

*“As the People of God, Who are we?”*

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

*Celebrating the Centrality of Christ in the Local Assembly*

If I were to ask you what one adjective best describes the Corinthian Church, which one would you use? Almost without exception they are identified as the carnal Corinthians. Based on the situation we find in the church of Corinth, you would think they were in complete disarray and colossal failures. Yet what I believe we will find as we study the letter is the foundational truth of one's position in Christ and the various problems confronting any fellowship where there is a diversity of personalities and differences of opinion. Paul's appeal based on one's position is toward body unity. This letter is a beautiful portrayal of what church life is to be like.

Paul's opening comments in 1:1-3 give us three statements concerning the people of God that we must keep in mind as we consider this lengthy letter.

- I. It tells us something about the Church (v. 2a)

We are the Church of God (v. 2).

There are many profound and penetrating statements made through the revelation of God. One of the most penetrating in today's individualized, autonomous culture is the question, "Is Christ divided?" Well . . . is He? We have so successfully celebrated individualism that personal wants have become immutable rights. Our culture lacks any sense of community. People wish to come to church without having any contact with or commitment to the "community of Christ." We slide in and out without interaction or obligation, yet what is the body of Christ?

Let the body of Christ rise up as one. Let us cease our striving against each other and let us celebrate who He is and what we now are in Him. We are the body of Christ. Grace is what unites us. Disagreement, division, disunity, and debating are the results of "un-grace."

We are the Church of God. The Corinthian Church was divided over personalities and preferences and Paul calls them back to this core truth.

- II. It tells us something about the individual Christian.

We are the saints of God (v. 2).

- A. Christians have been sanctified in Christ Jesus (v. 2b)
- B. Christians are saints by calling (v. 2c)
- C. Christians are a part of a global community (v. 2d)

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Today, you are either a saint or a sinner. Sainthood is not achieved through human effort. No one is a saint because of what they have done. Sainthood is not based on human performance, but on divine position. What must you do in order to become a saint? You must believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and then you will be saved.

III. It tells us something about God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (v 3)

He is the source and satisfier of all things (v 3).

We have an addiction for stability and what we envision as a carefree life. In order to cope with the reality of this problematic life, we seek to fill in our perceived voids with the purchasing of things we neither need nor want. It is only as we come to grips with His grace and His peace that we will find that which we yearn for. This is a journey of a lifetime.

As the people of God we are the recipients of His grace and His peace. Peace is not our natural state. We are at war with God, our fellow man, and ourselves. Through God's gracious dealings, we have been reconciled to God through the propitiatory sacrifice of His Son through whom we now can be at peace with God, our fellow man, and ourselves.