

Read

1 Corinthians 1:1–9

Isaiah 49:7

Consider

It is almost if not totally impossible for any of us to appreciate the influence Paul hoped to have with his letters. Today we have more ways of communicating than most of us know what to do with—telephone, e-mail, instant messaging—not to mention social media. For Paul, if he could not be in Corinth in person or send a colleague, the only way to get God’s message to the church was through a letter.

Take a look at the prayer of thanksgiving (verses 4 to 7) that Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that he offers on their behalf to God. He is thankful for God’s grace in their lives, for the spiritual riches that have been given to them, for the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, shown in the abundance of spiritual gifts. He is thankful because they are a blessed people. I think if Paul were writing to the English Ministry congregation at SCBC he would tell us the same thing—you are a blessed people.

Now look at verse 9, which begins, *God is faithful*. I wonder if Paul is quoting the main idea from Isaiah 49:7. That verse speaks of *the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you*. The apostle stresses the faithfulness of God and the way he chooses to portray that faithfulness is that the Corinthian Christians and us *have been called into the fellowship of his Son*.

Think about that—you and I are part of the fellowship of Jesus Christ because God has been faithful to us. I take that to mean that the belonging we experience, the sense of being sisters and brothers in the faith, this is nothing less than evidence of God’s faithfulness to us. When we value that fellowship, when we work to strengthen that fellowship we are doing nothing less than co-operating with God’s faithfulness to us.

Pray

Loving God, show me today what I might do, what I might say, who I may support, to whom I may show grace, so that the fellowship of our church will continue to be a witness to your faithfulness to us. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Diving Deeper

In verse 2, what does it mean to be a church that is “sanctified in Christ Jesus”, “called to be holy”? What might being “together with all those who call on the name of our Lord” mean for us, locally and globally?

Looking at verse 8-9, what does it mean that God is faithful to keep you “strong to the end” and in “fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ Our Lord”? How can we understand His will for us?

As we have been enriched in every way in our speech and knowledge through Him (v. 5), what might be our witness in our relationships and actions this week? Who might we be able to share our testimony with?

How can we live closer WITH God in our lives?

How are we being TRANSFORMED to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we DO this week?