

1Corinthians 17-11-12a

Well, good morning. This is Sunday, November the 12th, 2017. We continue our study in First Corinthians, chapter one.

We began our study last time with the introduction, talking about the city and its destruction in 146 B.C. and its subsequent resurrection from the dead, as it were, in 46 B.C. Its strategic position as a city of commerce and of culture in the Isthmus of Corinth there, leading to the Peloponnesus, and its identity as sort of a very cosmopolitan, erudite, up-and-coming, happening place. Still fairly new by ancient city standards. Some of the other cities, Athens and Sparta and Ephesus and others, had been around for generations, if not centuries, some of them going back as far as 600 B.C., but the rebuilt city of Corinth is really like the expansion north of Dallas, if you're familiar with that, where its new construction, its lot of young families, a lot of up-and-coming career people, career-minded people, and really percolating in terms of intellectual discourse and so forth.

It catered to the flesh. It was a center of idolatry. As I mentioned, the Temple of Aphrodite at the top of the Acrocorinth, and the Temple of Asclepius down below to heal up your STDs.

Among other things. So, this is the scene where Paul arrives and founds the church. He finds an interest in the gospel.

Many people are saved. He establishes this presence for nearly two years. He's there a year and a half, and then spends a few more months before he finally leaves, and lays that foundation that he's talking about here in chapter one.

As I mentioned last time, after his departure, when you read Acts, in the vicinity of chapter 17 and 18 is this time frame, you find that after Paul left, he probably had trained and identified, or maybe identified and trained, elders to lead that group after his exit stage left. These men, of course, are not apostles. They would be of the generation of Timothy and Titus.

The next star attraction, the next big noise to come through town was Apollos. When Apollos came, there had already been some drift, and there had been some early signs of cracking. You build a brand new house and put it on a solid foundation but you trust that as good as that foundation is, the ground underneath it has to be firm.

The ground, of course, upon which Paul lays this foundation that no other foundation can be laid except Jesus Christ, but that foundation is still laid on the soil of the human heart. If that soil is unstable, the best foundation in the world is still going to give and to shift. This begins to happen in Corinth.

It's not the fault of the builder and it's not the quality of the foundation. It is the ground upon which it is built. It is a reminder to us that it is not a problem with the truth of the word of God that can be blamed for failures, shortcomings, backsliding in the lives of Christians.

It is our choices. It is the stability of our faith and our commitment, really our belief. I read a really good article in the most recent little magazine from the Grace Evangelical Society talking about the difference between trust and belief, going back to a chain of argument that eventually lands you in lordship salvation by subtly changing the translation of pistuo or pistos, which is the Greek word we translate as to believe, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Well, in some contexts, pistuo can be translated trust, but you have to be careful about that because many other places it cannot be translated that way. And I won't go into all the details of the article, but the bottom line is if you change that to trust and then the author gave an example of a recent book where the author goes from talking about trust the Lord Jesus for your salvation to heartfelt trust and from heartfelt trust, he moves to an ongoing commitment and the ongoing commitment means recognizing that if you have placed all of your eggs in the basket of the Lord Jesus Christ, well, then he's got to be Lord and you end up down this trail by a subtle mistake in my opinion in translation in a wrong application. Now, how does that happen? It's there's nothing wrong with the text.

There's nothing wrong with the word pistuo. There's nothing wrong with the system that God set up for salvation, which is belief. For example, you remember he gives us and I think it's a telling point.

You remember the passage that says even the demons believe and tremble? Even the demons pistuo and tremble. Now, can you translate it trust in that context? Even the demons trust? Of course not. They believe.

They don't trust. They are, it is not a synonym and belief is ascent and that's important in our context this morning because Paul is gonna be talking about the testimony that was delivered. Let's look at it.

Now that we've sort of reviewed and caught ourselves up. You remember Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God and Sosthenes our brother. Sosthenes I'm guessing was the amanuensis.

Paul, I think was probably a pacer. I think he would walk up and down the room and deliver these messages orally and they would be set down. And this, by the way, I think accounts for some of the stylistic differences that people cite when they wanna say, Paul did not write this letter.

Well, there is an approximation when someone is speaking as I am speaking now. Some of y'all are taking notes. My daughter Elizabeth takes copious notes.

Many of the rest of you, I know I've seen your notes and they're a thing of beauty and they're actually better than what I say. You synthesize, you condense, you shorten, you get the essence of what I am trying to say. And in many cases, your notes, I wish that I had said what I said, you

had taken your notes, but that was all offline.

Then I had your notes and I would just read them and it would be a much better class, I think. But I think this happened with Paul. I think he would speak as I am speaking.

His amanuensis would distill or say, could I say thus or could we, you know, and it was a collaboration. That's why Sosthenes gets this mention. He's a partner, not just in ministry, but in the actual construction of this message.

And there are parts of it that are very extemporaneous. When Paul is gonna talk about who he baptized, you can tell that he's thinking out loud. I can't remember if I baptized anybody else.

He literally says, I don't know if I baptized anybody else, meaning I don't have time to stop and think about it because it's getting me off track. And then he returns himself to his point. So for this reason, as you probably know, I think Hebrews is also written by Paul and I think he wrote it with his own hand.

And the pharisaical training and the erudition of Old Testament knowledge reflected in that, I'm not sure that's a good construction, how erudite the author is in speaking of the Old Testament. I think that's Paul, myself. You detect the thought behind the words and it sure seems to be him.

Anyway, Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. It is the will of God that Paul is called to be an apostle. And this is an important first point.

It's really the first thought that comes across. He's an apostle and it's the will of God that he's an apostle. If you're going to cast aspersions at his presence, at his oratorical skills, at his approach, at his personality, remember they know him.

He was there nearly two years. And people who are going to start drawing comparisons and saying, well, you know, I know he introduced us to this new faith and kind of got us off the ground, but I don't know if he's really the one we should lean on going forward. He says, I'm an apostle by the will of God.

Don't forget, this was a divine commission. And if you're finding fault with Paul the apostle in his inspired ministry, you're finding fault with God himself. Not to say you can't find fault with a communicator, especially in the modern day.

We are not apostles. There are no apostles on the planet and have not been for 1900 years. But the apostles were special.

That's why Jesus addressed them. He said, remain in Jerusalem until you receive power from on high. You will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, until the end of the age.

Paul, Damascus Road, hard for you to kick against the pricks. You're gonna find out the kind of witness you are going to be for me, personally called by the Lord Jesus Christ, all of them. That's

unique.

Apollos is not in that number. Paul is. Cephas, Cephas, Peter is.

But Paul sort of cracks the door open and some light shines through on where he's going in this letter. To the church of God, which is at Corinth. Not the church of Paul, not the church of Peter, not the church of Apollos, not even the church of Christ.

It's the church of God. Not saying that that's necessarily a reason to name your denomination that, but he writes to, and of course, this is ecclesia, and church has gained a lot more baggage in our vocabulary than it had back then. Ecclesia was an assembly.

This is the assembly of God. Not saying that's a great name for a denomination either, or that having that name means you're on the right track, or on the wrong track. But it is the ecclesia of God.

And if you let it hit your mind in a fresh way, the group of God, the gathering of God. Paul is writing to those assembled, gathered people who belong to God, who are related to God at Corinth. Why are they related to God? How are they related to God? They are sanctified in, by, and with Christ Jesus.

Called to be saints. He says, I was called to be an apostle. You're called to be set apart, sanctified.

You are called to be this group. With all in every place who call in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. They are also calling.

So you've got God calling Paul to be an apostle. You have these people called to be set apart ones to God. And you have all of these people who are calling in the other direction, toward the heavenly realms.

To Jesus Christ our Lord. He is their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We talked about that natural order in our lives. It's not peace to you and grace ever. You ever think about that? Peace to you and grace.

It's never that order. Grace first, peace follows. Lose your peace, you're out from under grace.

Figure out why we've gotten disqualified from grace, peace will return. So now we pick up in verse four. I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you by Christ Jesus.

That's the foundation upon which all of this is built. You were enriched in everything by him in all utterance and all knowledge. This is an interpretive question, that statement.

You were enriched in everything by him in all utterance and all knowledge. And this is the Dative Locative Instrumental and as I did up above, is it in, by or with? And those who are really looking for ways to justify evangelism as the focus, mission and emphasis of the Christian life will say, and in writing and in extensive articles, that what Paul is saying here is that God's grace has enriched the Corinthians so that they have utterance, literally speech and knowledge for evangelism. God has put the gospel truth in them so that they can communicate it to others.

In other words, this is the speech and knowledge of the Corinthians. God has enriched you with these. Remember, the Instrumental, Dative or Locative, it's either in, by or with.

So if God has enriched you with these in sort of a direct object way, he has given you wisdom and given you utterance so that you can go spread the gospel. That's a very common interpretation of this statement. I submit to you and we will see the justification of it as we go forward in this letter.

What Paul is saying is, I thank God with regard to you all concerning the grace which was given to you by Christ Jesus, through Christ Jesus. It's because of Christ Jesus that this grace is even available. You were enriched in everything, not in wisdom and utterance.

You were enriched in everything, every part of your life, your capacity for life, your capacity for love, your capacity for happiness. Some of you all will recognize that vocabulary. But everything, your past is reconciled, your present is provided for, your future is assured.

God's grace has enriched you in everything by Him, Him being Christ, as you see it in the previous verse, nearer context, by means of. I would translate this verse, if it were me, you were enriched in everything through Him, by means of all utterance and all knowledge, all speech and all knowledge. This is Paul's two-year ministry in Corinth.

How were they enriched? It didn't just fall out of the sky like manna. Paul plowed teaching, wisdom, speech, day by day, week by week, month by month, for almost two years into this group. That's how they were enriched, and it was Him.

He's the conduit through which this grace from the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Lord Jesus Christ. So you get the sequence here. Here's God the Father on His throne.

He is a gracious, merciful, loving God. Through the Lord Jesus Christ, His grace flows. That's now the heavenly component, Christ's earthly work having been completed, first phase.

And it comes through Christ to Paul, and through Him, and His utterance and His wisdom to them. So there is this set of dominoes that fall, resulting in them being enriched in everything. Notice verse six.

Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed among you, among you. Every single one of these yous. By the way, starting in verse three, count the yous, not the female sheep.

Count the yous. Every one of these is a plural. And some of them in the Greek are embedded in the verb, but they are still you plural.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge. I'm not correcting the translation there.

Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed among you. That's five so far. So that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ who will also confirm you to the end that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, the Lord Jesus. Now I plead with you. And that's 10 direct appeals to this group.

All of them united and subsumed under, despite what Paul knows about their factions. But 10 times he addresses them all together, y'all. So I thank God with regard to you, concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Jesus Christ, by means of Jesus Christ.

You were enriched in everything in Him by means of utterance and knowledge that came through the Apostle Paul even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. The testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. Now, what is the testimony of Christ? That's an interesting phrase.

But you see the link there. The speech and the wisdom that Paul gave them was the testimony of Christ specifically. So if it's the testimony of Christ, before we even define that or explore it, what is it not? He did not use a great apologetical argument and try to compare various philosophies and say Christianity is superior.

He did not argue from history. He did not argue from consequences and results. Well, if you try this, you'll like it.

This'll get your laundry whiter. He did not try to logic them into faith. He did not sweep them away with great swelling words of oratory.

He says this, you were enriched in everything. This grace of God came to you. This speech and knowledge was the testimony of Jesus Christ.

So what is the testimony of Jesus Christ? What would you guess? When I say the testimony of Jesus Christ, we could probably safely say, well, this would be talking about the Lord Jesus, not necessarily his testimony that he gave and said, well, here's what I saw when I was in heaven. It would be the testimony of those who saw him, the apostles, right? So what kind of message was given in this speech and wisdom that Paul delivered that enriched the Corinthians in everything? It's the testimony of Jesus Christ. Look, for example, this same phrase occurs in others of Paul's writings.

Look at 2 Thessalonians 1.10. 2 Thessalonians 1.10. Paul is talking about the Lord Jesus and says, "When he comes in that day to be glorified in his saints "and to be admired among all those who believe." We've just been talking about that, right? You're called to be set apart. You're called to be distinct, a group that is dedicated to God, that is of God, the ecclesia of God. When Jesus comes in that day to be glorified in his called ones, his set apart ones, and to be appreciated, to be appreciated, to be admired, to be understood by those who know who he is and what he has done, because our testimony among you was believed.

So the testimony of Christ is that which people believe and when they see Christ revealed, they're going to admire and appreciate him. So what is the content of the testimony of Christ? It's not just Jesus died for your sins, believe in him and you don't go to hell. What is it that Paul could talk about for nearly two years, that when these people see the Lord Jesus return and be revealed, when we see the Lord Jesus return and he's revealed, we appreciate him, we understand him and we admire him, we glorify him, we are awed by him in the true sense of the word.

That's the testimony of Christ. Paul says the testimony of Christ was confirmed. This word confirmed is a great word, it's babayo, B-E-B-A-I-O, babayo.

This means to plant something on its feet, to stabilize it, to steady it, to assure it, to nail it down, to fix it in place, babayo. And that's important because it's very same words coming up in just a second. The testimony of Christ, what should be known about Christ so that he can be fully appreciated and admired was planted in your midst.

It was established, it was stabilized. Paul took his time and made sure that these people really understood who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ did in his first advent. Okay, everybody good so far? Now, if you stopped right here and said, okay, well, we're about to wrap up and we're all gonna go have the rest of our Sunday, what would we know? Paul came and established a church and he centered it on the person and work of Jesus Christ, right? I would think that that would be a worthy definition and goal of every local assembly, large or small, a focus on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Notice he did not talk about a missionary endeavor. He did not talk about an evangelistic outreach in the city. He didn't talk about helping one another and dealing with the poor.

Not to say that any of those things is not great, but what is the core? What is the definitional pillar at the center of an ecclesia? It's the person and work of Jesus Christ. That is the foundation. That is the focus.

That is what makes the church the church. That's what makes them of God. The grace that comes through Christ to that group is because that group is focused on the person of Jesus Christ and the work of Jesus Christ.

Now, why is that important? What did Jesus say? If you have seen me, you've seen what? If

you've seen me, you've seen the mission. If you've seen me, you've seen how much we need to help the poor. If you've seen me, you've seen how to live a holy life.

What do you see when you see Jesus Christ, his person and work? You see the Father. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. He said that at the beginning of his ministry.

What did he say at the end in the upper room? I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father. The focus is the Father.

It's the Father-centered life through Christ, in Christ, by means of Christ, understanding his person and work because the Father is so other we could never approach. To even try to imagine and come to grips with who he is would incinerate our tiny minds. No man has seen God at any time.

What? The Son has revealed him. It's the Son. He is the veil that keeps us from being blown into infinitesimally atomic parts entering into the holy place.

We can be the equivalent of the golden lampstand. We can be the bread on the table, and God is near, but it is the veil that both reveals. You know, there's cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant.

What's woven into the veil? Cherubim. We know what's behind there, but we're safe. We're protected.

It's not, I must protect the holiness of God. We have to be protected from the holiness of God so that we can survive. The Lord Jesus has done that for us, literally.

The veil which is his flesh. So that's what Paul is talking about. We've talked about this in 20 minutes.

Paul did it in two years, and he's reminding the Corinthians, unity. 10 times he says, you all as a group, you're in Christ, your grace comes by Christ, you're enriched in all things through Christ. And it is the testimony of Christ that was founded in your midst, stabilized in your midst.

So that what? What's the next verse say? So that you come short in no gift. This isn't in order that you not somehow fall short. He says, you don't, you're not short in any gift.

That all was done so that you now in the present are not short of any gift. The testimony of Christ. We saw it there in 2 Thessalonians 1.10. 1 Timothy 2.6, you can add to that.

Talking about the Lord Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. The work of Christ wasn't necessarily appreciated in the moment, but the testimony that the apostles would give afterward. Paul says, 1 Timothy 2.6, Christ gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.

That's his work. His person is gonna be appreciated when he's revealed. His work is gonna be

testified, a part of that testimony.

2 Timothy 1.8, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, O Timothy, the apostle says to the pastor. Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Again, 2 Timothy 1.8, nor of me his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.

The gospel is the testimony of Jesus Christ. Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Now notice, it's the person and work of Jesus.

What is the contrast here that Paul is setting up? And we're gonna see it fleshed out through the rest of the chapter. Don't worry about how clear you are. Don't worry about how erudite you are, how great you are at presenting truth.

When you speak the truth to one another, it doesn't say speak the truth to one another in wonderful words. Speak the truth to one another with great vocabulary. Speak the truth to one another in wonderful logical argument.

Speak the truth to one another in well-constructed phrases. What does it say? Speak the truth to one another in love. The testimony of the person and work of Jesus Christ has its own power.

You can't add to it with your oratory. You can't add to it with your eloquence. You can't add to it with your vocabulary and your wonderful apologetic constructions.

The testimony of Jesus Christ, His person, His work is the focus. You talk about that in love, God the Holy Spirit will take care of the transmission and the reception of that message. There are people who hesitate.

They say, oh, you know, I could never, you know, I learned so many wonderful things and I know so many wonderful things about the Lord, but I just, I hesitate. I would embarrass myself. I'd mess it up.

I would say the wrong thing. I would, I'm just not, I'm not one to talk. And it may not be a foremost gift, but if the Bible says be ready always to give an answer, and if here's an always and it's time to give an answer, speak on up.

Just trust that God the Holy Spirit is gonna, that's what I have to do every single time we have a Bible class, is trust that God the Holy Spirit is going to transcend the limitations of the person talking and the preparation and the inadequacies and the forgetfulness and whatever else it may be. The only way I think anybody can be a teacher or talk about the Lord or talk about the word of God is trusting that God the Holy Spirit is going to carry us as we do so. Carry us as we communicate, carry the person listening and help them to get it despite the inadequacies of the presentation.

We all have to do that. And Paul is making that point because what is the contrast in the mind of the Corinthians? Why are they fractioning? Well, you know, I didn't even begin to understand

this until Apollos came along because that Paul, he's not very eloquent. Paul says, if you're depending on eloquence and you're going with the eloquent argument, you're missing the boat.

It's the testimony of Christ. How did you come to appreciate Christ? How did you come to believe in him? How did you start to receive the grace of God? It was Jesus Christ. It wasn't Paul or Apollos or Cephas or anybody else.

What's really interesting is when he says, when he talks about the group that says, well, I am of Christ. You think, well, aren't these the people who get it? Well, we're coming to that. So I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God, which was given to you by Christ Jesus, not by Paul, not by Apollos, not by anybody else.

The grace came by Christ Jesus. You're enriched in everything by him, by means of utterance and wisdom. How did that happen? It was the testimony of Christ confirmed among you.

And trust me when I tell you this is confirmed among you. It's the same construction when Jesus says, the kingdom of God is in you, it says in the King James. The kingdom of God is among you.

The king was standing in their midst. The kingdom is in your midst. It's right here and you're missing it.

So that you now, you could put in parentheses, come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eagerly waiting. When you come to appreciate the testimony of Christ, his person and his work, you can't wait to see him.

You can't wait for him to come back. You want to be with him. You want to serve him.

You want to reflect his glory. You want to walk with him in white. You want him to have a nickname just for you.

He is the greatest celebrity. There's an awful lot of celebrity worship. People love singers.

They love actors. They love people accomplished in various fields. If you're a hockey player, you like the great hockey players.

If you're a dancer, you like the great dancers. If you play a sport, you like the people that play that sport. Nothing intrinsically wrong with that.

But for a believer, if the testimony of Jesus Christ has actually been laid as a foundation on good solid ground in our souls, he is the one we want to see. I want that autograph. I want to go to that concert.

I want to be in the presence. I would love to be at the after party with him. I would love to be in his presence and to express my appreciation and to show my admiration when he is revealed

and know enough that he'll look at me and I'm not just a drooling fan, but I'm actually useful.

I'm somebody he can talk to, somebody he can say, hey, I'm glad you're here. Can you do this for me? And we will know how to do it because we appreciate him enough to learn our job, to benefit from our experiences, to be coming short in no gift. Coming short in no gift.

Whatever your gift is, you're not short in it. And when the Lord Jesus comes and he's ready for you to exploit what you learned with that gift, you're ready. You're somebody that can be depended on.

You're somebody he values. It's one thing to value someone else, but isn't it great when that valuing is mutual? That's what makes great marriages, is what makes great families, is what makes great churches and great communities, is when there is mutual respect. There is value and appreciation.

There's give and take. And all of it is in that sphere of appreciation. The testimony of Christ was solidly established among you.

And you are not short in any gift. You've been enriched in everything. And you should be, and this is sort of an idealized version here, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember that in Thessalonians? When he's revealed, he will be admired. He'll be appreciated. Eagerly waiting for the revelation.

And that eagerly waiting is great. You remember in Romans chapter eight, where Paul is talking about all creation groaning under the curse and everything. And he says, the earnest expectation of creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God.

Here's the son of God, and here are the sons of God. And there is that great ecclesia of, he's the firstborn among many brethren. So you have that idea in Romans.

And again, in Romans 8, 23, we who have the firstfruits of the spirit, we ourselves groan. Creation groans, waiting for this revelation and redemption that comes when Jesus comes for his own. And in verse 23 of that same chapter, he says, we also who have the firstfruits of the spirit, we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for that adoption.

Eagerly waiting for the Lord Jesus, the redemption of our body. Philippians chapter three, verse 20, our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly await. That's our hope.

We're already citizens. It's that tension of already, not yet. Eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Titus 2.13, what is our blessed hope? Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. If you're not eager, when the thought crosses your mind, it doesn't quicken your pulse, thinking about the return of the Lord Jesus, you got to get

back to grace. Got to go back and look for that grace and get peace.

And then you're going to find yourself longing for the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus, anticipating it, and that is motivation. We got Thanksgiving coming up this month. A lot of people visiting other people, right? Sometimes it's people you haven't seen in a while.

You got family coming from across the country. You're going across the country. You're going across some patch of ground to be with somebody for Thanksgiving.

Anticipating that reunion, anticipating that appearance, what does it do? Well, I've got to get ready. Got to buy a butter bowl, figure out how to cook it, dust off the smoker, lay in the charcoal, get something for food, dressing, gravy, whatever it might be, make some pies. There's anticipation.

Eagerly waiting for something creates motivation for action in the present, doesn't it? And that's Paul's idea here. Instead of squabbling and quibbling, instead of wrangling and picking sides, go back to that solid foundation that was established in your midst. Your focus, when you've got some spare time, ought to be on the Lord Jesus.

I want to be ready for that. I can't wait to see Him and be approved by Him and not be ashamed at His appearing. So Paul is building all of this.

He's front-loading it, and he's going to elaborate on it as we go. So eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, verse eight, who will also confirm you to the end. You remember we had the calling.

Paul was called as an apostle. They were called to be saints. And then Paul says the testimony of Jesus Christ was babayoed in your midst.

Well, he says if that testimony has really become a part of the foundation in your soul, guess what? At the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be babayoed. It's the same word, babayo, babayo. Stood on its feet, stabilized, nailed down, constructed firmly, immobile, fixed, confirmed.

The testimony of Christ was confirmed among you. When He returns, He will confirm you to the end. This is telos, telios, the end of what? The end of the trail, the end of the road, the end of history, the end of this phase of God's plan as we go into the beginning of the next.

Confirm you to the end so that what? You may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blameless, faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish. So what a beautiful picture we have here.

The testimony of Jesus Christ, His person and work is the center, the focus. And with that, grace, peace, stability, hope, motivation, expectation, and the confidence that we can stand in His presence unashamed. What more do you want? And Paul has wrapped it all up here in about

three verses.

To a group that is having problems, keeping that focus. So he reminds them, this all must have a familiar ring. Can you imagine if in our immediate community, the Apostle Paul showed up and started having Bible classes, perhaps daily? How much could you learn? How many questions would you have? What do you wanna know from a Holy Spirit filled Apostle of God directly commissioned by Jesus Christ sitting right there? And you speak great Aramaic and wonderful Greek and you can just pick his brain, listen to him while he's teaching and preaching.

Well, that's what we're actually doing right here. And we've got the creme de la creme. We've got the pinnacle and the best.

What God chose to preserve of all of the preaching and teaching of Paul is right here in front of us. He is in our midst. He is teaching us.

We are those who call the Lord Jesus Christ Lord. His person and work testimony has been established among us. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're gonna turn the corner here in chapter one. We've seen the first nine chapters. Can you believe it? Two Sundays and we're already almost halfway through the chapter.

Didn't see that coming, did you? But we're gonna pause here and take our break. We come back, we'll pick up in chapter 10. He's gonna turn the corner here and say, now, having said that, I'm gonna say this.

And that's what we'll see when we come back.