

I CORINTHIANS 1:26-31
SEE YOUR CALLING!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Corinthians chapter 1 as we continue our in-depth study in Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth.

Keep in mind that Paul is writing to them to correct some problems in the church there in Corinth as well as answering some questions that they had.

In I Corinthians 1:11 Paul tells us, **“For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions [quarrels] among you.”**

That is just one of the problems there in Corinth and Paul has been made aware of some of the problems, and he is dealing with them. He does not want these things to continue on because they will cause divisions in the church, and it will be a horrible witness to unbelievers.

Tragically, we still see these problems today and the Holy Spirit is making us aware that we need to change, we need to grow in the Lord and not make excuses for our behavior.

In our last study Paul spoke of the ***POWER OF GOD*** and how the message of the cross was foolishness to those who were perishing. It made no sense to them and yet, as that message is preached it has the power to save the lost!

It is easy to get away from the message that God has given to us, the Gospel message and get into other issues that don't have the power to save.

This morning, we are going to look at a message that I have called – ***SEE YOUR CALLING!***

Now we read that, and we may be thinking, ***“This message is going to be on serving in the church. Great, what a day to come to church! Now I am going to feel pressured to serve!”***

Not at all. If you have to be pressured to serve, then you should not serve.

Let me also say this.

The idea here is dealing with salvation, that is the context of what Paul is speaking about.

Preaching the Gospel message and seeing people saved!

Remember what I have taught you – ***CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT!***

So the context is about our salvation and what God has done!

Now, what flows out of saving faith is serving faith! They do go together and sadly; many just see the saving part of faith and they stop there.

Not at all. There is serving faith and James dealt with that in his letter!

Remember what James wrote in James 2:14-18, **“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”**

Do you see that out of saving faith we see works in our life. It is evidence for our faith!

And what ends up happening at times is that people feel pressured in serving or even if they are serving they lack the passion to serve the Lord.

In fact, listen to this and you will see that some even go as far to say that having a passion for service is wrong. Now the focus in this teaching is on pastors, but we can also say that it is for anyone who is serving, and we should all be serving but we should be serving with a passion, which he feels is wrong.

This is what he wrote,

This vague ***“search to regain my passion”*** drives senior pastors like you and me to seek new ministries, new spouses, new job descriptions, new mission statements, new elder boards, new staffs and new careers.

Most often it leads to depression, and in some cases, to want to end our lives altogether.

I know because I’ve experienced this first-hand.

Here’s what I’ve discovered: Whenever a senior pastor has ***“lost their motivation”*** it is because they were drawing their ***“motivation”*** in the first place from one of four unhealthy motivation sources. [He says they are: Extrinsic Manipulation, External Validation, Adrenal Energy, New Employment Opportunities. ***(I am not sure where he got these, but this is not the motivation factors we should have. We should have a love for God, a love for the people of God, a love to share the Word of God, we should have a passion for what God has called us to do!)***]

He goes on to say,

Not only do many of us start ministry using these motivators, we dip back into the same bags of tricks once we lose our way.

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

Can you imagine if I came up here and just unpassionately taught you the Word of God?

You would think that I don’t even believe what I am teaching you or I don’t care about you, or I really don’t care about God!

It may sound like this. *“Good morning, if it really is a good morning for you. I don’t know and I guess it doesn’t matter. Turn to I Corinthians chapter 1, man we have to get moving if we are going to get through this, and let’s see if we can see what Paul is saying here. I don’t know for sure, but it seems interesting. Also, I am going to end early today; I have some golfing to do. You got to get out there while you can. You know what I mean.”*

I think you know that I am passionate about teaching you the Word of God. If I wasn’t, what would be the point.

Think of it like this.

Imagine if you were not passionate about your marriage. Do you know what will happen?

Your marriage will die, it will fall apart. If you are not passionate about it, then why did you get married in the first place?

The same is true with the Lord. If you are not passionate about Him, passionate about serving Him, then why in the world did you ask Him to be Lord and Savior of your life?

I hope that makes sense. And, as we will see this morning, we need to be passionate about our Lord, about others as we share the love of Jesus with people!

Let me share this with you. It will give us a good perspective to have in regard to what we truly are passionate about.

We are told,

Pop quiz: *“What are you most passionate about in life? What excites you and stirs up your enthusiasm?”*

Many of us will quickly respond, *“God,” “family,” “soul winning,”* or some other worthy pursuit.

Next question: ***“On what activity do you spend the most time?”***

It’s possible that this answer will be quite different from the first.

Why would this be?

Passion has been described as ***“a strong feeling or emotion.”*** We may also think of it as fervor, ardor, zeal, or delight. To put it simply, we find something so compelling that it moves us to action. Some pursue education, environmental issues, politics, or sports. Social media, shopping, or time spent with friends can become a passion if they consume our time. The truth is, we usually spend the most time on the thing about which we feel most strongly.

Whatever our passion, it will cost. It comes at the expense of time and effort. The price may include great personal sacrifice, misunderstanding of motives, or even the friendship of those who think us radical. Yet the greater the passion, the less these things matter.

For the Christian, our greatest passion should be God. According to Matthew 22:37-38, it is the only way to serve Him. ***“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”***

Saul, later called Paul, showed great passion for his Jewish religion and stirred up opposition to the early church because of it.

His life changed dramatically after an encounter with God on the road to Damascus. A new passion consumed him. He fully embraced the revelation of Jesus Christ and spent the remainder of his life evangelizing the world with the gospel. Such zeal cost, but he never regretted his decision.

How do we increase our passion for God?

How do we make Him first in our lives?

We must ask ourselves two questions. First, what draws me closer to Him? Next, what things in my life hinder this?

In our hectic world it is easy to become sidetracked from our devotion to God. If our lives are out of balance and we are over-committed, we will not make time for God as we should.

Unconfessed sin or an unforgiving spirit will also break our fellowship. Or perhaps we are holding back from fulfilling His will in an area of our lives. These and other things will steal our ardor [devotion].

The opposite of passion is apathy - indifference, lack of concern, or coldness.

If Satan can rob us of passion for God - distract us with other things - then he need not worry. Apathy makes his job easy.

When we consider how passionate God is about us - to the point of dying for us - how can we not feel intensely drawn to Him?

We demonstrate our fervor by an increased longing to be with Him. We will feed on His Word and spend time in prayer communing with Him. Our greatest desire will be to obey and please Him. As our fervency increases, so will our love.

The truth is we are as close to God as we choose to be. It is our decision.

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” (James 4:8, NKJV)

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

I hope that helps and as we will see this morning, I want you to – ***SEE YOUR CALLING!***

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

They are,

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD – I CORINTHIANS 1:26-28

THE REASON GOD USES US – I CORINTHIANS 1:29

GOD’S WISDOM – I CORINTHIANS 1:30-31

We closed last week with these words from Paul, and they will lead us into our study this morning. He wrote, “**Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.**” I Corinthians 1:25.

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in I Corinthians chapter 1, beginning in verse 26 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

I CORINTHIANS 1

VERSES 26-28

This is interesting to me because what we see God doing here is that He is bringing us all down or up to the same playing field. It is not that education is wrong but that the world’s wisdom, the world’s education can’t save you, it can’t bring you to Jesus!

Keep in mind I have called these verses – ***LEVEL PLAYING FIELD!***

And when Paul speaks of “**your calling**” he is speaking of our salvation.

And how powerful is this!

When it comes to our salvation, which Paul is talking about, he is saying that salvation is open to all people, not just a few!

It doesn't matter if you are rich, if you are poor, if you are educated, if you are not educated, if you are famous, if you are just an average Joe.

The gift of salvation is open to all people!

I know that some like to limit salvation to a certain group of people. Remember what Jesus said in John 3:16-17, **“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.”**

Now some, when they read that **“God so loved the world”** they believe it is only speaking of those who God chose to be saved. It is a limited atonement!

Not at all. You can't change what the word **“world”** means to justify the false teaching of limited atonement.

And just in case you don't get it, Jesus goes on to say, **“that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”**

Notice that it does not say, **“Only those who God predestined to be saved.”** Not at all!

He tells us, **“that whoever believes in Him.”** This gift of life that is only found in Jesus is opened to everyone, but it's limited to those who believe. You see, it is a choice on man's part. God paid the price for our salvation; we must receive that gift by faith!

There are many verses that show that salvation is open to all, to everyone who believes, and it is a choice on our part.

Let me share a few with you to show you what I mean.

In II Peter 3:9 we are told, **“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”**

The heart of God, the passion for God is to see men saved, all men. He gets no pleasure in the death of the wicked and He wants them to turn to Him and away from their wicked ways!

We even see that in Ezekiel 18:32, where we are told, **“‘For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,’ says the Lord God. ‘Therefore turn and live!’”**

That is the love of God for sinful man. That none would perish but that choice is up to you!

And let me say this. God does not force man to be saved, but again, it is a choice on our part. If it was not a choice on our part, if God did not predestine us to be saved, then it is His fault we are going to hell.

Of course that is not true and the only one we have to blame if we reject Jesus and end up in hell is us, not God!

Paul tells us in Romans 1:16, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”**

Paul speaks of both Jews and Gentiles or Greeks and that covers every person on this planet. The condition, once again, is belief! We are on a level playing field!

In Titus 2:11 Paul tells us, **“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”**

Now some may say, *“Yes, this grace salvation has appeared to everyone, but that salvation is only limited to those who God has predestined!”*

Is that what Paul said?

No, not at all.

This gift of salvation is opened to all. How crazy would it be to say, *“I have this free medicine that will make you live forever. Your body will not get sick, you will be like a young man or woman forever. Now, I have picked a few people for this and the rest of you, yes, you are aware of it, but I am not extending this gift of eternal life to you to receive!”*

That would be horrible!

Now, imagine God doing that! *“Yes, I have sent My Son into this world to bring salvation and you are aware of this free gift of eternal life, but I am sorry, I have chosen just a few of you to receive it. The rest of you, well, you will be eternally judged because this gift is not for you!”*

That would be evil, which tells me that is not of God. There is no darkness in God at all!

Thus, this grace gift of salvation is opened to every one of us to believe! We need to look at this with a correct set of lenses so we can see clearly the love of God for sinful man!

In John 3:36 we are told, **“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”**

What is the key to having everlasting life?

Jesus says, **“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life.”**

And for those who will see the wrath of God come upon their lives, it is not believing!

Also, in John 10:9 Jesus said, “**I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**”

This tells me that we have a choice to make. And I know I keep repeating this, but it is important for us to understand that belief is a choice on our part.

Does God know what we will do?

Absolutely because He knows all things!

But that does not mean that He predestined us to be saved or not be saved, He knew ahead of time and He gives to us every opportunity to come to Him. So the decision is ours as the Holy Spirit is with people drawing them to Jesus. But the choice is theirs!

And lastly, Paul, in Romans 10:13 wrote, “**For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’**”

It is not limited but “**whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**”

And notice what Paul says here in these verses in I Corinthians chapter 1.

NOT MANY WISE!

NOT MANY MIGHTY!

NOT MANY NOBLE!

Salvation is opened to all as I have said.

Think about that for a minute.

The smartest man in the world can't stand against a person who knows Jesus, no matter how foolish they might think we are!

Let me show you what I mean.

We are told,

There is no God. These four words have been declared by some of the most brilliant individuals who have ever lived.

Stephen Hawking, the theoretical physicist who became even more well known for refusing to let his paralysis (Lou Gehrig's Disease) hinder his work, passed away . . .

In his final book, which was published posthumously, he proclaimed there is not even a possibility that God exists.

Of all the words Hawking could've left the world with, "***There is no God***" are the ones he chose.

This is quite a confident statement. It's true that even for those who have faith there are moments of skepticism and unbelief. But if I were to ask most atheists, I wouldn't be surprised if many refused to rule out the mere possibility of a God . . .

Since denying God's existence was one of the final bombshells Hawking left behind, it must have been something he was pretty adamant about. As a scientist, he found no logical explanation for a God and therefore decided there mustn't be one at all.

In an interview he stated, "***God is the name people give to the reason we are here, but I think that reason is the laws of physics rather than someone with whom one can have a personal relationship.***"

. . . I wonder if he was so wrapped up in finding evidence for existence that he missed out on discovering a God that exists as well. I wonder if he was so focused on looking at the world around him, that he forgot to look at himself.

Hawking lived 50 years longer than he was supposed to with his disease. During this time he became a household name and a modern day Einstein.

Yet out of all the things he theorized, nothing proved why he had lived so long on borrowed time, allowing himself to contribute to the scientific world in the first place.

To me, there is a simple explanation. There is only One who can defy the laws of medicine and science alike. And maybe, just maybe, if Hawking had allowed himself to discard reason for just a moment, he would've realized that too.

- <https://bit.ly/4imG8TC>

Let me share his words once again and then I will expound on it. He said, ***“God is the name people give to the reason we are here, but I think that reason is the laws of physics rather than someone with whom one can have a personal relationship.”***

There is no God and the reason we are here is because of the laws of physics!

Yes, Stephen Hawking was a brilliant man in his field. But where did physics come from?

Did it come from evolution or time?

How come these laws play out here and everywhere?

Because there is a Creator God who created the heavens and the earth!

With all his knowledge, he could not believe in God, and he faces the consequences for his actions.

And for me, with probably an average IQ, some may say it is much lower, but you know what I mean. I am smarter than Stephen Hawking because I believe in Almighty God who came to save man from His sin and extend everlasting life to man through His Son, Jesus Christ!

I also think that this calling that God has given to us is not limited to our salvation, as I have said. Yes, it begins with our salvation but that calling continues on in the gifts that God has given to us.

God has gifted every one of us, and it is not because of our talent or education or wealth, but it is because He wants to use us. He does not need us, but He loves to work through us and in the end, He gets the glory.

You see, God will use us with the gifts, the abilities we have until we think that without us, God is in trouble and then you will be put on the shelf until you humble yourself before the Lord.

You may still be involved in the ministry, but it is not fruitful. You see, you can never be too small for God to use you, but you can be too big!

The key, of course, is that we can't boast about what we have done but we surely can boast about all that Lord has done, He gets the glory!

We will see that as we read on here in I Corinthians chapter 1.

A great example of God using the most unlikely people is seen in the life of D. L. Moody.

We are told,

One of the greatest awakenings of the 19th century began in Cambridge University in England when D. L. Moody and his singer, Ira B. Sankey, came to that center of learning.

In 1950 when I was traveling with Dr. H. A. Ironside, I met an Episcopal rector in Virginia who had been a member of that class in Cambridge when D. L. Moody came.

He told me that the whole University was outraged that this backwoods American preacher would dare to appear and speak in the center of culture of the English world.

They well knew that he **“murdered”** the King’s English. (Somebody once said that D. L. Moody was the only man he ever heard who could pronounce Jerusalem in one syllable!)

So this rector said that he and others of his classmates who were not Christians determined that when Moody spoke in the chapel at Cambridge they would hoot him off the platform.

Now, Moody began by asking Sankey to sing. (Sankey must have had a wonderful voice, because whenever he sang audiences quieted and listened to him.) As soon as he finished, Moody stepped to the edge of the platform and looking directly at the students who were gathered there, he said these remarkable words, **“Young gentlemen, don’t ever think God don’t love you, for he do!”**

This young man said that he and his classmates were dumbfounded by that beginning.

Moody went on and in a few minutes he again said, **“Don’t ever think God don’t love you, for he do!”**

Something about the very ungrammatical structure of these words captured them. The intense earnestness of this man spoke right to their hearts, beyond all the superficial, external things. That young man said that that day he sought out Moody for a private interview, and Moody led him to Christ. A great awakening came to Cambridge University at the hands of that humble servant of God.

Now, God does this again and again to remind us that though he made the human mind, and he encourages us to use it to search for wisdom and knowledge, when it comes to the use of this knowledge there is only one place we can learn to use it rightly, and that is in relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ out of the wisdom and understanding of the revelation of God in the Scriptures.

Why does God do this?

Why does God seem to be so against all the *“wisdom of the world”* as Paul calls it here?

Is he jealous of man?

Is he the kind of God who loves to put people down?

Paul says that God seeks deliberately to shame the wise and the strong, to bring to nothing things that are.

- bit.ly/3Fjr1fb

Can you imagine treating a man like D. L. Moody like that!

But pride can do all kinds of wicked things in our life, and we look down upon others because of the way they talk, the way that they dress, this and that. But, in the end, God shows how powerful He is by using people like us!

God can use any of us in any ministry He wants because He not only equips us for the work that He wants us to do, but He also puts together the work that He wants us to do. All we must do then is walk by faith and trust in Him!

The key of course is our salvation! And I know, none of us feel worthy and we are not. But God sees us differently. Let me share this song with you and you will see what God can do in us and through us as He touches our lives.

The song goes like this,

Well it was battered and scared,
 And the auctioneer felt it was hardly worth his while,
 To waste much time on the old violin but he held it up with a smile,
*“Well it sure ain’t much but its all we got left I guess we aught to sell it to,
 Oh, now who’ll start the bid on this old violin?
 Just one more and we’ll be through.”*

And then he cried, *“One give me one dollar,*

*Who'll make it two only two dollars who'll make it three,
Three dollars twice now that's a good price,
Now who's gonna bid for me?
Raise up your hand now don't wait any longer the auctions about to end,
Who's got four Just one dollar more to bid on this old violin?"*

Well the air was hot and the people stood around as the sun was setting low,
From the back of the crowd a gray haired man,
Came forward and picked up the bow,
He wiped the dust from the old violin then he tightened up the strings,
Then he played out a melody pure and sweet, sweeter than the Angels sing,

And then the music stopped and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low he said now what am I bid,
For this old violin and he held it up with a bow.

And then he cried out, *"one give me one thousand,
Who'll make it two only two thousand who'll make it three,
Three thousand twice you know that's a good price,
Common who's gonna to bid for me?"*

And the people cried out, *"what made the change we don't understand",*
Then the auctioneer stopped and he said with a smile,
"It was the touch of the Master's hand."

You know there's many a man with his life out of tune,
Battered and scared with sin and he's auctioned cheap,
To a thankless world much like that old violin,
Oh, but then the Master comes,

And that old foolish crowd they never understand,
The worth of a soul and the change that is rought,
Just by one touch of the Masters hand.

- Touch of the Master's Hand

That is the key, God has touched our lives and as foolish as we may seem, God puts down
the wise by simpletons like us!

I love the fact that God has placed us all on a – **LEVEL PLAYING FIELD!**

There is no excuse, we just need to believe and walk by faith!

As we read on, we are going to see – **THE REASON GOD USES US!**

VERSE 29

I think I can safely say that most of us and probably all of us think that we are pretty smart. We may not be an Einstein, but we are, in a sense, *“Smarter than the average bear!”*

Here is the problem with that logic as we live out our faith. We tend to think that we know what is best for our lives, that we can do anything, and we leave God out of the picture.

It is amazing to me how wrong I have been when I have tried to do things my way!

Not only that, but for many, because they think that they know better, when they read about the cross and that our salvation is only found in Jesus, they are outraged.

It is foolishness to them. It is a stumbling block to them. They can't accept that fact that they are sinners and that their sin has separated them from God.

Look at what we see here. They are smart and thus, as they look at their life, they see themselves as pretty good and thus, God must accept them!

That is not what the Scriptures teach. They teach that all of us are sinners and that the only righteousness that God will accept is perfection!

And the only perfection we can attain is found in Christ when His righteousness is given to us by faith!

We can't glory in how smart we are. We can't glory in how good we are. We can't glory in how talented we are. We just can't glory in ourselves!

That is what Paul is saying here.

But let's face it. We want the attention, we want the praise, we want and want and want and, in the end, we are taking the glory that is due the Lord.

Let me share a few things to show you how we can draw attention to ourselves and away from the Lord.

So how do we know if love for the glory of man has gained a stronghold in our life?

Here are a few markers:

1. You measure your success by what you see and feel in the moment. (eg. If others don't appreciate what you've done or your ministry isn't flourishing, it must be a failure and not worth continuing.)
2. You are motivated and unmotivated in your work, friendships, church, etc., by the praise or lack of praise of those around you.
3. Your decisions are often driven by what others will think.
4. You are easily discouraged, irritated, or angry when your efforts are not appreciated by others or when others receive credit for something you have done.
5. When others praise you, you begin to feel self-confident in your own abilities, rather than relying on the Lord to lead and provide.
6. You are more drawn to the type of work and serving opportunities that will be noticed and praised by others.
7. You struggle with competitiveness and envy when someone else succeeds or is given praise (even within the body of Christ).
8. You measure success with a short-term view, rather than an eternal one.
9. You spend less time in the Word and prayer and more time perfecting your craft, skill, job, or reputation.
10. You only portray the admirable aspects of your life to those around you (in church, on social media, etc.).
11. You find comfort in making sure others see your pain and shower you with attention because of it.
12. Your relationships only go so deep that your struggles are not revealed.
13. Your emotions and how you feel about yourself are constantly swayed by what you assume others think of you.
14. You only share a surface level of your faith out of fear of offending someone or giving the perception that you are weak, strange, or narrow-minded.

The list could go on, but hopefully these are a helpful start in examining the motives of our heart. If you find yourself discouraged by seeing some of these descriptions to be true of you, don't be! You are certainly not alone!

Strongholds cannot be broken if we do not first recognize where they have a grip on our lives. So be encouraged, if you are a child of God, you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and are in the process of sanctification along with every other believer.

Although I hate to admit where I am seeking my own glory over God's, I am thankful for his conviction, and that I am fully forgiven and cleansed from my unrighteousness. I can also be confident that his sanctifying work will continue in my life until the day I am holy, perfect, and complete in his presence (Philippians 1:6).

As we stop fighting for our own glory and unify in glorifying Christ, we become a witness and testimony to a lost world who is divided and fighting one another for their own temporary glory. What a blessing it is to be a part of God's people who are building one another up for the glory of Christ rather than tearing each other down over the endless and empty pursuit of our own glory.

- bit.ly/3FiIsMQ

And remember the perspective that Paul gave to us regarding who we are and who God uses.

We read in I Corinthians 1:25-28, **“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are.”**

God chooses the simple not the smart - the weak not the strong - the humble not the noble
- *and why?*

The answer is in verse 29, **“that no flesh should glory in His presence.”**

You see, all the glory goes to God.

Now I am not saying if you are smart God can't use you, if you are not strong, God can't use you. Of course he can, but the key, no matter where you are at, is understanding that it is God who is working in you and through you for His glory!

And it doesn't matter if you accept that or not because Paul tells us in Philippians 2:9-11 as he speaks of Jesus and how He emptied Himself in the Incarnation and has been raised in glory. Paul wrote, **“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

I don't care who you are, believer or unbeliever, there is coming a day when all will bow their knee before the Lord either willingly or out of constraint, recognizing He is Lord overall, and we are not!

It is as Isaiah 45:22-23 tells us, **“Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath.”**

It doesn't matter what you think of Jesus, the fact remains that He is God and one day every knee will bow before Him in honor of Him and the thing is, surrender to Him now so you can bow before Him as your Lord and Savior and not as you are departing from Him into the Lake of Fire!

I don't care who you are or how smart you may think you are. Compared to an all-knowing God, you don't even come close.

Now that should bring us great comfort, that our all-knowing God has gifted us and prepared the work for us and out of this, it brings glory to God!

Think about Jesus, when God became flesh and dwelt amongst us, all the work that He did, the life that He lived, what did it do?

Jesus tells us in John 17:4-5, **“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”**

All the shame, all the pain, all the mocking's and beatings He laid aside because He saw the end results – He gave glory to the Father and He is seated in glory once again as the work He was sent to do was finished.

What was that work?

To redeem sinful man and thus, in a sense, we too are that joy that was set before Him, part of the work that He completed!

Now, how does that help us?

Because one day we will be glorified with our Lord, we will be with Him in glory.

But until that day, all that we do should bring glory to God for He is the One who has enabled us to do these things!

Thus, let us look past the things we are going through because they are temporary!

May we look to Jesus, keep our eyes focused upon Him as this race heats up, so that we may finish the race, not a sprint but a marathon you might say, with joy in our hearts, looking past these things and unto Jesus!

And think about how hard that is, looking past the hard things in our life and looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith and understanding the joy of coming before Him one day.

We endure these times for an eternity with Him!

Here is the problem for us many times. Our pride gets in the way and thus, we really don't know God because we can do it!

But we can't and we need to remember that. Apart from the Lord we can do nothing. And thus, all that we do should bring glory to the Lord!

So what are you boasting about?

What do you glory in?

Is it all about you or is it about the Lord and what He has done in you and through you.

Make no mistake about it – ***HE IS EVERYTHING THAT WE NEED AND THUS, ALL GLORY GOES TO OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST!***

I truly can't boast about anything that I have done, but I can boast in my Lord!

I can speak for myself here and tell you, all that God has done in my life is not because of my intelligence, my speaking abilities, my wealth it is all because of the Lord and thus, He gets all the glory as He uses the foolish things of this world, the unwise people of this world, those that are not mighty, those that are not noble, the weak and so on, to put to shame the wise and to bring glory to Him!

So we have seen here – ***THE REASON GOD USES US!***

And that reason, of course, is to bring glory to Him as we have seen.

As we read on, we will be looking at – ***GOD’S WISDOM!***

VERSES 30-31

Make no mistake about it, we need the Lord’s wisdom because we have seen what our own wisdom can do in our lives, and it is not a good thing.

Remember what the Lord said in Isaiah 55:8-9, **“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’”**

Thus, through the work of Jesus in our lives He is imparting to us the Wisdom of God!

And if you are lacking wisdom, listen to what James tells us, **“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”** James 1:5-8.

Also, here in I Corinthians 1:30, notice what Paul says God is communicating to us.

And let me say this, because the structure of this verse in the Greek is interesting. ***“What Paul says is, “He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made to be our wisdom, even our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. In other words, righteousness, sanctification and redemption are the explanation of what wisdom involves. They are all contained within that one word.”***

Let’s look at these words.

RIGHTEOUSNESS – We are declared *“innocent”* not just *“not guilty”* because of the finished work of Christ.

Paul said in Romans 4:23-25 regarding the faith of Abraham on how he was saved by faith and not by works and how relates that to us, **“Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”**

We have become righteous before God because Jesus has given to us His righteousness, as Paul said in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

SANCTIFICATION – By the work of Jesus in our lives He has made us holy, set apart for God to use and the moment we are saved, that sanctification process begins, and it will continue until we go to be with the Lord. And the promise is that God will complete this work He has started in us.

Paul said in II Thessalonians 2:13-17, **“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.”**

REDEMPTION – Paul is speaking of our glorification, which is a settled fact if we have received Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Paul, in Romans 8:30 tells us **“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”**

Paul speaks of our glorification in the past tense because he is that sure that what God has started, He will complete in each of us. He will bring it to pass. It is not maybe; He will bring it to pass for He already sees us as glorified in a positional sense through Jesus. Our freedom is found in Jesus!

J. Vernon McGee put this into perspective for us as he wrote,

Our glory should be in the Lord. We should glory in the Lord Jesus Christ today. Let me ask you, what do you glory in? What are you boasting of today? Are you boasting of your degrees? Of your wisdom? Of your wealth? Of your power? Are you boasting today of your position and your character? My friend, you don't have a thing of which you can boast - and I know I haven't. But we can boast of Christ. He is everything. He is everything that we need.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Vol. V, p. 12

Look at what we have seen this morning in our study.

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD!

I like that, God can use anyone at any time, we just need to be open to Him, humble ourselves and walk by faith!

THE REASON GOD USES US!

The reason that God uses us is to bring Him glory. We don't have the abilities or talents or resources, but God does, and He will get the glory as we serve Him and walk by faith.

GOD'S WISDOM!

Let's face it, we need the wisdom of God to live out our lives and apart from God's wisdom, we are living with the wisdom of the world, and we see what that is like. God has what is best for us and thus, seek His wisdom, His direction and you will do well!

As I close this morning, let me share these words with you from Jeremiah 9:23-24,

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the LORD.”

Make no mistake about it, - ***IT IS ALL ABOUT THE LORD AND WHAT HE HAS DONE, NOT WHAT WE HAVE DONE!***

And thus, **“He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”**