corner of the globe, into one family that is united in Christ.

That is united to one another. He's talking about the universal church. Right? He's writing to a local church. Right? The city in Corinth. But he's reminding them they're part of something bigger, a universal worldwide church in which all believers are one in Christ.

You see, the church of Corinth, they had adopted some of the cultural values like autonomy, like self-achievement, like social status by means of wealth and influence.

Any of this sound familiar? Any of this sound familiar? And this led, as we'll see even next week in next week's passage, to divisions in the church, to cliques, to mistreatment of those in the lower class.

And so Paul is beginning the letter by pointing to the spiritual reality that all of them, all of them, and not just all of them in the Corinthian church, but all of the saints in all of the world, and that's in

every generation, all of them are united in Christ to one another.

[24 : 32] And the church's unity is going to become a main theme in this book because it's so central to the heart of the gospel, so central to what the gospel is and what the gospel does.

You know, Shoreline, it's relatively easy to get a group of people with similar interests to come together for community. Like, it's not that hard. You can find that at Planet Fitness, right?

You can find that through online gaming. You can find that in youth sports. Or you could go on down the list of ways that you can go find community with people of like-minded interest.

But the gospel does something far more profound than bring people of similar interests to gather together. The gospel, it unites people of every ethnic background, of every socioeconomic status, of every level of education into one family that is as diverse as humanity, but has this one all-surpassing thing in common, faith in Jesus Christ.

That's what the gospel does. So let's be a church where the cultural dividing lines are demolished, right? Where we are regularly loving and serving those who are different from us.

[25 : 51] And not so that we can, you know, achieve corporate, you know, DEI goals. That's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. We're not trying to achieve those kinds of goals. We're trying to portray the beauty of Christ.

That's what we're trying to do. You know, on the screen earlier was this stained glass window, and that's kind of like what the church is, right? We're a bunch of varied, seemingly random, jaggedy pieces that Christ fits together into this beautiful thing that he's doing.

But I just want to ask, do you spend time with people that are different than yourself? Like, are you pursuing relationships with those who, apart from Christ, you wouldn't interact with?

That's what Jesus is calling us to do. That's what the gospel does. It brings us all together to be one together. The church is united in Christ, and we're going to talk about that a lot more in this book. Paul concludes the greeting in a way that he often does. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. And that should be its own sermon, really.

[27 : 08] Grace and peace from God our Father. You know, that the church has been called and sanctified and united is evidence of this grace flowing from the wounds of Christ. Right?

It's evidence of the peace of God, meaning the peace that we have with God, with one another, that the saints enjoy now and forever. This grace, this peace, it comes, Paul says, from God who is now our Father.

He's our Father. And it comes through Jesus Christ, who laid down his life upon the cross so that we could eternally enjoy these benefits, chiefly the benefit of himself.

And we're going to see that down in verse 9. Christ is our source. He's our source. He's the church's source. And secondly, Christ is our sustenance.

Our sustenance. By that, I mean that Jesus gives strength. In Jesus is strength. He gives us nourishment. In Jesus is nourishment for the church.

[28 : 09] And we're going to see that in three ways. So the first, the fourth characteristic of the church from this text is that the church is enriched in Christ.

Enriched. Verse 4. Look at 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.

Paul is expressing in these verses his thanks to God for the outpouring of God's grace. Specifically in the Corinthian church in all kinds of spiritual gifts.

Now we're going to learn more about this speech and this knowledge and these spiritual gifts as we move forward in the book. But what I want you to know right now, if you haven't read 1 Corinthians, is that one of the reasons that Paul needs to address the Corinthian church, it's because of their misuse and abuse of the spiritual gifts.

[29 : 17] But right here, at the start of the letter, Paul is saying that this outpouring of spiritual gifts is something for which he always thanks God. Let's not miss this point.

Apparently, Paul, in his private prayer life, is all the time giving thanks to God for the Corinthian church. And for God's grace poured out upon her despite all of her shortcomings.

And what this means is that Paul then has a ready word of encouragement for the church. Do you see that? He's thanking God and now he's encouraging the Corinthian church as he's writing to them.

Shoreline, God wants us to be a church of thankfulness and a church of encouragement. That's what God wants us to be. He wants us to be regularly praying for one another.

And not just in supplication, but in thanksgiving. And then as we do that, bringing a ready word of authentic encouragement to one another for our mutual outbuilding in Christ.

[30 : 21] So pray for your fellow church members. All the people that are gathered in this room, the ones that aren't with us this morning, pray for them. Pray for them. And again, not just in supplication.

Like, it is good. That is a good thing that we can do. We can pray in supplication. We can intercede on other people's behalves, and we're called to do that. So I'm not downplaying that. But I'm saying it's not that hard for me to say, Lord, I thank you for Brother Matt.

You know, he's got problems, Lord. And I just want you to sanctify him in the spirit this morning.

Like, you know, we can pick apart people's, and we should be praying for people's sanctification in Christ.

What I'm saying, I should also be thanking the Lord. Lord, thank you that you've made Matt to be such a shepherd who loves the body and who sacrifices himself for the body. Right? Thank you for the Lord.

For our fellow church members, and especially those that we rub shoulders with. Just a practical thing here. We're currently working on a plan to refresh our membership directory.

[31 : 22] I think the last time we had one was in, like, 2019. We want you all to have a listing with pictures of the members of Shoreline in hand, primarily for prayer. Like, that's especially what we want it to be for.

So more information to come on that. And then, as Rob mentioned, as we included, you know, Christmas cards are an easy thing. We save our Christmas cards. We put them into a stack. And then we use them in our family worship times to pray for people.

And then maybe in your private prayer life, you might have some other means. We were talking in the class this morning about prayer cards. It's just another practical way to write things down and to be praying regularly for people in the church.

And then, come into these gatherings. Come into the community group gatherings. Whenever you are in people's homes and with people in the church, look for ways to encourage those in the church.

I just want you to imagine with me for a moment. What would it do to the culture of our church if every single member was praying regularly in thanksgiving and supplication, but right now we're talking about thanksgiving, for every single member?

[32 : 29] Every single member praying regularly for every single member. And then what if, when we gathered together, every member was thinking about, how can I encourage Tyler this morning? How can I encourage Sarah this morning?

I'm thinking about how am I going to encourage the believers that are here this morning? That would be a supernatural, unified, gospel-revealing sort of community, would it not?

That would be a community of people that's reflecting Christ and exalting Christ. That's the kind of church that we all want Shoreline to become, isn't it? And you know, by God's grace, I'm encouraged because I do see people doing that regularly, week in and week out, in community group, here on Sunday mornings.

I see people doing that. And so I'm thankful for you all and the encouragement that you provide. By God's grace, we're going to grow more in this area in 2025.

You know, we're part of a culture of negativity. I don't know if you know this. I think we all know it. We all feel it all the time. A culture that's constantly tearing down.

[33 : 31] So let's embody a gospel culture of thanksgiving and encouragement for the building up of the church and the glory of Christ. The Corinthian church, we really haven't even talked about their enrichment and spiritual gifts.

Just looking at what Paul's doing here, his thanksgiving. The Corinthian church was enriched by God with spiritual gifts, which Paul says are gifts of his grace upon them. And Paul says in verse 6 that these gifts provide evidence to the truthfulness of the gospel.

Through these gifts, he says, the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you. Now we're going to talk in a lot more detail about the spiritual gifts, especially when we get to chapter 12 and 13 and 14.

But sure, God has gifted every believer in Christ by the Spirit with spiritual gifts, with varied gifts of grace for the building up of the body.

There's gifts of teaching. There's gifts of leading. There's gifts of serving. There's gifts of faith.

There's gifts of hospitality and of prophecy and of wisdom and miracles and administration.

[34 : 43] All sorts of spiritual gifts. And as we use our spiritual gifts, we, listen to this, Paul's saying this, we validate the message of the gospel. Is the Bible real?

Is Jesus really Lord and Savior? Did God really come down in the person of Jesus to live, die on the cross, and rise again on the third day?

Is Jesus really risen and reigning? Well, look at the church. That's what this is saying. Look at the church and see the evidence of the risen and reigning Lord Jesus Christ as they display their spiritual gifts towards one another.

Like, this is incredible. We're declaring the truthfulness of the gospel message when we exercise our spiritual gifts for the upbuilding of the body. The church is enriched in Christ.

And again, we're going to talk a lot more about spiritual gifts down the road. Next, the church is, fifth characteristic here, hope-filled. Filled with hope. Hope-filled by Christ's return.

[35 : 47] Paul says, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some translations say, as you eagerly await or eagerly wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Corinthian church's perspective was far too nearsighted. They were far too earthly-minded, far too concerned with worldly comfort and worldly prestige.

And Paul is reminding them that it's not in things of this world that we hope. It's, again, it's in the risen and reigning Lord Jesus Christ.

And it's in the fact that one day, he is going to return and be revealed to the whole world. And guess what? Paul says in Romans 8 that the sons of God, the children of God, will also be revealed to the whole world with Christ.

He's going to come back and he's going to make all things new. Right? All earthly things. And that day, all earthly things are going to fade away. All worldly pursuits are just going to disintegrate before our eyes.

[36 : 51] What will be left is eternal things. Those things will take shape. They will take clarity. That will become the ultimate and only reality. For now we see in a mirror dimly.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13. But then, face to face, even the spiritual gifts are going to fade away. But what will be left is an eternity basking in the love of Christ.

This is our great hope. Church, this is our hope. It's Christ. It's eternal life with Christ. And in resurrected bodies like his, which Paul talks about in chapter 15.

Now this hope nourishes our souls. Speaking of chapter 15. One of the most magnificent expositions of the resurrection in the Bible.

And this is how Paul concludes chapter 15. This is his closing word of exhortation. After talking about the resurrection. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

[38 : 03] This is what it looks like to be a church that is filled with hope at Christ's return.

Abounding in gospel work. A pillar of the truth. All right, not tossed to and fro by the waves of worldly wisdom.

Because we know, we know, we know our destiny. We know it. Christ, our sustenance, enriching the church, filling us with hope, and thirdly, sustaining us.

We're sustained by Christ. Paul says, Saints, if someone were to ask you, you know, hey, Josiah, why are you still a Christian after all these years?

You know, what would you say? You might say, because I believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world. And that would be a good answer. Right? That's a good answer.

But there's a more primary reason. Right? If someone were to ask you, how do you know that you're going to make it? Like that you won't throw in the towel of your faith in one year or in 25 years from now.

[39 : 11] What would you say? Perhaps you'd say, because I've decided to follow Jesus. No turning back. That would be a good answer. But there's a better one.

Or there's a better, more fundamental answer to those questions. And it's this verse. It's verse 8. Why are you still a Christian? How do you know that you're going to make it all the way?

Because Jesus Christ, who bled and died for me, is by his grace and his power sustaining me and strengthening me and upholding me.

He has promised never to leave me or forsake me. He's saved me. He's called me from death to life. He's united me to himself and to all the saints.

He's made me holy like himself. And I am sure that of this, that he who began a good work in me will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

[40 : 06] Philippians 1.6. Philippians 1.6. Or do you remember this promise from Isaiah 46 verse 4? Now, as we trudge through life, it so often feels like the bottom is just dropping out from under us.

Like our sin that runs so deep in our hearts. It feels undefeatable, right? Our problems, which just pile on one after the other, they feel unsolvable.

And our suffering, which brings us to our breaking point. It feels like we could never surmount that. And if you're in one of those places today, or when you will be in the future, because we surely get in those places, know that even still, Jesus Christ, who has borne all your grief and all your sorrows, he is burying you and carrying you.

He is sustaining you right now, and he will sustain you. Child of God, he will sustain you to the end. In church, he is sustaining us individually and as a local body of believers and as one universal body with all the saints.

And on that day when Christ returns, no weapon formed against us will stand, right? All the accusations of the enemy will be forever silenced. Jesus will present his bride, as Paul says in Ephesians 5, he will present his bride, the church, to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish.

[41 : 53] We're sustained to the end guiltless. We're sanctified forever. And that's why we're still here, right? That's why we're going to make it to the end. We are sustained by Christ who is himself our sustenance.

Christ our sustenance. And the last thing, Christ our satisfaction. Christ our satisfaction. Here's the seventh and final characteristic of the church that I think we see in this text.

Joined to Christ. Joined to Christ. Now the second characteristic I mentioned was united in Christ. But this one is united to Christ. Or to use a different word, joined to Christ.

Verse 9. God is faithful. Which is why he's going to sustain us, guiltless to the end, right? Because he's faithful.

He's reliable. God is faithful by whom you are called into the fellowship of his son, Jesus Christ our Lord. So there's that word called again.

[42 : 56] And notice now what it is exactly that we are called into. We have been called into the fellowship of his son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Now what is fellowship?

We throw that word around a lot. Do we know what fellowship means? Fellowship, homeschoolers who are part of this co-op, is koinonia in the Greek. Koinonia. Koinonia.

It refers to a sharing, a participating in something. And it connotes intimacy, a relational intimacy. Paul is saying that we have been called into a sharing, a participating with and in Christ.

We've been called to relational intimacy with the son of God. And if we're joined to the son, then we're also joined to the father through the spirit.

So Jesus taught his disciples in the upper room. For God's eternally three in one, right? He's three in one. He is a community in himself of perfect love and harmony.

[43 : 58] And we're called into that fellowship. The divine life of the triune God. That's what we're called into. And church, this, again, drawing back from what we said last week, this is why humanity was made.

Right? This is why Israel was called to the Lord. To know God. To fellowship with God. And this is why now the church in Christ has been made into the new humanity and the new Israel.

To know God in Christ. And this is truly the good life. This is the good life. Knowing Jesus. That's the good life. He is the living water.

He is the bread of life that satisfies the deepest longings of our souls. Those who eat this bread. Those who drink this water will never hunger.

Never thirst anymore. See, the church in Corinth was chasing after all sorts of other things for their purpose and their satisfaction.

[45 : 03] Paul is reminding them. He's reminding us this morning where that's ultimately found. Right? It's not found in worldly wealth. It's not found in social status. It's not found in sexual indulgence.

Or even in influence in the church. It's in relationship with Jesus Christ. Who is the all satisfying treasure of our souls. Christ our source.

Christ our sustenance. Christ our satisfaction. Christ our all. Christ our all. Our everything. He's called us, church.

He's called us. He has sanctified us. He has united us. He is enriching us. He is sustaining us. He is filling us with hope.

And he has joined us to himself eternally by grace. It's all by grace. Yeah, we've got all sorts of problems here. We do.

[46 : 01] Got all sorts of besetting sins that we can't seem to break. But we have Christ. Or more accurately, he has us. Right?

He's got us. So let's center ourselves all the more in 2025. Let's center ourselves on Jesus Christ. And then let's watch what he does for the upbuilding of this body.

And for his kingdom. And for his glory. Please pray with me. Heavenly Father. It's your grace. That has done all these things.

Lord, we sit here. We stand here. In holy reverence. And in humility. And in awe.

That you're a God of such marvelous, matchless, astonishing grace. That you would call us to yourself and to fellowship with Christ. Now and forever.

[46 : 59] Lord, we see here that you are the source of our lives. Individually and corporately. You're the source. Let us remember that each and every day.

God, you're the sustenance. Let us go to you for nourishment. For strength. Lord, you're our satisfaction. God, let us deny the flesh.

And stop pursuing the things of this world. Pursue you fully this year. And Lord, would you supernaturally by your power. Make this church.

Make this church more like Christ. Unite this church. Into an uncommon supernatural unity. That transcends all of the cultural dividing lines. That we see around us.

And make us one. As you are one. Father. Son. Spirit. Spirit. You are one. Make us one. With you and in you.

[47 : 56] And as Jesus prays. That the world would know. That you're the Christ. The son of God. That they would know. That's where life is found. We pray this in Jesus name.

Amen. Would you stand with us?