

Chapter 1: Christ's Holy, Divided Church

1 Corinthians 1:1–17

The church at Corinth was a mess. The Apostle Paul had planted this church (cf. Acts 18), but the reports he was receiving indicated that the church had drifted far from where they were when he left them. They had become proud, rebellious, schismatic, scandalous, and individualistic. In this letter, Paul must address many sensitive, painful issues, exhorting the Corinthians to return to the simple purity of the gospel, and to reform their lives accordingly. Still, while most of us may have been tempted to launch into criticisms, correction, and rebuke, Paul models apostolic love and wisdom. Instead, he begins in the salutation and thanksgiving of his letter to remind the Corinthians of the gracious work that God has done, is doing, and will continue to do in their lives.

Only after reminding them to the holiness to which they have been called through their union with Jesus Christ does he exhort them, beginning with their divisions over teachers and baptisms. In this first section of his letter Paul begins with a call back to holiness in Christ that expresses itself through unity in the church. Indeed, Paul writes, *personal* fellowship with Christ demands nothing less than *relational* unity with Christ's people. Or, to put this another way, in 1 Corinthians 1:1–17 we see that *you cannot have the whole Christ without the whole Church*.

Called to Holiness in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:1–3)

Paul opens his first letters to the Corinthians with a salutation that follows a standard pattern for ancient letters: first, he states his own identity as the author of the letter; second, he names the Corinthians church as the recipient of the letter; and third, he offers a greeting.¹ Although the pattern of this salutation may be standard, what Paul writes within the framework of that pattern is not. Paul packs a remarkable amount of rich doctrine and pastoral encouragement in these three short verses. More than that, Paul uses this opening salutation to lay down the first bricks of a foundation that must support the many difficult matters that Paul must address through the rest of this epistle.

The Apostleship of Paul

First, Paul identifies himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:1). An *apostle* is a messenger, and, in this case, a messenger whom Christ personally sent as an infallible witness to preach his gospel and establish his church.² Paul does not open all of his letters by asserting his apostleship (e.g., 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, Philemon), but the nature of Paul's apostleship seems to be in question within the church at Corinth (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1–5; 9:1–23).³ Therefore, Paul does not simply assert *that* he is an apostle, but he goes further by describing *how* he became an apostle of Christ Jesus: he was called by the will of God (1 Cor. 1:1). Paul will readily acknowledge that he does not look very impressive (1 Cor. 2:1–5; 4:1–13; 9:1–23). Nevertheless, Paul notes from the beginning that his outward appearance is deceptive, since it has been the will of God to call Paul as an apostle.

Furthermore, Paul here subtly challenges any who would claim authority in the church. Regardless of whether someone displays outwardly impressive gifts, the fundamental question is this: Has God truly called this man to an office of authority?⁴

Nevertheless, while Paul asserts his authority, he does not wield his apostleship as a weapon. In the very next sentence, Paul describes Sosthenes as “our brother” (1 Cor. 1:1). Paul lists Sosthenes as a “co-sender” of this letter.⁵ Although Paul does occasionally speak of “us/we” in this letter (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:18–31; 2:6–16), this does not seem to suggest that Sosthenes is also a co-author, but merely a partner with Paul in ministry.⁶ Most likely, this Sosthenes was a fellow believer whom the Corinthians knew, and it is possible (but not certain) that this Sosthenes may have been the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth mentioned in Acts 18:17.⁷ By calling Sosthenes his “brother,” Paul puts himself on equal terms with Sosthenes, in spite of Paul’s authority as an apostle. This is significant, since Paul will soon describe the Corinthians themselves as “brothers” (1 Cor. 1:10, 11). By calling both Sosthenes and the Corinthians his “brothers,” Paul subtly begins to undercut the divisions in the church that Paul will address at length in this letter (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:10–17): “In a split community, Paul wishes to emphasize their familiar relationship. Though he introduces himself as an apostle commissioned by God, he speaks to them as their sibling.”⁸

The Church at Corinth

Second, Paul identifies the recipients of his letter: the church of God at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2). The Greek word here translated *church* could refer to any assembly, religious or otherwise—indeed, this word describes the rioting Ephesians (Acts 19:32, 41).⁹ In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), this word for “church” appeared frequently to refer to Israel as a gathered assembly (e.g., Deut. 4:10).¹⁰ In the New Testament use, the word *church* can be a collective term for all the people of God (e.g., Eph. 5:25), or a class of people (e.g., Gal. 1:13), or the professing Christians in one place (e.g., here in 1 Cor. 1:2), or even a single assembly of Christians meeting in a single home (e.g., Rom. 16:5; Philem. 1:2): “Any number, however small, of professing Christians collectively considered may be called a church.”¹¹

Further, Paul insists that the church at Corinth consists of those who are “sanctified” in Christ Jesus, and “called to be saints” (1 Cor. 1:2). The words “sanctified” (*hēgiasmenois*) and “saints” (*hagiois*) derive from the same root word, which has to do with *holiness*. *Holiness*, then, has a twofold meaning: (1) being cleansed from the guilt and pollution of sin, and (2) being set apart and consecrated for God’s special use.¹² The Corinthian believers have been *set apart as holy* in Christ Jesus, and, therefore, they are *called to be holy*—that is, to conduct their lives as God’s *saints* in a manner befitting of the *sanctification* they have received.¹³ As John Calvin writes, “For if you do not by holiness of life show yourself to be a Christian, you may indeed be *in* the Church, and pass undetected, but of it you cannot be. Hence all must be sanctified in Christ who would be reckoned among the people of God.”¹⁴ We should not miss the fact that this *call* to be saints (1 Cor. 1:2) is parallel to Paul’s *call* to be an apostle (1 Cor. 1:1).¹⁵ Just as it is God’s will to call Paul as an apostle, so it is God’s will to call his people to be holy (c.f., 1 Thess. 4:3).

Paul’s description of the church at Corinth raise an important question: To what degree are the Corinthians really holy? Indeed, in the Corinthian Church there are divisions (1 Cor. 1:10–17; 4:1–4), rebellion against apostolic authority (1 Cor. 4), sexual immorality (1 Cor. 5:1–13; 6:12–20), lawsuits (1 Cor. 6:1–11), participation in idolatry (1 Cor. 8:1–13; 10:1–32), disunity between

husbands and wives (1 Cor. 7:1–40; 11:2–16), exclusion of the poor at the Lord's Table (1 Cor. 11:17–34), crass competition over spiritual gifts during corporate worship (1 Cor. 12–14), and false doctrine concerning the resurrection (1 Cor. 15). Even so, Paul insists that the Corinthians are not only sanctified, but called to be saints. Paul recognizes that the gospel has been preached, and the sacraments have been administered.¹⁶

By calling the Corinthians holy, then, Paul accomplishes two things. First, Paul exhorts us to continue to address the many issues that detract from the holiness which God has given to us in Jesus Christ and called us to live out. Second, Paul warns us of the dangers of demanding a perfect church: “For the man that is prepossessed with this notion, must necessarily in the end withdraw from all others, and look upon himself as the only saint in the world, or set up a peculiar sect in company with a few hypocrites.”¹⁷ The Church has been sanctified in Christ Jesus, and yet the Church remains deeply sinful and perpetually in need of significant reform. Unless we understand both of these aspects of the Church's holiness, we will never fulfill our calling to pursue the holiness to which God has called us as saints.

The Church in Every Place

The Corinthian Church, however, is not alone. They have been sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints not exclusively, but “together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:2). By this, Paul reminds the Corinthians that the Church “extends beyond Corinth.”¹⁸ The Corinthians share their identity and calling with all those who “call upon”—that is, *worship*—the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁹ In this phrase, Paul may be alluding to the prophecy from Malachi 1:11: “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and *in every place* incense will be offered to my name, a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.”²⁰ In other words, the Lord's name is made great among the nations as the gospel spreads through new churches planted in every place throughout the world.

Grace and Peace

Third, Paul offers his characteristic greeting: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:3). As many commentators note, *grace* refers to the foundation of our salvation, and *peace* to the results of our salvation: “The former includes all that is comprehended in the love of God as exercised towards sinners; and the latter all the benefits which flow from that love.”²¹ In this short prayer, Paul summarizes the entirety of the Christian life, from beginning to end.

Before moving, we should note the heavy emphasis that Paul places on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ: “Paul is an apostle *of Christ Jesus*; the Corinthians have become believers (“were sanctified”) *in Christ Jesus*; Christians universal are designed as those who call on the name of *our Lord Jesus Christ*; and grace and peace from God the Father are effected through *our Lord Jesus Christ*.”²² Paul insists that Christians must do nothing on our own, from our own strength, or to accomplish our own purposes. Instead, everything comes from Christ Jesus, through Christ Jesus, and for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Called to Fellowship with Christ (1 Corinthians 1:4–9)

After Paul's greeting, he offers a prayer of thanksgiving for Corinthians and the work that God is doing in their midst. Comparing the thanksgiving in this letter to Paul's other letters, Gordon Fee observes that "Paul's thanksgivings generally follow the same pattern: I (1) give thanks, (2) to God, (3) always, (4) for the recipients, and (5) for certain reasons, which are then elaborated."²³ Here, Paul follows the first four elements of this pattern in 1 Corinthians 1:4: "I (1) give thanks (2) to my God (3) always (4) for you...." The Corinthian Church may bring Paul a considerable amount of grief, but yet Paul nevertheless pauses to thank God for them. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes in his book, *Life Together*, "A pastor should not complain about his congregation, certainly never to other people, but also not to God. A congregation has not been entrusted to him in order that he should become its accuser before God and men."²⁴ If indeed the Corinthians are the Church of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:2), then Paul can rejoice—even while he recognizes that there is significant work to do among them.

The Grace of God Given in Christ Jesus

After this, Paul moves into the reasons for giving thanks. Paul points to the grace of God given to them in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:4), but then he defines that grace very specifically: "[5] that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— [6] even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— [7] 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 Cor. 1:5–7). We should notice the past ("you were enriched...was confirmed among you..."), present ("you are not lacking...as you wait"), and future ("the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ") orientation of this passage.²⁵ Paul is giving thanks for the entire scope of time in which God's salvation in Christ Jesus has worked, is working, and will work among the Corinthian believers.

This scope of time, then, begins with what has already happened: the Corinthians were enriched in all speech and knowledge (1 Cor. 1:5) as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among them (1 Cor. 1:6). By *speech* and *knowledge*, most commentators think that Paul is referring to individual gifts among the Corinthian in areas of speech (e.g., prophecy, teaching, tongues) and of knowledge (e.g., doctrine, discernment), respectively; however, these may instead refer more generally to the *preaching* of the gospel and the *apprehension* of the gospel within the church.²⁶ Even if this does refer to individual gifts (as I think it does), we should note that Paul is saying that the church *as a whole* has these gifts, rather than suggesting that each individual Christian possesses them all. Indeed, the *you* ("...in every way *you* were enriched in him...") is in the plural form (i.e., "you all"), rather than a singular form ("you specifically").

These gifts are only a brief summary of the vast work that God has been doing at Corinth. Elsewhere, Paul insists that the Corinthians not only excel in speech and knowledge, but also in faith, earnestness, and love (2 Cor. 8:7).²⁷ In our passage, though, Paul goes on to explain that the Corinthians were enriched in speech and knowledge "even as" (or "just as") the testimony about Christ (that is, the gospel of Christ) was confirmed in their midst (1 Cor. 1:6).²⁸ The Church at Corinth exists because the Corinthians have received and believed upon Paul's proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Not Lacking in any Gift

The Corinthians are not merely well taught; it is also the case that they are “not lacking in any gift” (1 Cor. 1:7). Now, Paul will later reveal that these gifts have become a point of contention in the church (1 Cor. 12–14)). Nevertheless, Paul recognizes that the gifts themselves are good, even if the Corinthians have been misusing those gifts.²⁹ Paul does not want them to forfeit those gifts, but to use those gifts for the edification of the whole body of Christ in the church. Indeed, Paul insists that those gifts from God are necessary as the church awaits the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:7). As we noted earlier, Paul rejoices that the church at Corinth is a true church, even while he knows that he must address significant shortcomings in that church. They *have* believed, and they *are not* lacking in any gift as they *do* await the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ; however, they also need correction in several areas.

Sustained to the End by God’s Faithfulness

Therefore, Paul encourages the Philippians in the promise that the Lord Jesus will sustain them to the end, that they might be guiltless on the day of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8). Here, Paul refers to the great doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints: “True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God, and his decree and covenant to give them perseverance, their inseparable union with Christ, his continual intercession for them, and the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”³⁰ What a marvelous comfort that the Lord Jesus Christ will himself sustain and preserve our faith all the way to the end, regardless of our stumbling, sin, and failures along the way! As Charles Hodge writes, “When we remember on the one hand how great is our guilt, and on the other, how great is our danger from without and from within, we feel that nothing but the righteousness of Christ and the power of God can secure our being preserved and presented blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus.”³¹ Indeed, Paul insists that we will be guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament prophets spoke of the Day of the Lord in terrifying terms (e.g., Amos 5:18); however, the one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will stand with confidence on that day (cf. 1 John 2:28).³²

In light of our great sin and weakness, how can this be? What hope could we possibly have that we will be able to persevere guiltless to the end in order to stand confidently before the Lord Jesus Christ, the Righteous Judge of all the earth? In fact, we can have no confidence in ourselves. Instead, our hope is in God: “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). It is *God’s* faithfulness and *God’s* calling that guarantees our eternal salvation through the fellowship (i.e., union and communion) that we have with Christ, and elsewhere, Paul inseparably ties God’s calling with eventual glorification: “[29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn of many brothers. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Rom. 8:29–30).³³ In no way does this depend on our strength and righteousness, or the whole scheme would fall apart. Instead, we trust the faithfulness of the Father, demonstrated in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and worked out perseveringly in our lives through the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit.³⁴

Called to Unity by Christ (1 Corinthians 1:10–17)

Now that Paul has begun with his thankfulness for the work of God in Corinth, he turns to confront the first of several concerning issues in the church. Paul changes subject in a way that is perhaps more apparent than in our English translations: “*But* I exhort you, brothers...” (my translation). The work for “exhort” is a compound word that means “call alongside of someone.” It might help to think of a coach who, in an effort to get his athletes to perform as well as possible, speaks sharply to them, instructing them on how to fix flaws in their technique. Paul has gone to great lengths in the first nine verses of this letter to demonstrate his love, affection, and admiration for the Corinthian Church. Now, he sharply calls out to them to correct the divisions in their midst.

Divisions in the Corinthian Church

We should pay careful attention to *how* Paul makes his appeal: “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). First, as we noted earlier in our discussion of “our brother Sosthenes,” Paul here calls the Corinthians his *brothers*. This is word gender-inclusive, referring both to men and to women, and it conveys the familiar relationship that he has with the Corinthians. He is not a lord above them, shouting down from his pedestal, but he is a *brother* alongside them, urging them forward in a manner fitting of their calling as saints in the church of God.

Second, Paul appeals to authority, but not to any authority that is inherent in him. Instead, Paul appeals to the authority delegated to him “by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul is both a brother to the Corinthians *and* an apostle of Christ, and he exhorts them from the standpoint of both relationships. Paul’s authority is not power that he may wield however he likes; rather, Paul’s authority is as a direct representative of the Christ. These divisions in the midst of Corinth, Paul argues, are not simply irritating to Paul, but constitute sins against Jesus Christ himself.

Third, Paul issues a command in the positive, then the negative, and then again in the positive. To begin, the positive: “that all of you agree.” Literally, *agree* is “speak the same [thing],” although this does not refer to bland, boring sameness. Rather, this *sameness* suggests unity by harmony rather than absolute conformity: “They are to be like a chorus singing from the same page of music, not like a cat’s concert with each howling his or her own cacophonous tune.”³⁵ Then, the negative: “that there be no divisions among you.” Anthony Thiselton argues that “divisions” might be a bit too strong to translate the word here:

A key word in this passage is **splits** (v. 10; Greek *schismata*). We risk losing the point if we translate the Greek by a more formal word such as *divisions*, for these are not divisions of doctrine....The word **split** (in the Greek) denotes a *tear* in a fishing net that needs to be mended (Mark 1:19), or a *rending apart* that has to be “put back to order” (2 Cor. 13:11). The word may be used metaphorically of a political divide. In the Fourth Gospel the preaching of Jesus provokes a *split* among the crowd of hearers (John 7:43; 9:16). It is very serious when **splits** or *tears* appear in the church. Since Paul calls the church Christ’s body, it is almost as if this power play tears apart the limbs of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27; cf. 11:18).³⁶

Splits and tears have begun to appear in the whole cloth of the Church at Corinth, and Paul insists that these tears must not be allowed to remain, but must be mended and put back together. Thus, Paul returns to stating this idea in the positive: “that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.” The word *mind* here may mean “intellect” or “feelings,” while the word for *judgment* always refers to “judgment” or “opinion.”³⁷ With these three statements, Paul makes a powerful statement about the unity he desires for the Church at Corinth.

Quarreling Over Teachers

We do not know anything about the Chloe from whose people Paul gains this news about splits in the Corinthian Church.³⁸ Whoever they were, they inform Paul that the Corinthians have been quarreling over teachers, with some following Paul, others following Apollos, still others following Cephas (that is, Peter), and others who insist that they follow Christ (1 Cor. 1:12). The tragedy in these quarrels is multifaceted. Not only does Christ fail to gain the preeminent, exclusive glory among his people, but these quarrels divide Christ’s faithful servants (Paul, Apollos, and Peter) against one another, as though they were rivals against each other *and* against Christ.³⁹ It is difficult to know why the church was splitting along these lines, although it is likely that Gentile believers gravitated toward Paul (cf. Acts 9:15; Gal. 2:8; Eph. 3:1), Jewish believers clung to Peter (cf. Gal. 2:8, 11–14), and the more educated believers flocked after Apollos (cf. Acts 18:24–28).⁴⁰ It is more difficult to understand what Paul means by those who insisted that they follow Christ. In context, it seems that these believers may have been correct to profess allegiance to Christ alone, but that they failed in love by defining themselves as Christians over against their brethren.

Paul expresses his shock through three questions in 1 Corinthians 1:13. First, Paul asks whether Christ has been divided. Importantly, the grammar of this statement expects an affirmative answer: *yes*, Christ has been divided by the tears and splits in your midst!⁴¹ These splits are scandalous, since there is, in fact, only one, undivided Christ for all believers.⁴² The next two questions, however, expect a negative answer so that we might translate them like this: “Paul has not been crucified for you, has he? You were not baptized into the name of Paul, were you?” The force of these three questions, then, is both to illustrate the sin of the Corinthian disunity while also revealing its weakness. If Paul hasn’t been crucified for you, what can he do for you? If you weren’t baptized into Paul, what allegiance do you owe him?⁴³ Here again, the picture of Paul’s understanding of his apostleship comes into sharper focus: he has authority, but not to establish tear off a piece of the church under himself. Rather, Paul has received his authority precisely to keep the entire church under the lordship of Jesus Christ alone.

Not to Baptize, but to Preach

Apparently, some of the splits in the church had to do not only with preferences in teachers, but about who baptized whom. For this reason, Paul expresses gratitude in 1 Corinthians 1:14–16 that he baptized very few people in Corinth: Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. This Crispus is probably the ruler of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth (Acts 18:8), while Gaius is probably the same person referred to in Romans 16:23.⁴⁴ Intriguingly, Paul mentions that he cannot remember whether he baptized anyone else (1 Cor. 1:16). On this point, Charles Hodge writes, “The nature of inspiration is to be learnt from the declarations of the Scripture and from the facts therein recorded. From these sources we learn that it was an influence which rendered its recipients infallible, but it

did not render them omniscient. They were preserved from asserting error, but they were not enabled either to know or to remember all things.”⁴⁵

Part of the reason that Paul did not remember whom he baptized is that he did not come to baptize, but to preach the gospel—and not with words of eloquent wisdom, but in the full power of the cross (1 Cor. 1:17). Because the Corinthians were latching onto their favorite teachers and the administration of baptism, they were losing sight of the gospel itself. Whether they gravitated towards religious rites and ceremonies, or to eloquent teachers, the Corinthians were missing the real glory in the cross of Jesus Christ. To be sure, the cross is *not* glorious by human standards, for the cross represents shame, humiliation, and suffering. The message of the cross of Jesus cannot be dressed up or glossed over, for to do so would empty it of its power. By the cross, God displays his own wisdom and puts the wisdom of the world to shame. Where the world seeks outward glory—whether by clamoring for the right religious ceremonies or for the most eloquent speakers—God strips all of that outward glory to nothing at the cross. There, the full magnitude of the Lord’s wisdom, righteousness, love, and mercy is put only display without any polluting influences of human glory. It is the gospel of the cross that Paul came to preach.

Discussion Questions

- 1) In light of your past, what is the significance of God’s work of sanctifying you and calling you as his saint (1 Cor. 1:2)? From what did Christ save you? What does this calling tell you about God’s grace and love? What does this calling tell you about God’s purposes for your life? In light of your life today, how does this call highlight ways you may not be living in a manner worthy of that calling?
- 2) When Paul says that the church at Corinth is not lacking in any spiritual gift (1 Cor. 1:7), which gifts does he have in mind (cf. the general list in 1 Cor. 12:1–11)? Which gifts do you *not* have, but see that others have in the church? Which gifts has God entrusted to you as the church waits for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ? How might you grow in using those gifts to build up the church?
- 3) Notice the past, present, and future work of God in the lives of believers (1 Cor. 1:5–8). To which attribute of God does Paul acknowledge as the foundation behind this work (cf. 1 Cor. 1:9). How does God’s past faithfulness toward you gives you confidence for his future faithfulness? How is that confidence expressed in the faithful exercising of our gifts until Christ returns (1 Cor. 1:7)?
- 4) Why does Paul insist that we cannot have the whole Christ without the whole Church (1 Cor. 1:10–17)? Whom do you naturally move toward in the church? From whom do you naturally move away? What differences or distinctives are most difficult to overcome for you? How might you intentionally move toward those from whom you are divided and mend any splits between you?

Notes

1. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the

New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 23.

2. “The word *apostle* means literally a *messenger*, and then a *missionary*, or one sent to preach the gospel. In its strict official sense it is applied only to the immediate messengers of Christ, the infallible teachers of his religion and founders of his church. In calling himself an apostle Paul claims divine authority derived immediately from Christ.” (Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Reprint: Edinburgh, UK: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2000; Originally published 1857), 2.)

3. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 24–25.

4. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 48. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.viii.i.html>>

5. Paul Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People* (Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2011), 17.

6. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 26.

7. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 2.

8. “Ἀδελφοί [‘brothers’] is his standard term for Christians, yet 29 percent of the word’s appearances in the Pauline corpus occur in 1 Corinthians.” (Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 41.)

9. Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, USA, 2008), 41.

10. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 28.

11. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 2–3.

12. “The word (ἁγιάζω) translated to sanctify, means to cleanse. And as sin is presented under the twofold aspect of guilt and pollution, to sanctify, or to cleanse from sin, may mean either to expiate guilt by an atonement, or to renew by the Holy Ghost. It is used for expiation by sacrifice in Heb. 2, 11, 10, 14, 13, 12, and elsewhere. The word also means to render sacred by consecrating any person or thing to the service of God. In the present case all these ideas may be united. The church consists of those whose guilt is expiated, who are inwardly holy, and who are consecrated to God as his peculiar people.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 3.)

13. Barnett, *1 Corinthians*, 18–19.

14. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 52. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.viii.i.html>>

15. Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 31.

16. “Farther, notwithstanding that many vices had crept in, and various corruptions both of doctrine and manners, there were, nevertheless, certain tokens still remaining of a true Church. This is a passage that ought to be carefully observed, that we may not require that the Church, while in this world, should be free from every wrinkle and stain, or forthwith pronounce unworthy of such a title every society in which everything is not as we would wish it. For it is a dangerous temptation to think that there is no Church at all where perfect purity is not to be seen. For the man that is prepossessed with this notion, must necessarily in the end withdraw from all others, and look upon himself as the only saint in the world, or set up a peculiar sect in company with a few hypocrites.

What ground, then, had Paul for recognizing a Church at Corinth? It was this: that he saw among them the doctrine of the gospel, baptism, the Lord’s Supper — tokens by which a Church ought to be judged of.” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 51. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.viii.i.html>>)

17. Ibid.

18. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 28.
19. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 4.
20. Thomas Schreiner, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, USA, 2018), 53.
21. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 5.
22. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 32.
23. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 33.
24. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1954), 29. Cited in Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997), 20–21.
25. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 39.
26. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 6–7.
27. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 36.
28. “The gospel is called the ‘testimony of Christ,’ either because it is the testimony concerning God and divine things, which Christ bore; or because it is the testimony which the apostles bore concerning Christ. Either explanation is agreeable to the analogy of the Scripture. Christ is called the true witness; and it said to have borne witness of the truth. Compare John 3, 11. 32. 33. 8, 13. 14. On the other hand, the apostles are frequently called the witnesses of Christ, and are said to have borne testimony concerning him. The gospel, therefore, is, in one view, the testimony which Christ bore; and, in another, the testimony which the apostles bore concerning him. The former is the higher, and therefore, the better sense.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 7.)
29. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 33–34.
30. *Westminster Larger Catechism*, #79.
31. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 10.
32. C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1968), 39.
33. “If God has promised to give certain persons to his Son as his inheritance, to deliver them from sin and condemnation and to make them partakers of eternal life, it is certain he will not allow them to perish. This is plain enough, but how did the apostle know that those to whom he wrote were included in the number of those given to Christ, and that the fidelity of God was pledged to their salvation? It was because they were called. Whom he calls, them he also justifies; and whom he justifies them he also glorifies, Rom. 8, 30. The call intended is the effectual call of the Holy Spirit, by which the soul is renewed and translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. The only evidence of election is therefore vocation, and the only evidence of vocation, is holiness of heart and life, for we are called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Compare again Rom. 8, 29, where believers are said to be ‘predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son.’ To this they are effectually called. They are made like Christ. Fellowship includes union and communion.” (Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 10.)
34. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 60. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.viii.ii.html>>
35. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 42.
36. Thiselton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary*, 39.
37. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 12–13.
38. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 42.
39. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 65–67. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.viii.iii.html>>
40. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 13–14.

41. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 51.

42. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 46.

43. “Here we have a *second* argument, which is taken from the profession of baptism; for we enlist ourselves under the banners of him in whose name we are baptized. We are, accordingly, bound to Christ, in whose name our baptism is celebrated. Hence it follows that the Corinthians are chargeable with perfidy and apostasy, if they place themselves under subjection to men. Observe here that the nature of baptism resembles a contract of mutual obligation; for as the Lord by that symbol receives us into his household, and introduces us among his people, so we pledge our fidelity to him, that we will never afterwards have any other spiritual Lord.” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 69. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom39.viii.iii.html>>)

44. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 64.

45. Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 16.