

1 Corinthians

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[0 : 01] Trusting that the Lord may help us, let us turn to the first epistle to the Corinthians, the first chapter and the 26th verse.

The first epistle to the Corinthians, the first chapter and the 26th verse. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

And it is especially the first five words. For ye see your calling.

There is amongst us, for the most part, it seems a willingness to object when we come to the specific things that pertain unto the salvation of the Lord's dear people and their part in it.

How many times we have heard through the years, Oh, I couldn't presume? Dear friend, let us begin here.

[1 : 50] Remember, if the Lord hath not begun the good work, there's nothing to presume about. Let us also remember the word that declares that every word of God is pure.

There's no alloy, there's no deception, there's nothing hidden. It's pure. And if we feel to lack in any matter, in any aspect, the Lord encourages his children and he encourages them in a way that each must understand.

For he says, if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will the Father of spirits give the Holy Ghost unto them that ask him?

Now, the Holy Ghost is he who is come. And let us appreciate that no matter what the circumstances may appear unto us by our natural judgments and by the events and the circumstances round about us, the Lord, when he spoke unto the disciples concerning the Holy Ghost declared, and he shall abide forever.

And the Holy Ghost is the teacher, the revealer, the one by whom there is a recalling of all those things that the Lord hath said and that the Lord hath spoken unto his people.

[4 : 13] Though they may have a mind that forgets, the Holy Spirit is the remembrancer. Now, I want to try as help to bring a few things out concerning these five words for ye see your calling.

I wonder whether there is in us a desire that is entirely outside of the things of this world and of time and sense.

In Psalm 16, we read this. Thou wilt show me the path of life.

In thy presence is the fullness of joy. At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Are these the desires of your soul and mine?

[5 : 54] Is this that which to us rises above all the things of time and sense, all the pleasures of this world?

All of the ways of men? You see, the fountain of all joy is in Jehovah.

There are people whom God hath called and he hath called them into the enjoyment of these things throughout a never-ending eternity.

The fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore. Now, these things are not the desire of a man by nature.

But they are the desire of a people whom God has separated unto himself. And if there is a faint desire and a longing for these things, consider what it is that we really look for and long for.

[7 : 34] And Jesus has put it into the most wonderful words. That they all may be one.

As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, they also may be one in us.

Now, there's the fullness of joy. There are eternal pleasures. This is life eternal.

But, dear friend, the Lord calls his people to know a little of those joys here, to have foretastes.

And by these things ye see your calling. Now, I want to mention one or two things wherein the matter and then the manner of the calling is revealed in the scripture and experienced in the hearts of the Lord's people.

[8 : 53] In that third chapter that we read together in the epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle addresses the brethren.

And he says, wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. Now, they are partakers.

They have experience of it. They are the subjects of it. They are the subjects of it.

They are motivated by it. And the manner of this calling and the matter of it is in this word, it is a heavenly calling.

It is a calling from earth to heaven. And you may say, well, the apostle is very specific.

[10 : 00] He speaks of holy brethren. And I can't feel that I could say that or apply that or receive it respecting myself.

But if you read the letters to the churches and that one to the church of Corinth from which the text is taken, the address of that letter is unto the church of God, which is at Corinth to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to the church of God.

And perhaps you'd say equally well, I could never count myself among the saints.

Dear friend, strictly according to God's word, and he is faithful and true. The saints are those whom he has set apart unto himself, not the saints of the church of Rome or any others would describe them.

The saints are those who are partakers of his calling. They are called to be separate.

[11 : 32] They are called from earth to heaven. When you read that word in the epistle to the Ephesians, walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.

What way are you walking? To hell or to heaven? In the things of this time state? Or are your affections set upon things above?

Dear friend, except we are the subjects of that heavenly calling, our affections will ever be upon the earth and will bring us to hell.

But as partakers of that heavenly calling, there will be a desire. It will be said of us, not perhaps in the judgment of men.

But in the way that we walk, they look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

[12 : 52] Men won't understand and they certainly won't accompany you. Neither will they help you or hold you up in these ways.

But if you're found there, if the desires of your heart and of your soul are toward that kingdom, desiring earnestly to come there, then we see your calling.

You may say, well, is that enough? Oh dear friend, how misguided, how hard of heart we can be.

The word of God declares and he says, I will not alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth. And he declares unto his dear children, that he that has begun this good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Can you ask for more than the almighty God himself should in entirety begin?

[14 : 20] Continue and perfect his eternal purpose in sovereign grace to save your soul from hell?

We do provoke him by such thoughts. I love to read that word in Psalm 138.

And dear friend, it's a rock. In the time of trouble, the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.

When you can see no help, no light, no relief, no comfort. What a mercy to be able in the midst of that darkness to see the shining light of his truth and his grace in Christ Jesus the Lord.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. And if you read the 11th chapter of Hebrews, you'll find that all those that now inherit the promises walk this way.

[15 : 38] We read of them. We read of them. These all died in faith.

And we see their calling. And yet such is the deceitfulness of our heart that we question when these very things are made known, revealed and accomplished in us.

Now, when we read in the scripture also in the epistle to the Philippians and the third chapter, we read these words.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Now, everyone that is the subject of this heavenly calling must turn from the things of time and sense as one begins a race.

Whether they are faces toward the object and the prize. And it's necessary to press, that is to strive.

[17 : 14] To resist everything that would prevent and hinder every delusion that the mind and the heart practices upon us.

We must press. And all that we might understand. The wondrousness of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus the Lord.

You see, if you never know the value of the prize, even in a natural sense of the word, there will not be the same striving after it, except that it is seen to be desirable above all things.

And the calling that is spoken of in God's word, that heavenly calling is a high calling.

And all that we might have these things sealed upon our hearts and consciences. In the eighth chapter of Romans, the Lord declares the exalted nature of that calling which is unto and upon his dear children.

[18 : 53] His dear children. And he says this. For whom he did foreknow. Then he did predestinate to be conformed unto the image of his son.

Now dear friend, is there a higher calling than this? Is there anything more desirable unto a mortal, hallible, sinful creature than to be conformed unto the image of his dear son?

Go to the first chapter in John's gospel. In the beginning was the word. In the beginning was the word. In the beginning was the word. And the word was with God. And the word was God.

And it is unto that image, that high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that is set before his dear people.

Dear friend, do we appreciate how great this calling is?

[20 : 11] And yet if the Lord has so come and enlightened and enlivened us so that there is a desire to press towards the mark, then as the spirit shows unto us the excellency and the glory of that prize, there is a pressing.

A pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. There can be no question.

There is set before us in those things in union with the Lamb. From condemnation free, the saints from everlasting were and shall forever be.

Or there is a prize. And this is the high calling of God in respect of his dear children.

Now also we read in the epistle to the Philippians. In the epistle to the Ephesians. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of his calling.

[21 : 46] And what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. Our dear friend, if the Lord has opened our eyes, exercised our hearts, what is it that hath made the necessity of his calling and of his blessing and of his presence?

So dear unto us. Well I believe it is as we are caused to see our need because of our sin.

And the hope that he puts into the hearts of his people is this. That though sinners there is a way made.

And that way is in Christ Jesus the Lord. And therefore the hope of their calling is Christ Jesus the Lord.

I am sure that we have sung many, many, many times. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

[23 : 34] Dear friend, if it is anywhere else it will fail. It is Jesus' blood and Jesus' name alone that prevails before the Father's face.

If you have a hope in the law you'll hear that law condemn you in that great day. If you have a hope in your own abilities or your own labours.

You'll find that they are nothing worth when they are put in the sales scales of the sanctuary.

Because in the other side of the scales is our indebtedness because of sin.

And all the labours, all the tears, all of the endeavours, none of these things can even come.

[24 : 48] And find access and acceptance there. They have no place in the midst of holiness and righteousness. They merely add unto our sin.

And it is necessary that there be put in the other side of the scale Jesus' precious blood.

And the word of God declares, for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.

And there's the hope. The hope is in his blood to cleanse from all sin.

Now again in this same epistle to the Ephesians we read, There is one body and one spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling.

[26 : 02] Oh, it's necessary that we underline this one hope. If you think of the multiplicity of religions and hopes that have existed throughout the ages, how many millions have been deluded?

There is but one hope. There is a great joy. Dear friends, what a mercy that almighty God has left on record for us.

This determination of his heart and of his mind. For he says, all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.

He will not leave it to any other. He himself will teach all his children.

Not some of them, all of them. I've mentioned from time to time this comparison and I find it very sweet and apt.

[27 : 29] If you have a little child and that child needs to be bottle fed, you get pure milk.

You won't buy sour. You don't put the milk in a dirty bottle.

You sterilize it. You make sure that it's clean. Because you desire that that which will nourish the child, nourish it perfectly, fully.

And all of these things are undertaken so that no harm or danger shall come unto the child. Now if you and I have such an understanding and such a wisdom in natural things, shall not almighty God ensure that that which is necessary to nourish the hope, the life of his dear children, be given unto them in such a way that it will do them all the good that he purposed and intended.

And every step be taken to prevent any harm or any poison being given unto them. And therefore the Lord himself teaches.

[29 : 03] And there is one hope. One hope of your calling. And then we come to that word that we have read as a text.

For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty are called, not many noble are called.

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. And God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

And the base things of the world to confound the world to confound the world to confound the world. And things which are despised have got chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to naught things that are.

When the Lord created the heavens and the earth, He didn't create it out of things that existed.

[30 : 17] You see, when a man makes something, he has to take something that exists, put his hands upon it, work it, shape it, hew it, whatever it is, that he might make something else.

But we are told that there was a void. Now in a void there is nothing.

And when God created all that we can see, and there are countless objects of great immensity that we can't even see or understand, He did not make them out of things that already existed.

He spake and it was done. And when the Lord calls His people, He doesn't have to take something in you.

Oh, I know that very often we want to feel this, we want to find that, we want to possess the other. The Lord doesn't need something in us.

[31 : 43] We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus. And the same power, the same voice, the same ability that spake the earth and all the universe out of nothing, has so wrought in His people.

For if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. There is nothing that is of us in that which God hath made us.

Now again, if we know somewhat of these aspects of God's truth, I believe also that we come to this.

In the prophecy of Hosea, in the sixth chapter, we read, Come and let us return unto the Lord.

For He hath torn, and He will heal us. He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us.

[33 : 14] In the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, His going forth is prepared as the morning.

And He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth. Dear friend, we've got to know these things.

If we are partakers of the heavenly calling, we've got to know, in some measure, to some degree, these very things that are written here.

You see, there are a people, those that are partakers of His heavenly calling, and the word says concerning them, they know the joyful sound.

And what is the joyful sound? It is the day of jubilee, spiritually, in their souls.

[34 : 24] The day of release. The bringing out from under oppression. The day of returning. The day of joy.

But dear friend, except we know what it is to be torn, to be stripped. You see, if the Lord applies the truths of His holy law unto our hearts and consciences, we shall not only find that our own righteousness is as rags.

The apostle Paul was brought into that solemn place where all his own righteousness was stripped off him, when the Lord met with him.

But dear friend, not only was it stripped off him, but he was made to see that they were filthy rags.

And if you and I are partakers of the heavenly calling, we've got to learn that. And the Lord does not bring a man or a woman to know that, to feel it, to grieve and mourn over it, to desire to return unto the Lord, because of the felt distance and isolation.

[36 : 00] And condemnation that they feel. And then refuse to hear their plea.

It's an impossibility. When you read in the scripture of the abundant mercies and goodness and grace of Almighty God, in the countless circumstances that are left for our encouragement, there is no place where the Lord is not.

There is no place where those whom the Lord has wrought upon and brought into this solemn exercise, so that they cry out after Him, desiring His presence.

Where He does not hear and graciously receive. Let me give you the first example in God's Word.

In the book of Genesis we read where Adam and Eve had transgressed God's holy law.

[37 : 27] He had given unto them a commandment. They rebelled. They were cursed and under the condemnation of Almighty God.

The earth was cursed because of their sin, great sorrow and darkness was over all.

And in the midst of it and at that very moment, the word declares that God took of the skin of the beast.

And He made coats for Adam and Eve. And He clothed them.

They didn't do anything themselves. The Lord in His mercy and in His grace fully clothed them.

[38 : 38] For they were naked and afraid. Now when you and I are brought into that place where we are naked and afraid before a holy God.

When our cry goes up unto Him, come and let us return unto the Lord. We know that He has so wrought in us and discovered the darkness, the bitterness, the sinfulness of our own hearts.

He that has shown us those things alone is able to heal us. You know we hear from time to time of many who talk of their condemnation under the law.

And they believe in the commands and the strictures of the law. And yet very often the same people in reading the word of God, respecting the mercy that is in Christ Jesus.

The Lord refused to believe that. I'm too great a sinner. But it is the same God, the same faithful God, who hath given the law that sin may be revealed in all its solemnity.

[40 : 12] That hath proclaimed peace and pardon through Jesus' precious blood. And if you and I are amongst those in whom God hath wrought, hath begun this good work, so that we know and feel our utter need, then we shall come unto Him to heal us.

Dear friend, by these things ye see your calling. We know that God hath torn. It is His work.

And it is His love and His power and His purpose wherein our healing is to be found. He hath smitten.

And He will bind us up. Oh, how faith is in exercise in these very moments when we know that the Lord hath done these things, convinced us of our sin.

And we cry unto Him who alone is able. For the soul says, whom have I in heaven but thee?

[41 : 40] And by these things ye see your calling. Now there are many, many other matters that we ought to have mentioned, but the time has gone.

But I trust that it might be an encouragement to search the scriptures and see those things which the Word of God declares unto us are in the pathway of His people, whereby His dealings with them are known.

And as you pass in the similar circumstances to them, then perceive your calling.

understanding and desiring the excellency of that high calling that we might press toward the mark or the prize of the high calling of God.

May He get out this blessing. Amen.

[43 : 01]
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