

The Blessed Mess: Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

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The Blessed Mess: Introducing 1st Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:1-9)

This letter reminds us that...

1. God doesn't give up on us:

2. God doesn't give up on others:

For Further Thought and Discussion:

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper:

2. Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-2. When and how did Paul start the church at Corinth (see Acts 18:1-17)? What was Corinth like as a city? How was the culture of Corinth shaping these believers' view of Christianity? How did it impact their relationship with Paul?
3. Jeff noted that 1 Corinthians may be the most "*situational*" book in the entire Bible. What does this mean? How should this impact the way we approach the book? What prompted Paul to write this letter (see 1:11; 5:9; 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 27)? What – if anything – is the unifying theme of this letter (see 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; compare 1 Corinthians 1:18)?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9. How does Paul display grace to his readers? Given what we know about the Corinthians, what is surprising about Paul's description of them? How might this encourage us (especially when we feel like failures as followers of Christ)?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 again. How does Paul challenge his readers in this passage? How does this passage preview some of the themes Paul will address later in this letter?

Application:

6. 1 Corinthians is both an encouragement and a challenge. It reminds us that there is great hope for even the most carnal Christians (1 Corinthians 3:3), and that God will be faithful to make us like Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9). It also challenges us to display grace; to be patient and forbearing with difficult people as we seek to correct and persuade them of the truth (see 1 Corinthians 13). Which of these messages (encouragement or challenge) do you most need to hear right now? Why?
7. The Corinthians were tempted to squeeze their faith into a cultural mold; to reshape Christianity, so that it accorded with the values of their day. Can you think of ways you've been tempted to do this?
8. What's one thing you can do this week to apply this message?