

The 5th Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, June 23, 2024

“The Prayers of Paul: In Christ”

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

There were problems of _____ and division. Believers were suing one another in the secular courts and dishonoring the name of Jesus. There was sexual immorality, spiritual _____, theological error, lawless _____, and a general failure of _____. And behind all of that, giving force and power and fueling all of their confusion was an even deeper confusion about how they ought to _____ to the culture of their day, the culture out of which they had been converted and in which they still lived.

Paul clearly had a great deal to _____, challenge, and exhort the Corinthians about, however, instead of doing that he begins this letter by _____ God for them and _____ for them.

He feels deep, lasting _____ to God for these believers among whom he has invested a year and a half of his preaching, teaching, and discipleship ministry.

Instead of rebuking or criticizing, Paul begins by giving thanks to God for the work of _____ he sees in the Corinthian’s lives, and prays that God would continue to _____ them to the end.

FOUR ELEMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Element #1. The Christian life is _____.

The six verses of this prayer are _____ with the name of Christ.

This prayer is book-ended in verses 4 and 9 with words that give special emphasis to the believer’s _____ with Christ.

“I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus...” (1 Corinthians 1:4)

The grace of God that we enjoy as believers isn’t a dab of spiritual stuff that God doles out to us sparingly, but rather it’s the _____, stance, and orientation of the _____ of God towards us when we are in Christ.

“God is faithful by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:9)

koinonia = *fellowship* =

God’s irresistible call in the _____ of the Gospel brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light; from death to life; from being men and women in _____ to being men and women united to Christ, where we find fellowship and _____ with Him.

Everything else in our Christian life is _____ on, or is in some way or another, an aspect or a _____ of, this union with Jesus.

In a therapeutic age like ours that turns our attention _____, it’s helpful to be reminded that the Christian life is centered elsewhere, not on the self, but on the _____. In praying this prayer, Paul directs our gaze up, away from ourselves and our circumstances, to _____.

No matter what we’ve found in Christian community, we’ve found something infinitely more _____ and more precious in _____.

Are you in Christ? Do you have Jesus?

Does Jesus have hold of you?

The Christian life is a Christ-centered life.

Element #2. The Christian life is _____.

“I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind...so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 4-5,7)

The grace of God that was given to the Corinthians in Christ had produced in them _____, especially in the areas of speech and knowledge.

grace = karis and gift = karismita. Spiritual gifts are just that—they are _____ of God’s _____.

Spiritual gifts = the _____ of grace that God gives, so that there can be no _____ except in the One who has given them. God gives us spiritual gifts not to make much of _____, but that, as we use them for the good of the church, much is made of _____.

He gives us the grace we need and the gifts He requires in order for the church to be _____ for ministry and service that we might be edified, _____, comforted, and pointed back again and again not to ourselves or some goofball in a pulpit, but to Christ who is the _____ need of our hearts.

What spiritual gifts has God given to you?

How are you using them to build up the body and glorify God?

Element #3. The Christian life is _____.

“...even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among them.” (1 Corinthians 1:6)

As the Gospel—the testimony about Christ penetrates and takes root in our _____, that grace enriches and equips us with everything good for doing His will. Christian _____ and _____ together are the _____ of the ministry of the Word and the testimony about Christ being confirmed among us.

bebaino = *confirmed* (v6) & *sustain* (v8) =

“God will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:8)

In other words, no matter what happens in this life, no matter how difficult or challenging it gets, God _____ that, ultimately, we’re going to make it.

_____ will do it. He will sustain us, _____ us, and remake us until we shine at the last day with the completed reflection of the _____ of Jesus. And He will do it through His _____.

As the Word of God takes hold in us, as the testimony about Jesus grips our hearts, fills all our horizons, and motivates all our service, God confirms and sustains us, _____ all the events of this life, in sure and certain hope, all the way to _____.

Do you love your Bible?

Has the Word of God taken hold of you?

Does it sustain you?

Element #4. The Christian life is _____.

Some people live in the _____, and can’t quite shake the problems of yesterday. Whether its two years ago, five years ago, or fifty years ago, they just can’t get _____ the past.

Others live for _____, constantly in the _____, and are anxious and _____ of _____.

Although we are called to _____ for the good times in the past

and to seek _____ and forgiveness for the bad, so that we can move on and live _____. And although we are called to _____ each moment of the present and not to _____ about tomorrow, the Christian life is _____-oriented. And by future, I don’t mean tomorrow or five years from now, but eternity—the final _____ line of history.

“God has enriched you by His grace in Christ with spiritual gifts. You are waiting for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:7)

They are watching and _____; their eyes are fixed on the _____, on the finish line. That’s what a Christ-centered heart always results in—a heart that is _____ by Jesus and is _____ for Jesus

No matter how much of Jesus we know here, we long for the _____ of knowing Him hereafter. We can never get _____ here. We can never see enough or know enough here. There’s always _____ to come when Jesus returns in His glory.

This earthy life, this here and now, this is the _____, the waiting room this side of eternity. This world isn’t _____. This life isn’t all there is. When Christ comes, that’s home and that’s life, that’s where we’re going, that’s what we’re looking for, that’s what we’re longing for ...

Are you ready to go, or is this world your home?

Do you live waiting for the revealing of our Lord Jesus or are you still living in the past or living only for today, when the best is yet to come?

CONCLUSION

Paul’s prayer for the Corinthians presents us with a question: Are you _____?

I’m not talking about _____. I’m not talking about tradition, ritual, routine, or _____. I’m talking about a _____ reality.

Does Jesus have hold of your _____? Are you in Him? Has He captured you so that you _____ for nothing more than to be with Him, to see Him, and to have _____ of Him?