



**1 Corinthians**  
**Chapter 1:1-9**  
**New International Version**

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

<sup>2</sup>To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

<sup>3</sup>Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Thanksgiving

<sup>4</sup>I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. <sup>5</sup>For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—<sup>6</sup>God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. <sup>8</sup>He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**They live best together who live with God.**

**(Money is like salt water) –**

*“The saints stand passionately patient, keeping God’s commands, staying faithful to Jesus.”* Rev. 14:12



# Sermon Notes

## BEYOND CYNICISM

**Saints are STRIVING not SATISFIED**

*“Saints are sinners who kept on going.”* Robert Louis Stevenson

**Saints are HOPEFUL not HOPELESS**

*“Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.”* Dr. Seuss

**Saints are Generous not Guarded**

*“Give what you have. To someone, it may be better than you dare to think.”* — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

*“A Gloomy Christian is a Contradiction”*  
*share laughter, music, smile*

*“A Lonely Christian is a tragic”*  
*share presence, invitation, letter, ear*

*“A Hopeless Christian is distracted”*  
*share your story, Bible, prayer, serving*



## 1 Corinthians

Both comedy and tragedy are found in the story of the Corinthian church. There was the comedy of a dynamic, gifted Christian community composed of uneducated, uninfluential people. They were plucked out of one of the greatest centers of trade, political authority and pagan religion in the Roman empire. Morals were so bad in that city that its citizens had inspired a word for sexual license—to *Corinthianize*! The existence of a church in such a setting was a reason for comic rejoicing.

However, there was also the tragedy of the Corinthians forgetting their humble roots and placing themselves as kings over one another—even over Paul, their founder and friend. The resulting tensions and schisms would boil over with even greater heartache for Paul in 2 Corinthians.

In the first six chapters of 1 Corinthians Paul begins with the distressing matters he has learned about: factions, incest, court cases and freedom gone wild. In chapters 7—14 he treats a series of topics that the Corinthians have asked him about, from marriage to spiritual gifts, with each new topic signaled by the phrase *Now concerning*. Finally, he sums up the teaching of the book in chapter 15, which is devoted to a theology of the resurrection or "last things."

the Corinthians had two root problems: premature spirituality (they thought they had everything heaven could offer) and immature spirituality (they forgot that the heart of the gospel is love, servanthood and the cross). Perhaps our communities, too, need correction in both practice and theology.

Dieterich Bonhoeffer contrasts "cheap grace" and "costly grace" by pointing out that "costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life."<sup>1</sup>

Call it burnout. Call it enlightenment. Call it whatever you like--it's plaguing the contemporary church. Andrew Byers calls it **cynicism**--the state we all too easily arrive at after passing through disillusionment. Too many saints in the making are having their wings clipped in this painful process.

But wait--there's hope. Disillusionment is, at its heart, the dispersal of illusions, pointing us toward what's really real--a great cloud of hopeful realists who have gone before us and welcome us into their number. There is a way beyond cynicism, and if we follow Jesus through it, we'll find faith and life at their fullest.

**Let's face it. Most of us are problem centered.** How will I get all my work done on time? What can I do to be a better witness? Why do I get angry so easily?

Solving all these problems is good. But so often we lack a broader perspective. We put Band-Aids over gaping wounds instead of looking for long-term solutions. We lack vision, so we fail to ask why we are involved in certain activities at all.

**"We wait for God to bless us while God waits for us to accept the blessing." B. Thompson**