

I CORINTHIANS 1:4-9
THANKFULNESS!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Corinthians chapter 1 as we continue our in-depth study of this letter that Paul wrote from Ephesus to the church in Corinth.

As we saw from our last study, the city of Corinth was a very wicked city but not much different from the wickedness in our major cities today.

And then the Gospel of Jesus Christ came into this city and people were getting saved and things are looking good.

But there was a problem. It seems like the church could not cut themselves off from their practices before they were saved. They let the world into the church you might say and then into their lives.

So Paul is going to deal with these issues, like divisions in the church, dealing with sin in the church, something that they were not taking care of, disputes against the brethren that they were bringing to the courts instead of dealing with it themselves, confusion on marriage, using their liberty to the point of hurting people in the body, using their spiritual gifts in a very ungodly way, and more. Also, Paul answers questions that these believers had.

Make no mistake about it, there were many problems there in the church in Corinth and Paul was dealing with those problems in this letter.

Now, with all the problems there in Corinth, in the verses we will be looking at this morning, we are going to see Paul speak of – ***THANKFULNESS!***

I know that sounds kind of a strange thing for Paul to do when there were so many problems there in the church in Corinth, and yet that is exactly what he will do, be thankful for the believers, the saints there in Corinth!

And here's the thing. It is easy to see all these problems there in the church in Corinth, but the reality is, there is no perfect church.

How can that be?

Because we carry around these bodies of flesh and that flesh gets in the way and thus, there are problems.

So this letter, inspired by the Holy Spirit is for us as well to learn and to grow from.

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

A THANKFUL HEART – I CORINTHIANS 1:4

THE RICHNESS OF GOD'S GRACE – I CORINTHIANS 1:5-7

SECURITY IN CHRIST – I CORINTHIANS 1:8-9

Let me share this story with you and yes, it is about being thankful.

We are told,

A retiree in Florida phones his daughter in New Jersey and says, ***“Honey, I have bad news for you. Your mother and I have decided that 52 years of marriage is enough. We’re calling it quits and getting a divorce.”***

His daughter yells, ***“Are you crazy? What the heck are you saying? We’re not going to let you do that!”***

The father says, ***“No, we’ve had enough. We’re getting tired of the same old routine and looking at each other every day. I don’t want to talk about it, so call your brother in Detroit and let him know.”***

And the father hangs up on his daughter.

Panic stricken, the daughter phones her brother and drops the bomb about their mom and Dad.

“No way, no WAY!” shouts the brother. ***“This will NOT happen! Stay by the phone. I’ll talk to them and handle this. I’ll call you back as soon as possible!”***

The brother phones his father and says, ***“Dad, Sis just told me you’re getting a divorce. That’s CRAZY! No way we’re gonna let this happen to you and Mom. We’re both booking planes tonight and flying down there to Florida in the morning to sort this out. Listen, don’t do anything till we get there and you hear me out! Promise me, Dad. Don’t do ANYTHING!”***

The old man agreed. He turned his cell phone off with a smile and then said to his wife, ***“Ok, it’s all arranged, Sweetheart. The kids will be here tomorrow for Thanksgiving and, best of all, they’re buying their own plane tickets!”***

- Dr. Larry Petton

Okay, that was funny to me, and I guess having the kids come for thanksgiving, no matter how they got there, this couple was very – ***THANKFUL!***

With that said, let’s begin reading in I Corinthians chapter 1, beginning in verse 4 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic – ***THANKFULNESS!***

I CORINTHIANS 1

VERSE 4

I find this interesting for Paul is thanking God for these Christians in Corinth.

What we have to understand is that he is not saying he is thankful for their carnality but because God is gracious, He has given to them something they don't deserve, eternal life with God through Jesus Christ.

This thankfulness is based in Christ and the work that He has done, is doing and will do in the lives of these saints in Corinth and the same is true for us!

And it truly begins with our salvation or as Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

Grace is a gift to us from God, and it is not based on what we have done, how good we are, it is freely given to us.

You can describe grace as – ***UNMERITED FAVOR!***

I think the most important question we must ask is this. ***“What must I do to be saved?”***

Now, in saying that there is a surplus or an abundance of answers that people have.

Some would say we are saved through baptism, or confirmation, or church membership, or keeping the Law, or being good, or living by the Sermon on the Mount, or giving to those in need, or communion, or paying for our sins in Purgatory, and the list can go on and on, and it does!

Here's the thing. That is not how you are saved.

We can't work our way into heaven because we have missed the mark of perfection and thus, our sin separates us from God. Doing good doesn't negate the bad!

And the reality is, the only thing we have added to the work of salvation is *SIN*, God did the rest by saving us and our salvation is only found in Christ, and it is through Christ's finished work that grace is given to us!

Paul put it this way in Romans 6:23, **"For the wages of sin is death, but the *free* gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

Thus, the basis for our salvation is grace, the means of our salvation is faith, and it is based in Christ!

Now let's think about this for a minute. What if the only gift that God has given to you is salvation, eternal life with Him, can you still be thankful?

We need to be! There is nothing we need more. There is nothing that is more important in our lives than eternal life with God!

And let me say this. God is so gracious, and we will talk more about that in a few minutes, but He has blessed us with so many things!

The problem for many is they focus on what they don't have instead of what God has given to them.

Keep in mind we don't deserve anything and yet, God has blessed us exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ask or think! (Ephesians 3:20)

And here we see Paul thankful as he sees that they have come to saving faith in Christ!

But there was this problem. They saw the grace of God giving them a license or freedom to do whatever they wanted. They were behaving like the world, and they did not see that as a problem because they felt it was all under grace!

And that is what Paul will address in this letter.

What is interesting is that you don't see Paul deal with the Corinthian believers with things like the deity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, the atonement because it was not a problem like it was in some of the other New Testament letters.

Their problem was how they were living out their faith. They understood that they were saved by the grace of God, but they took that grace to the wrong conclusion.

And many times, what happens is that we allow the influence of the world to cause us to be unthankful.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

One of the defining characteristics of a godless life is ingratitude. ***“For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened”*** (Rom. 1:21).

As one author put it, ***ingratitude and pride go hand in hand. Once we reject God, we become arrogant, thankless creatures.***

But the disease of ingratitude not only infects those in the culture around us; it is epidemic among God's people as well. We are more often like the nine lepers healed by Jesus who left without saying thanks than we are like the one who returned to fall at our Lord's feet in unspeakable gratefulness (Luke 17:11-19).

According to Jesus in this passage, the pathogen of thanklessness is more dangerous than leprosy.

Mercifully, there is a cure.

First, we must recognize that thankfulness does not come naturally . . . A life of gratitude is especially difficult in a culture such as ours that exalts the proud, despises humility, and enthrones self as the highest authority.

In a world consumed by indifference and lack of appreciation, Christians can engage in a moment-by-moment protest of thankfulness. Persistent gratitude will set us apart from the world, making us salty to a self-indulgent culture (Matt. 5:13).

Second, we must return again and again to the great reality of the cross. It proclaims that Jesus died for people like us, people who forget to say thank you.

He is so patient with our obstinate ingratitude. But as we come to the cross daily, we begin to see our pride and thanklessness crucified.

In their place, the resurrection life of gratitude dawns.

- <https://bit.ly/4aTPTG4>

For the Corinthians, they lived a life of carnality, and that is a problem. And yet, God's grace is sufficient, it needs to be sufficient in our lives.

And it is easy to look down upon these Corinthians, these believers, for their carnality.

But what about us?

Keep in mind that these writings are for us as well, as I have said.

Now we also need to remember that God has poured out His grace upon us, something we too did not deserve because our righteousness was and is like filthy rags before a holy and righteous God.

You see, as believers, when we compare ourselves to God in which no darkness dwells, we fall far short.

We can only stand before God in the righteousness that has been imputed into our lives by faith in Jesus, or as Paul says, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”** II Corinthians 5:21.

I want to take a few minutes to look at some of the Scriptures that deal with thankfulness, I think it is important, because, when things don’t go our way, we can easily become unthankful.

We are told in Psalm 136:1-3, **“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy endures forever. Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever.”**

As you read that you can just feel the joy of the Psalmist as he is so thankful for the Lord and all that He has done in his life! He is thanking God for who He is. He is great, He is good, there is no one or nothing that can compare with Him.

We should be thankful as well because the God of this Psalmist is the same God we believe in!

THANK YOU, LORD!

In Psalm 100:4-5 we are told, **“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.”**

How does God want us to enter into His presence?

We don’t have to guess for the Psalmist tells us that we are to, **“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”**

Coming to worship the Lord should be a celebration not a funeral! The best way to enter into the Lord's presence is by thanking Him for what He has done and praising Him for who He is.

J. Vernon McGee sums it up like this for us. He wrote,

Someone told me the other day that he attended the services of one of the great churches of the past and had never witnessed a place that was so dead.

Do you know what the problem was?

People were not coming to church with praise in their hearts. They did not come to the service with thankfulness in their hearts to God. They did not enter His gates with thanksgiving.

If you go to church on Sunday to worship, make *sure* you go with thanksgiving and praise in your heart. If you fail to do that, you are not going to be very helpful to your church.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible, Vol. II, pp. 822-823

THANK YOU, LORD!

In Ephesians 5:20 Paul wrote, “**giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**”

Not only is there joy but we give thanks to God for all that He is doing in our lives, the people He brings into our lives!

THANK YOU, LORD!

In Colossians 2:6-7 we are told, “**As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.**”

That phrase, “**walk in Him**” speaks of our daily lives, that as we move throughout our day, He guides our lives.

He also says that we are “**rooted**” in Him, which speaks of our life source. You see, we receive our spiritual nourishment from Him and as we do, fruit will be seen in our lives.

And lastly, we are “**built up in Him**” or we are maturing in Him each and every day.

Look at what God has done and walk accordingly, and you should be “**abounding in it with thanksgiving.**”

Our lives should be overflowing with thanksgiving for our Lord not only saved us, but He has blessed us with so much!

THANK YOU, LORD!

In I Timothy 2:1 Paul wrote, “**Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.**”

Paul reminded them that they are to pray for all men for salvation and sanctification so that men are not only saved but by their actions, things will go well, that they will mature.

Now Paul lists some three things here: *supplications*, *prayers*, and *intercessions*.

What is the difference?

Let me explain it like this.

First of all, *supplications* are specific prayers.

He then speaks of *prayers*, which are more of a general prayer.

And then he speaks of *intercessions*, which speak of our prayers for others as we bring their needs before God.

And then, what is the attitude of prayer?

We are to pray with *thanksgiving*.

THANK YOU, LORD!

That is what Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6-7, as he wrote, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

Paul is speaking of praying with a heart of thanksgiving before God!

THANK YOU, LORD!

And I can go on, because the Bible is filled with the idea of us being thankful before God.

I do realize that sometimes things don't work out like we think that they should. Or difficulty comes our way. Or even sickness.

But in all of those things God is working, and we might not understand the totality of what is happening, but again, God has a plan, and He knows what He is doing. Thus, can we trust Him and be thankful for Him not giving up on us but continually working in our lives for the best?

We need to or if we don't, we will not have a thankful heart!

And here is something that we can do in those dark times!

REMEMBER IN THE DARKNESS WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED IN THE LIGHT!

(Joe Bayly)

We are to have – ***A THANKFUL HEART!***

God has saved us!

He has sustained us in this life!

And one day He will complete the work in us, and we will go home to be with Him!

And thus, Paul was able to say, **“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus.”**

As we read on, we will be looking at more of God’s grace or – ***THE RICHNESS OF GOD’S GRACE!***

VERSES 5-7

Notice what Paul is saying here. He is telling them and us that God also bestowed upon them all kinds of wisdom and knowledge, not because they were so worthy, but God is so gracious and merciful and He gave to them what they needed, just as He does with us.

And what God had graciously given to them, they used that to testify or be a witness of Jesus Christ to those around them.

Yes, at times it may not have looked like they were Christians, but they were because of God’s grace that was given to them, and they received it by faith!

They abounded in spiritual gifts, lacking nothing, not because they were so spiritual or so holy, but because God gave to them as He pleased!

Yes, they were blessed beyond measure outwardly, in a worldly perspective you might say, but inwardly there was a heart issue that needed to be dealt with, they were prideful, and they needed to be broken.

One writer put it like this in regard to the gifts that these believers in Corinth had, *“The grace of God was shown to the church in Corinth in that they lacked no spiritual gift. This tells me something very important: The flow of spiritual gifts either in a man individually or in a congregation corporately is not an indication of spirituality. It’s an indication of grace. When someone has a gift of healing, a word of prophecy, or otherwise moves in the miraculous, our tendency is to assume he must be very holy. The gifts of the Spirit, however, are not dependent upon our attaining a certain level of spirituality. They’re simply a matter of our being recipients of grace. This means ministry and spiritual gifts are not based upon how we’re doing at all - but solely upon what God wants to do in and through us.”* (Source Unknown)

Let me take a few minutes and let’s look at – ***THE RICHNESS OF GOD’S GRACE*** towards us. It truly is amazing.

Liten to what we are told in Ephesians 1:3-9, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself.”**

He has made us accepted in the Beloved, in Christ all by His grace!

Again in Ephesians 3:8-12 we are told, **“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.”**

When you understand all that we have is a grace gift from God, you can relax and rest in Him.

But when you think that God will give you things according to your works, you will never rest. You will work and work and work and still, there is no peace, no comfort, no joy because you are trying to attain something that God has for you because of His grace!

When you understand that, you can find that rest, that peace, that joy as you serve Him. You understand that God loves you and will bless you and you just have to walk by faith and use what God has given to you!

Of this we are told,

The Greek word translated **“unsearchable”** describes something that cannot be fully comprehended or explored. In other words, there is no limit to the riches of Christ; they are past finding out.

Try as we might, we can never plumb the depths of Christ’s worth.

Paul delineates some of these riches in Ephesians 1:7-14: *redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, the knowledge of the mystery of His will, the message of truth, the sealing of the Holy Spirit, and the guarantee of our inheritance.* These are spiritual riches with eternal benefits, and we cannot fully comprehend them.

Jesus taught two short parables that emphasize the value of eternal life and the kingdom of God: *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it”* (Matthew 13:44-46).

Like a hidden treasure or a pearl of great price, admission to the kingdom is of incalculable worth - and it is Jesus Christ who grants the admission. The unsearchable riches of Christ are on display in every believer's heart.

The unsearchable riches of Christ cannot be fully traced out. *“In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form”* (Colossians 2:9), so the riches of Christ include all that God is.

The unsearchable riches of Christ are *the Glory of God, the Truth of God, the Wisdom of God, the Life of God, and the Love of God.*

In Christ, God *“has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing”* (Ephesians 1:3).

In Christ are hidden *“all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* (Colossians 2:3).

In Christ, God *“has given us everything we need for a godly life”* (2 Peter 1:3).

In Ephesians 3:8 Paul refers to himself as *“less than the least of all the Lord's people.”*

This humble statement is then contrasted with *“the boundless riches of Christ.”*

Paul describes himself as the lowest of believers while lifting Jesus up as the greatest of all . . .

Christ's riches that He makes available to us are not material but spiritual. The unsearchable riches of Christ provide salvation to everyone who believes (John 3:16; Romans 1:16).

We may be the worst of sinners, yet Jesus can forgive us and transform our lives (Romans 12:1-2).

It is the gift that truly keeps on giving, as we are changed, by God's Spirit, into ***"loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled"*** people (Galatians 5:22-23, CEV).

King Solomon was a man of great riches and wisdom, and his fame spread throughout the known world. Dignitaries from other countries came to hear his wisdom and see his lavish display of wealth (1 Kings 10:24).

Scripture says that Solomon had no equal in the earth at that time: ***"King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth"*** (verse 23).

Yet, for all that, Solomon's riches were not unsearchable. They could be quantified; the gold bars could be counted, and he had no inexhaustible supply of silver.

Besides that, Solomon's riches were only the temporal treasures of this world.

Jesus is ***"greater than Solomon"*** (Luke 11:31).

The treasures of Christ are inexhaustible, they are unsearchable, and they are forever.

- <https://bit.ly/3WXC1VE>

We need to understand that! You can't use up the grace of God, they are forever!

If you are still not sure about God's grace, what it is all about, let me give you this perspective on what God has done for us, what He has given to us.

What does it mean when the Bible says that we have been pardoned by God?

Here are two classic definitions from American legal history:

First, in 1833, Chief Justice John Marshall, in a landmark decision, described a pardon as ***“an act of grace . . . which exempts the individual on whom it is bestowed from the punishment the law inflicts for a crime he has committed.”***

Second, in 1866, the Supreme Court gave another famous definition of a pardon: ***“a pardon releases the punishment and blots out of existence the guilt, so that in the eye of the law the offender is as innocent as if he had never committed the offense . . . A pardon removes the penalties and disabilities and restores him to all his civil rights; it makes him, as it were, a new man, and gives him a new credit and capacity.”***

Christian Philosopher William Lane Craig offers this as a marvelous description of a divine pardon. ***“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation . . .’ The pardoned sinners’ guilt is expiated [atoned], so that he is legally innocent before God.”***

- William Lane Craig, The Atonement, p. 65

Exactly. We are guilty before God. The punishment is eternal separation from God, ultimately in the Lake of Fire!

But God became flesh, dwelt amongst us, went to the cross of Calvary to pay the penalty for our sins.

Thus, Jesus bore our sins, took our punishment and He gave us this grace gift of eternal life. We do not deserve it. We can do nothing to obtain it except receive that gift by faith.

Thus, when Paul looked at the Corinthian church, he could say, ***“These people proclaim Jesus, they know about Jesus, there are the supernatural gifts of God among them, and they are excited about Jesus’ return.”***

I am not sure how many people can attest to those things today in the church. But the church in Corinth had those things that they were doing good with.

Also, and as we will see, as you look at this church in Corinth, they were not spiritual giants. They had a lot of problems that Paul will deal with, and yet, we see God’s grace working in them and through them, not because they deserved it, but God has freely extended this gift to them!

And did you notice in verse 7 that they are **“eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

I wish more Christians would have that hunger for the Lord’s return, that joy to wait for Him to come for His Bride, the Church!

And what I see here, that they are waiting for, is the Rapture. Others say it refers to Jesus coming ***WITH*** His saints.

When you look at Paul’s writings, the focus is on the Rapture of the Church, that we are waiting for the Lord’s coming and that is what I think Paul is speaking of here.

Keep in mind that Paul said that we are not going to come up short in any gift, why is that important?

Because Paul says that the Lord is coming back and that means the days will get more and more evil and we will need those gifts to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world!

We can't do it on our own and the Lord does not expect us to. Thus, as we have seen – ***THE RICHNESS OF GOD'S GRACE*** from Salvation until the day we are taken home to be with Him. It is all His grace!

Thus, may we have a – ***THANKFUL HEART!***

As we look at the last point, it is an important one. Paul speaks of our – ***SECURITY IN CHRIST!***

VERSES 8-9

Let me start out with this because there are those who are not secure in Christ. Let me explain.

We are told,

In a bizarre turn of events, the bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix has ruled that countless Catholics must now re-do their sacrament of baptism.

Father Andres Arango resigned from St. Gregory Catholic Church in Phoenix after it was determined he used the words “***We baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,***” instead of the correct phrase “***I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,***” according to Thomas J. Olmsted, the bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix.

Olmsted explained, “***The issue with using ‘We’ is that it is not the community that baptizes a person, rather, it is Christ, and Him alone, who presides at all of the sacraments, and so it is Christ Jesus who baptizes,***” with the priest presumably acting as Christ’s surrogate to perform the sacrament.

The priest in question had performed hundreds, maybe thousands of baptisms over the course of his 20+ year career. But the Diocese determined that because he used the wrong word, “. . . *all of the baptisms he has performed until June 17, 2021, are presumed invalid.*”

He suggested this was a particularly serious error, since, according to the Catholic Church, *“Baptism is a requirement for salvation.”*

“It saddens me to learn that I have performed invalid baptisms throughout my ministry as a priest by regularly using an incorrect formula,” said Father Arango.

So, do all of these people whom Father Arango baptized now need a do-over?

Well, if any of them actually believed that the validity of their baptism hinged on just how precisely a ritual was performed, then yes, they most certainly do - **not so** that the priest can correct his words, but rather that **they** might correct their faith.

The Scriptures teach that if we have sincerely placed our trust in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for the eternal salvation of our souls, then our salvation is eternally secure.

There is no human *“formula”* which can either codify or nullify it.

This story illustrates just how tenuous it is to place one’s confidence in rituals.

But the good news is that it is our faith in Christ, not in the proper performance of rituals, that saves us . . .

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph 2:8-9 NKJV).

- Illustration Exchange

Now some of you are thinking, *“Hey, Pastor Joe baptized me. What words did he use? Did he get it right?”*

Don't worry, for \$19.95 we can get you rebaptized!

Just kidding!

No ritual saves you!

No pastor saves you!

Jesus saves you and you can't be unsaved!

And for baptism, that doesn't save you either. Baptism is an outward act to show people what God has done in your life. It is a witness to family and friends and even others that you have rejected all the false god's and have turned to the living God, you have given your life to Jesus Christ!

My heart breaks when I hear stories like that one where the priest did not use the right words when he baptized people. Can you imagine family members whose loved ones have died and they are thinking, *"Father Arango baptized my loved one and I wonder if he used the right words. It doesn't sound like it, so does that mean he went to hell?"*

Listen to what Jesus said in John 3:16-18, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."**

Notice that Jesus says that believing in Him is what saves us, not good works, not some ritual – **BELIEF!**

If you believe in Jesus, if you have repented of your sins and asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, then you are not condemned.

What is interesting is that if you don't believe you are already condemned. You see, Jesus came not to condemn us because that was our status. He came to save us, but you have a choice to make. To receive Him or reject Him!

Again, look at how I Corinthians 1:8 opens up. Paul tells us that the Lord will “**confirm you to the end.**”

What that means is this.

The Greek word means, “*to make to stand, to make stable.*”

In other words, Jesus will take us to glory, He will complete the work He began in us because our salvation, from beginning to end is a work of God!

Believe it and apply that into your life!

Listen to what Paul wrote in Hebrews 12:2, “**looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**”

Who is the Author of our faith?

Jesus is the Author of our faith! It is His grace that He extends to us, and we receive by faith!

Who is the finisher of our faith?

Jesus is the finisher of our faith! He will complete the work that He has begun in us, from our Salvation all the way to glory.

Paul put it like this in Philippians 1:6, “**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**”

Listen to how The Amplified puts this verse. We are told, “**And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.**”

I like that, Jesus will bring this work to full completion!

What does that tell you?

It speaks of our eternal security that we have in Christ. If we did not know we are eternally secure in Christ, then we would not know if we were saved until we go home to be with the Lord and then He will decide if we made it in.

You see, if it is not the finished work of Christ that saves us, then we must live up to a certain standard, which no one knows what that standard is!

But Paul has total confidence that the work that God started in the Philippians, their salvation, He will bring to completion, their glorification. And what Paul says of the Philippian believers he is also saying to us.

Paul, in Colossians 3:4 tells us, “**When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**”

Folks, when God saves us, He does so completely and eternally, and you can take that to the bank! Paul didn’t say that we “*might*” appear with Him but that we – ***WILL!***

Do you doubt that?

Do you think it is too hard for God and He might not complete the work?

Do you think if you don’t live up to a certain standard you will be cast out, the work won’t be completed?

Listen to what Jesus said in John 6:37, 39, **“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out . . . This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.”**

Also, in John 10:27-28 Jesus said, **“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”**

And Paul tells us in Romans 8:37-39, **“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

And lastly, listen to what Paul said in Romans 8:30, **“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”**

I want to focus on this glorification here because it is the final step of the sanctification process, and it will occur when we go to be with the Lord.

What is interesting here is that Paul states this work, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is in the past tense.

Why does Paul speak of something that has not happened as if it already did?

Because that is how sure it is. God will complete the work He started because He foreknew us, He knew who would be saved because our God is all knowing!

Think about it like this. If you are His, He will not lose you – it is a promise – you are already seen as glorified in the Father’s eyes – that is how certain it is, that is how secure we are in our eternal redemption!

Listen to what nineteenth-century commentator, F. B. Meyer said, *“We go into the artist’s studio and find there unfinished pictures covering large canvases, and suggesting great designs, but which have been left, either because the genius was not competent to complete the work, or because paralysis laid the hand low in death; but as we go into God’s great workshop we find nothing that bears the mark of haste or insufficiency of power to finish, and we are sure that the work which His grace has begun, the arm of His strength will complete.”*

The work of sanctification is a work of God, the Holy Spirit, He has begun it, and He will see it through to completion.

Don’t disbelieve but believe! God will finish what He has started!

The problem is that many try to make it their own work and then, if they fail, they will forfeit heaven.

It is not a work that we started, God did.

And it is not a work that we finish, God does!

Praise God we can rest in the security of our salvation that is based in Christ!

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

As I reflect on my fifty plus years in Christ it is indeed God who has kept me. It is not my grip on God that has made the difference, but his grip on me. I am not confident in my goodness. I am not confident in my character. I am not confident in my history. I am not confident in my “reverend” persona. I am not confident in my perseverance. But I am confident in God.

- R. Kent Hughes, Philippians – The Fellowship of the Gospel, p. 28

Absolutely. I am not confident in myself, but I am confident in the Lord and the work He began in my life, He will finish, He will bring me home to glory! And the same for you!

And we can know we are saved because our salvation is based upon the finished work of Christ, or as Jesus put it, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”** John 5:24.

Then Paul says here in I Corinthians 1:8, **“that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Wait a minute! You mean to tell me that Paul is calling these believers in Corinth – ***BLAMELESS!***

Look at the divisions between them. The problems that they had. The schisms that went on in the church and he calls them - ***BLAMELESS!***

How can that be?

Just as it is with us!

Yes, in a practical sense they had issues just like we do.

But positionally speaking, they were as white as snow with their sins cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more! That is what Christ has done, not what they have done!

That is why Paul could call them - - ***BLAMELESS!***

That is what Jude tells us, “**Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless [blameless] Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.**”

I love this. When God comes into our lives, when He saves us, he holds onto us by His grace, and He will sustain us all the way to heaven!

Here’s thing. Yes, Paul is saying that they will be confirmed to the end, they are not going to lose their salvation, but they can miss out on the joy, the peace that God has for them.

You see, we are saved by grace through faith and not by the Law through good works.

What is interesting here is that when Paul says that they are “**blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ**” the words “**that you may be**” were added for clarity but I think it once again adds some confusion to the text.

We have been washed in the blood of Jesus; all of our sins were paid in full.

Thus, like I have said, on a positional plane, we are perfect as the Father looks at us and on a practical plane we do sin, but God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!

It is not “**that you may be**” because – ***YOU ARE BLAMELESS IN CHRIST!***

Paul concludes by saying, “**God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**” I Corinthians 1:9.

God is faithful and we are not. If it were up to us to maintain our salvation, we would all be in trouble because we are not faithful.

But God is faithful, and He will lose none of us!

That good work He has begun in us He will complete!

The problem is that God loves us just the way we are, which really is not a problem, but here is where it may get a little rough. He loves us too much to leave us just the way we are!

Thus, the moment we get saved, the sanctification process begins as God is molding and shaping our lives into the image of God.

As I bring our study to a close, let me share this with you regarding grace.

We are told,

This is an amazing statement. God has lavished his grace on us.

The word *“lavished”* carries the idea of holding nothing back.

I have been on two cruises in my life.

The first was when I was in the Navy. That cruise was not fun. I had a job to do, slept in a room with 65 other men, and ate whatever food the ship’s cooks decided to feed me.

My second cruise was on a cruise liner. I had no job, nothing I had to do. I had my own stateroom that I shared with my wife. There was a great variety of food and entertainment. And that cruise is what I think of as *“lavish.”*

But rather than material pleasures, God has lavished on me the riches of his grace.

Not just a little grace.

Or enough grace.

But abundant grace.

God’s grace toward me knows no bounds.

The spiritual blessings in this passage are all because of the riches of God's grace that he lavished on me.

And he does this, not because I am worthy of it, but by his good pleasure (Eph. 1:5).

Because he is love (1 John 4:16).

- <https://bit.ly/418mhBr>

Thus, may we have – ***A THANKFUL HEART!***

Because of – ***THE RICHNESS OF GOD'S GRACE!***

And we can have that peace, that assurance of knowing that He has saved us, He sustains us, and one day He will take us to glory – ***SECURITY IN CHRIST!***