

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**A Letter to the Church  
Second Sunday after Epiphany  
1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

May the light of God's love push back the darkness.

**We come to the light from the four corners of the earth,  
from the north, from the south,  
from the east, and from the west.**

But we are all one in Jesus Christ.

**We come from many nations and many cultures.**

But we are all one in Jesus Christ.

**We come seeking the light that guides us to life.**

But we are all one in Jesus Christ.

**Let us lift up our many voices and praise the God of all people**

**Prayer of Adoration and Invocation**

Almighty Lord God,

you gave your Son, Jesus Christ, to be the light of the world:

We praise and magnify your holy name that in him  
you have revealed the wonder of your saving love to all people.  
With those of old who brought their tribute to his feet,  
confessing him as King of heaven and earth,  
we now present the worship of our grateful hearts,  
asking you to give us grace to give ourselves to you.

Everlasting God,

you brought the nations to your light  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.  
Fill the world with your glory,  
and show yourself to all the nations,  
through him who is the true light

and the bright morning star,  
 Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and forever. Amen

**Opening Hymn #181: "All Praise to You Lord"**

All praise to you, O Lord,  
 who by your mighty power  
 did manifest your glory forth  
 in Cana's marriage hour.

Oh, may this grace be ours,  
 in you always to live  
 and drink of those refreshing streams  
 which you alone can give.

So, led from strength to strength,  
 grant us, O Lord, to see  
 the marriage supper of the Lamb,  
 the great epiphany.

**Call to Confession**

God of grace,  
 you have given us Jesus,  
 the light of the world,  
 but we choose darkness  
 and cling to things that hide the brightness of your love.  
 Immersed in ourselves, we have not risen to new life.  
 Baptize us with your Spirit,  
 that, forgiven and renewed,  
 we may preach your Word to the nations  
 and tell of your glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ,  
 our Lord and our light forever. Amen.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Assurance of Pardon**

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,  
 that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.  
 If we say that we have fellowship with him  
 while we are walking in darkness,  
 we lie and do not do what is true;  
 but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light,  
 we have fellowship with one another,

and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.  
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.**

### **Music Ministry: "Child of God" by Choir**

### **Responsive Reading**

#### **Question 112. What is the fifth commandment?**

"Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16).

#### **Question 113. What do we learn from this commandment?**

We learn that we owe proper respect to our parents and that we ought to be considerate of their needs especially when they are weak and elderly. Parents and children are tied together by a mutual giving and receiving of love and care in the bond of the family. This relationship is harmed as much by severe parents as by disobedient or neglectful children.

Lev 19:3

#### **Question 114. What is the sixth commandment?**

"You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:23; Deuteronomy 5:17).

#### **Question 115. What do we learn from this commandment?**

We learn that we ought to cherish human life as God's gift. This commandment forbids murder as well as suicide. It allows for lawful war and self-defense. Jesus emphasized that this commandment includes hatred, the angry word, and the murderous thought. All acts of violence against the neighbor are prohibited.

Lev 19:18, Mt 5:22, 1 Jn 3:15

### **Children's Hymn #173: "We Three Kings"**

We three kings of Orient are;  
bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star.

Refrain:

O star of wonder, star of light,

star of royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light.

Glorious now behold him arise,  
King and God and sacrifice:  
hallelujah, hallelujah,  
sounds through the earth and skies. (Refrain)

### **Children's Lesson**

#### **Prayer for illumination** **(Congregant Prepared)**

#### **Scripture**

##### **1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

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

**<sup>2</sup>To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:**

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

##### **Thanksgiving**

**<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— <sup>6</sup>even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— <sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

### **Sermon**

Paul wrote a letter the church in Corinth, one of the very churches which he founded. We are going to look at that letter today and see just how relevant the teachings that were passed on to that church two thousand years ago are to the modern church.

Ephesians 6:12 teaches us,

#### **Ephesians 6:12**

**<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**

This has been the reality that the church, and in fact all humankind, has faced since the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Today we see this clearly in the way that our culture is falling apart morally, the way that our politics have been corrupted, the failings we see in government, economics, education, we even see this present in our views of family and the modern church. Our world has always been wrestling with sin, and to many who look around at the state of our culture, our country and even our churches, it looks as if we are losing that wrestling match.

All across the world there are churches who are caving into the pressure and persecution of a Godless society. It seems that many of them have forgotten what church means and what a church is called to do by God. This is not new, and it is not unique, those of you who have read the Book of Revelation know that Jesus addressed seven different churches in that book who were suffering under the pressure and persecution of the Godless society of their day.

Yet perhaps better known than those seven churches is this letter that addresses the church of Corinth.

The church in Corinth was established by Paul on his second missionary journey, he spent 18 months teaching the church in Corinth to ensure that they were firmly grounded in their faith. However, like many churches which start off with a firm Biblical foundation, Corinth became a troubled church. The city of Corinth was spiritually and morally corrupted and over time the church in Corinth was being pressured and persecuted into being more accepting of the Godless culture of the city. The Church of Corinth was forgetting their foundation and forgetting their call, and Paul's letter to them carefully and lovingly brings forth their drift away from what a Church is and what a church is do in the world. It is for this reason that the letters to the church of Corinth, the letters to a church that was drifting into a morally and spiritually corrupted church are just as relevant today as they were then. The church in Corinth was not unique, it is a church that is becoming more and more commonplace in today's society, where the world seeks to change the church in its image, and the church is forgetting both what it is and what it is called to be.

Paul begins by addressing the church, '**To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.**'

Paul uses the term church, a word with which we are all familiar, but do we actually know what this word means. Church is defined in the dictionary as; 'a building used for public Christian worship.', 'a particular Christian organization, typically one with its own clergy, buildings, and distinctive doctrines.', 'the hierarchy of clergy of a Christian organization, especially the Roman Catholic Church or the Church of England.', or 'institutionalized religion as a political or social

force.'. I am confident that one of these definitions is the way that the majority of the world would define church.

However, none of these modern definitions of the word Church come close to the biblical meaning of the word Church. The word that we translate as 'church' comes from the Greek word 'Ecclesia' which is a compound word. The first part of the word is 'ek' which is a preposition and has the meaning of 'out from' or 'out of'. The main part of the word is 'clesia' and is a verb meaning 'to call.' So, the most common translations of the word ecclesia are 'the called out' or those called out from'. This was often used to refer to people who were gathered together for a specific purpose. So, when Paul says the Church of GOD, he is saying very clearly that these people are God's called out people. A group of people called out from the world, set apart, people who are different than the rest because they are called to be a unified group with the purpose of glorifying, praising, and thanking God while they answer his call, submit to His will, and obey his teachings herein this world.

This means that when Paul speaks of the church, he is not speaking of this physical building, or of what people would call their church. Truthfully there is no such thing as 'my church' or 'your church' because it is always God's Church, God's called out people. Most churchgoers start off knowing this, they have the correct purpose and plan, they do all the right things in serving and answering the call, however, as time goes on, they become comfortable with their traditions and ways of service and they slowly begin to think of their place of worship as 'my church' or 'our church', and begin to forget the reason that the church exists. They forget that the church does not belong to them, it belongs to God.

**Acts 20:28**

**<sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.**

In Acts 20:28, Paul reminds the elders of the Church in Ephesus that the church was purchased by the blood of Christ, it does not belong to any man or group or denomination, the church belongs to God.

This should also remind us that even though many people will claim membership in a church, or a denomination, that the real church is not made up with this list. The church is made up of all those who have given their life up to Christ and been called out from the world to serve him as their Lord. This is what we mean when we say universal catholic church in the Apostles Creed. The church is the group of people that are true believers regardless of where they attend a service. The church is made up of only those people who have been born again, those who have been washed clean by the blood of Christ.

This is clarified when we look at the rest of that second verse:

**1 Corinthians 1:2**

**<sup>2</sup>To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:**

And it is cemented in by the ninth verse:

**1 Corinthians 1:9**

**<sup>9</sup>God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

God seeks to save all of the Lost. Yet there are so many people in this world who refuse to humble themselves and submit themselves to God. Yet God calls his church out of this Group of people, he summons them to Him through the works of the Holy Spirit in them. Calling out to them to be set apart from the sinful ways of this world, called to repent from their own sinful desires and to humble themselves and obey the teachings of the Lord in their lives, becoming citizens of Heaven.

We need to know and understand that we are not saved by anything we do here on Earth, instead we are saved only by the grace of God. We do not become a member of the called out of God by going to church, by tithing, by helping or serving others, by getting sprinkled with water or dunked in a baptism, or by repeating a prayer or promise that we choose God. We become one of the called out by God when the Holy Spirit begins its work in us.

For all of God's children there is a time in their life when the Holy Spirit brings them into faith in Jesus Christ, which results in them coming to , submitting to and seeking to obey the teachings of God in their lives and it is important that we know that this process will be different in every one of God's children.

Oswald Chambers said this,

**It is not that you have got God, but that He has got you. Why is God at work in me, bending, breaking, molding, doing just as He chooses? For one purpose only—that He may be able to say, “This is my man, my woman.” First Peter 2:9 says of the church, “But you are a CHOSEN GENERATION, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.**

**-Oswald Chambers-**

If God is calling on you, if the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart saying ‘come to Christ, repent of your sin and surrender to him as Lord and Savior’ do not waste any time in accepting that call, and allowing him to call you His child for all of eternity and become one of His saints.

In 1 Peter 2:9 we see that the people of God are called a Holy nation, and in 1 Corinthians 1:2 Paul called the people of the Church in Corinth saints. Remember that this letter is written to a

fallen church, to people who are disobeying God and falling back into the ways of the world. Yet here Paul is calling them saints, reminding the church of Corinth that they are called to be different.

There is another important biblical lesson here, the moment that the Holy Spirit begins its work in you, you are saved. This is called the doctrine of Salvation and it is an important part of understanding how we are saved as the children of God. The doctrine of Salvation states that the minute we become a true believer in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour we are Sanctified before God. So, what does 'sanctify' mean? Again, to put it simply, 'sanctify' means 'to be made holy'.

Sanctification is what God does to every one of His people, he makes them holy, he sets them apart from sin. Does this mean that we instantly stop sinning when we are saved. Unfortunately, not. There is often quite a difference between our state of sanctification with God and our behavior here on earth. All of God called out people are Christians, are saints, they are a people who have been made Holy before God, and in the eyes of God on judgement day will be seen as being righteous, however, they will not always behave that way while here on earth. Their standing with God is holiness, the behavior on earth is unholiness. How can we understand this?

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

**<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**

God does not just write off the debt we owe from our sin when we are forgiven. The debt that is owed for our sin needs to be repaid, so God transfers all of that debt, all of that sin that we have committed and will commit onto Jesus, who bore all of the penalty of our sin upon the cross at calvary. And at the very same time, he transfers onto us all of the righteousness and perfect obedience of Jesus. When we accept Jesus into our lives fully and become a faithful believer, we have righteousness and a holy standing before God because we are 'in Christ'. This is referred to as positional sanctification, and is completely done by God, we have no part in this.

Yet, even though we have positional sanctification we are not sanctified in our lives. Paul knew this, in Romans 7 he wrote:

**Romans 7:22-23**

**<sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, <sup>23</sup> but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.**

Even when God has created a new heart in us, we will struggle with the sins of our flesh. This is often referred to as the struggle between the Old man and the new man.



Paul is telling those who have been sanctified that they are called to be saints, they are called to be set apart from this world and to be holy.

**1 Peter 1:13-16**

**<sup>13</sup> Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”**

Be holy, this is a process known as progressive sanctification, which begins the instant that the Holy Spirit begins its work in a believer and continues through the believer’s entire life here on Earth. Our Salvation and positional sanctification are the works of God alone, but the process of progressive sanctification is a joint effort between the Holy Spirit and man. Progressive sanctification involves of God working in us and us learning to humbly submit ourselves to God’s will in our lives, and to come to Him in obedience. It is a long and often complicated process of sin, repentance and change that is carried out through the life of a believer. One in which true believer gradually grow in their grace, slowly changing to become more like Jesus in their lives. Being called out by God is not a free pass, it is a call to work and change in our lives and this is what Paul is reminding the Church of Corinth.

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-8**

**4** Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. <sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. <sup>7</sup> For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. <sup>8</sup> Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Paul is telling the church in Thessalonica that they need to be different than the society that surrounds them. Believers, the called out of God, need to seek to please God and to refrain from their own sinful pleasures, to abstain from sexual immorality, to learn to control their desires and instead act with holiness and honor, and to live as an example of this for all those outside of God’s call.

**Romans 12:1-4**

**12** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do

**not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

Romans tells us that we are to stop conforming to the ways of this world, to live changed lives. We are called to give up the self-centered, self-exalting, self-gratifying way of live that his world promotes and instead embrace the teachings of God. Paul is reminding the church that we are called to place Christ first in our lives and every day, in all that we think, all that we say and all that we do, remember that we are living 'in Christ' and that we should be a reflection of that status of holiness and righteousness in the world.

This is the call to the church of God, put off the old man and put on the new man. If you are hearing God's call in your life, and you have not yet given yourself up to him fully do so now, this is the perfect time. If the Holy Spirit is at work in your heart and mind saying, 'Come to Christ, repent of your sins, surrender to him as Lord and Saviour' Listen to it, that is the most important call you will ever have in your life.

If you have already answered that call, then are you pursuing his call to holiness. Are you seeking to change the way you live? Are you seeking to be holy because the God you follow is Holy. Are you walking with the Holy Spirit and working on your sanctification? Which man are you listening to in your live the old man or the new?

Charles Spurgeon said, 'The salvation of Christ is not a salvation in sin, but a salvation from sin'. Many times, people will say that they cannot overcome sin in their lives. The truth is however that more often than not, they do not want to overcome the sin in their lives, they are not defeated by the sin, but instead disobedient to the Lord's teachings. As believers we are called to be at work in our progressive sanctification always, to be constantly at work with the Holy Spirit in our lives putting off the old man and putting on the new man. To die to our old self and embrace our born-again life.

If a church is to be a church of God, it must do these things. It must recognize that it is called to be holy, to be set apart, to be called out from the ways of this world, and it must seek to walk that way and obey Christ in all of its actions.

As a Christian we need to answer the call of Salvation and the call of Sanctification in our lives, setting aside our old ways and humbly submitting ourselves to Christ in obedience in all that we think, all that we say and all that we do, in every aspect of our lives.

Let us Pray,

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving and for Strength**

We give you thanks upon thanks,

O Lord our God,

Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

by all means, at all times, in all places.

For you have sheltered, assisted,  
 supported, and led us on  
 through the past times of our lives,  
 and brought us to this hour.  
 O good and loving,  
 grant that we may pass this holy day,  
 and all the times of our lives, without sin,  
 with all joy, health, salvation,  
 sanctification, and fear of you.  
 O Lord God, drive away from us  
 and from your holy Christian and apostolic Church  
 all envy, all fear, all temptation,  
 all the working of Satan,  
 and all conspiracy of wicked men.  
 Supply us with things good and profitable.  
 In whatever ways we have sinned against you,  
 in word, deed, or thought,  
 pass over in your love and goodness.  
 Do not forsake us, O God,  
 for we hope in you.  
 Lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from the evil one  
 and from his works;  
 by the grace, compassion, and goodness  
 of your only Son. Amen.

***Source: The Divine Liturgy of St. Mark, in Bright's Ancient Collects,***

**Music Ministry: "Here is Love" by Walter Gemmill, Rob Noyes & Rick Richardson**

### **Invitation to Offering**

#### **Offering**

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3). We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. This note from our treasurer:

**E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. [standrewspertthoffering@gmail.com](mailto:standrewspertthoffering@gmail.com) If you have an Offering Envelope #, please include it in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.**

### **Offertory Prayer**

**(Congregant Prepared)****Closing Hymn #172: "As With Gladness Men of Old"**

As with gladness men of old  
 did the guiding star behold;  
 as with joy they hailed its light,  
 leading onward, beaming bright:  
 so, most gracious Lord, may we  
 ever more be led to thee.

Holy Jesus, every day  
 keep us in the narrow way,  
 and when earthly things are past,  
 bring our ransomed souls at last  
 where they need no star to guide,  
 where no clouds of glory hide.

In that heavenly country bright  
 need they no created light:  
 thou its light, its joy, its crown,  
 thou its sun which goes not down;  
 there forever may we sing  
 hallelujahs to our King.

**Pastoral Prayer**

God has called us out of darkness  
 into the glorious light of the Son.

Let us therefore pray for those who do not yet know the light  
 and for all those in need of our prayers,  
 saying, "Lord, hear our prayer."

For the church and its ministry to the world,  
 and for all those who bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations,  
 let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

[Silence]

For the nations of the world and their leaders,  
 for all those in authority [especially . . . ],  
 and for an end to war and oppression,  
 let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

[Silence]

For those who have not heard the good news of salvation,  
 for those who have heard but have not believed,  
 and for those who have forsaken their faith,  
 let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

[Silence]

For those who are lonely and destitute,  
 for victims of injustice and discrimination,  
 for those who are unloved and forgotten,  
 let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

[Silence]

For those who are sick in body, mind, and spirit,  
 for those who are hungry and homeless,  
 for those who are dying or bereaved,  
 and for all those in need of our prayers [especially . . . ],  
 let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

[Silence]

For the saints who have gone before us in the faith  
 and are now at rest [especially . . . ],  
 we give thanks to the Lord.

And for all the saints on earth  
 who surround us in a great fellowship of love,  
 let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

[Silence]

Loving God, hear the prayers of your faithful people  
 and guide our thoughts and actions,  
 so that your will may be done and your name glorified,  
 through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Benediction**

May Christ, the Son of God,  
 be manifest in you,  
 that your lives may be a light to the world;  
 and the blessing of God Almighty,  
 the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
 be among you and remain with you always. Amen