

“The True Church”
1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Introduction:

1. This Morning - We Are Going To Continue Our Series In 1 Corinthians!
 - Last Week - An Overview Message!
 - About Corinth!
 - About The City / Community / Church / Challenges!
 - And We Saw How There Is A Lot That Is Similar & That Applies To Us! So - We Need 1 Corinthians Just As Much As The Church Of Corinth Needed It!
 - Last Week - We Looked At The Forest!
 - This Morning - We Will Start To Look At The Trees!
 - And Work Our Way Through This Inspired Book!
2. Let's Begin Where Paul Began!
 - 1:1-3 - “Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, / Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: / Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ!”
3. One Of The Important Things To Remember As We Go Through 1 Corinthians, Is That Paul Is Writing To A Church!
 - So - Just What Is A Church?
 - What / Who Makes Up A Church?
 - **IE:** There Are So Many Different Clubs & Organizations Today!
 - For Children:
 - Community Clubs - Like 4H / Scouts
 - Sports Clubs - Soccer / Basketball / Baseball
 - Christian Clubs - Awanas
 - For Adults:
 - Business Clubs / Health Clubs / Gyms
 - Community Clubs - Rotary / Kiwanis
 - Secret Clubs - Like The Masons
 - Christian Clubs - Gideons
 - There Are A Lot Of Benefits & Opportunities When You Are A Part Of A Club!
 - A Feeling Of Belonging / A Sense Of Purpose / A Mind Of Unity!
 - You May Make A Lot Of Friends In These Clubs!
 - You May Do A Lot Of Good Things!
 - You May Enjoy A Lot Of Fellowship!
 - But In The End:
 - There Is Really Only One Membership That Matters!
 - Are You A Member Of The Church?
 - Not Specifically – Grace Baptist Church!
 - But Are You A Member Of The True Church?
 - The Church Of Jesus Christ?
 - Is Paul Writing To You?
 - See This Morning – Being A Part Of The True Church Is The Only Membership That Matters! Because Of:
1. ***The Formation Of The True Church!***
 - **IE:** All Other Clubs & Organizations Are Designed & Formed By People!
 - This Is How The Boy Scouts Of America Was Formed By Chicago Publisher, W. D. Boyce In 1909 - When He Visited London & Got Lost On A Foggy Street & An Unknown Scout Came To Help Him & Take Him To His Destination - The Boy Refused To Take A Tip, Because He Was A Boy Scout And Was Just Doing His Daily Good Turn - That Led Mr. Boyce To Start The Boy Scouts In America!
 - A Good Club! Braden Is Involved In It!
 - But As Good As It Is & Can Be – It Was Only Formed By Man!
 - But The True Church Was Formed By God!
 - It Was Formed With A Message!
 - 1:1 - Paul Identifies Himself As An “Apostle Of Jesus Christ!”

- Jesus Sent Paul & All Of The Other Apostles – Or Sent Ones – With A Simple But Urgent Message To The World!
- Find This Message Later In 1 Corinthians:
 - 15:3-4 - “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; / And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures!”
 - And If You “Believe On The Lord Jesus Christ – Thou Shalt Be Saved!” (Acts 16:31)
- This Message Is What Turned The World Upside Down!
- This Message Is What God Used To Form His Church!
 - No Charter / No Constitution / No Contract / Just Christ!
- It Was Formed Through A Messenger!
 - 1:1 - “Paul, Called To Be An Apostle Of Jesus Christ Through The Will Of God!”
 - Paul Did Not Form This Church On His Own!
 - Or With His Own Message!
 - No - He Was Specifically & Divinely Chosen To Deliver This Message For Jesus!
 - So - The Message Of The Gospel & The Message Of 1 Corinthians Is Not Paul’s Message, But Jesus’ Message! Need To Take It & Listen To It!
 - The Church Is Not Man’s Idea / Club / Organization!
 - It Is God’s! He Formed It! For His Purpose / Plan!
- It Was Formed Through A Miracle!
 - Familiar With The Miracle Of Paul!
 - Who Was Previously Saul - A Jew Who Persecuted The Church Of Jesus Christ - Whom God Changed On The Road To Damascus! God Saved Him! A Miracle! This Is How The Church Is Formed!
 - But What About - 1:1 - “Sosthenes Our Brother!”
 - Meet Someone With The Same Name In Acts 18 - When Paul Went To Corinth For The First Time To Start The Church There!
 - Sosthenes Was A Jew - The Chief Ruler Of The Synagogue - Took The Place Of Crispus, Who Became A Christian - Was Beaten By The Greeks After Trying To Get Paul Tried!
 - Very Likely That This Sosthenes Is The Same One!
 - Which Would Mean That He Is Now Too “A Brother!” – Saved! Part Of The Church!
 - A Miracle! This Is How The Church Is Formed!
- Are You A Member?
 - Of The True Church Of Jesus Christ?
 - It Is Formed Through One Message – Faith In Gospel!
 - It Is Formed Through Many Miracles – Are You Truly Born Again?
 - Being A Part Of The True Church Is The Only Membership That Matters! Because:

2. ***The Features Of The True Church!***

- **IE:** Sometimes It Is Easy To See What Club / Organization Someone Belongs To! Signs Of Membership:
 - There Are Uniforms – Military / Scouts / Schools!
 - There Are Membership Cards – Good News Clubs!
 - These Are Temporary!
 - There Are Tattoos – Gangs!
 - These Are More Permanent!
 - But All Of These Signs Of Membership Are External!
 - The Features Of The True Church:
 - Are Internal / Spiritual!
 - How Do You Know If You’re A Member?
 - Look At Who / What Makes Up The True Church:
 - Look At Who Paul Is Writing To - 1:2 - “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours!” - 3 Features:
- Those Who Have Been Cleansed!
 - “Sanctified In Christ Jesus!”
 - This Is What Is Done For Christians!
 - They Have Been Sanctified / Washed / Made Holy In The Sight Of God The Father Through His Son Jesus Christ! This Is Now How God Sees Us!

- 1 Corinthians 6:11 - "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God!"
 - Even Though The Condition Of:
 - Their Home Was Wicked! Corinth!
 - Their Hearts Were Wicked!
 - Their Habits Were Wicked!
 - In Christ Jesus – They Have Been Made Fit For Heaven!
 - Hebrews 10:10, 14 - "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. / For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified!"
- You Are Only A Member – If You Have Been Cleansed!
 - By The Blood Of Christ! "Are You Washed?"
- Those Who Have Been Chosen!
 - "Called To Be Saints!"
 - This Is What Is Done To Christians!
 - They Have Been Called / Chosen By God To Be Saints / Holy Ones / Living Lives That Reflect The Character Of Jesus More And More!
 - 1 Peter 2:9 - "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light!"
 - Chosen - Not Because Of Our Goodness / But Because Of His Grace! To Form In Us What He Wants Us To Be!
 - You Are Only A Member – If You Have Been Chosen!
 - Called By God To Be His Special & Holy Child!
 - So - We Need To Be Who We Are!
- Those Who Are Calling!
 - "With All That In Every Place Call Upon The Name Of Jesus Christ Our Lord, Both Theirs And Ours!"
 - This Is What Is Done By Christians!
 - This Is How They Know They Have Been Cleansed / Chosen / Called – Because They Themselves Are "Calling Upon The Name Of Jesus Christ!"
 - **IE:** To Call - Is To Cry Out For Help When You Are In Need - Like Someone Who Is Drowning!
 - Only Those Who Are Calling On Jesus Alone - To Save Them From Their Sin / Shame - Can Be A Part Of The True Church!
 - Romans 10:13 - "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!"
- Are You A Member?
 - Have You Been Cleansed From Your Sin?
 - "Sanctified In Christ Jesus?"
 - Have You Been Chosen As God's People?
 - "Called To Be Saints?"
 - Are You "Calling Upon The Name Of Jesus Christ Our Lord?"
 - The Fact That There Was A Church Even In The Wicked / Worldly City Of Corinth:
 - Shows Us That God's Grace Can Reach Anywhere!
 - "With All That In Every Place!"
 - Even If You Are Far Away Geographically!
 - Even If You Are Far Away Spiritually!
 - Wherever The Gospel Goes, There Can Be A Church!

3. ***The Favor Of The True Church!***

- **IE:** Why Does Someone Ever Join A Club / Organization? Because Of The Benefits It Offers, Or What They Can Offer! American Express Is A Familiar Financial Company That Became Well Known For Its Unique Kind Of Credit Cards - Almost Became An Elite Kind Of Club - They Had A Saying: "Membership Has Its Privileges!"
 - The Same Can Be Said About The True Church!
 - "Membership Has Its Privileges!"
 - What Are They?
 - Find These Benefits / Privileges / Favors In 1:3 - "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ!"
 - Now - Verse 3 Is A Very Common Way For Paul & Other NT Writers To Begin & Sometimes End Their Letters!
 - Romans / Galatians / Ephesians / Peter / John
 - It Was A Common Greeting:

- Because These Were Constant Needs!
- The Grace Of God & The Peace Of God!
- And Membership In The True Church Has Its Privileges!
- The Blessing Of God's Help!
- God's Grace! "Grace Be Unto You!"
- This Is God's Help & Strength For His People To Be & To Do What God Called Them To!
- Hebrews 4:16 - "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need!"
- The Church Of Corinth Needed God's Grace & Help!
- And God Alone Could Provide It! Paul Knew!
- "From God Our Father, And From The Lord Jesus Christ!"
- Need Help – You Know Where To Go! God Provides It For His Church / His People!
- The Blessing Of God's Harmony!
- God's Peace! "And Peace!"
- This Is God's Security & Tranquility In The Hearts & Relationships Of His People – To Reflect Outwardly (Like A Mirror) The Inward Peace / Harmony With God!
- Philippians 4:7 - "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!"
- The Church Of Corinth Needed God's Peace & Harmony!
- And God Alone Could Provide It! Paul Knew!
- "From God Our Father, And From The Lord Jesus Christ!"
- Need Peace / Harmony – You Know Where To Go! God Provides It For His Church / His People!
- Are You A Member?
- These 2 Blessings Were Absolutely Essential For A Church Like Corinth!
- In 1 Corinthians – Find Many Concerns / Commands!
- Could Not Deal With Them Without God's Grace & Help!
- In 1 Corinthians – Find Problems With Division / Unity!
- Could Not Deal With Them Without God's Peace & Harmony!
- And Neither Can We!
- We Need God's Grace & Peace!
- And God Offers / Provides Them To His Church!
- Membership Does Has Its Privileges!

4. *The Foundation Of The True Church!*

- **IE:** Just About Every Club / Organization Begins With A Charter Or A Constitution! Our Own Country! Even Our Own Local Church!
- If We Are Members Of The True Church:
 - Need To Remember The Plan / Purpose For Our Church!
- Jesus Christ Is Our Charter! Our Foundation!
 - We Exist For Him Alone!
- Plainly Put - 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 - "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ!"
 - Jesus Is Our Foundation! Jesus Is Our Charter!
 - Must Never Forget This!
- See This In 1:1-3 – Jesus Is Mentioned 4 Separate Times In These 3 Verses!
- Jesus Alone Is The Provider Of Our Salvation!
 - 1:1 - He Is Called "Jesus Christ!"
 - Jesus – Which Means Savior!
 - Without Him, There Would Be No True Church!
- Jesus Alone Is The Promise For Our Salvation!
 - 1:2 - He Is Called "Christ Jesus!"
 - Christ – Which Means The Anointed One! Messiah!
 - Without Him, There Would Be No True Church!
- Jesus Alone Is The Power Of Our Salvation!
 - 1:2 & 1:3 - He Is Called The "Lord Jesus Christ!"
 - Lord - Which Means Master / Authority!
 - Without Him, There Would Be No True Church!
- Jesus Alone Is The Foundation Of The True Church!

- And Must Be The Foundation Of Our Church!
- Is He? What About Your Life – As A Church Member?

Conclusion:

1. Being A Part Of The True Church Is The Only Membership That Matters!
 - You Could Be Involved In Dozens Of Clubs!
 - You Could Be A Leader In An Organization!
 - But If You Are Not Part Of The True Church Of Jesus Christ – None Of These Other Things You Participate In Will Matter In The Long Run!
2. Respond:
 - Rely On The Formation Of The True Church! The Gospel!
 - Reflect On The Features! Always Calling On Jesus!
 - Remember The Favor / Foundation!
 - If We Stop Building On The Foundation Of Christ Alone, We Will Stop Being A True Church – Instead Turn Into Any Old Club!
3. Being A Part Of The True Church:
 - With The Right Formation / Features / Favor / Foundation!
 - Is The Only Membership That Matters!

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