

WORDS MATTER – p. 3
“Affirming the Wayward”
1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Defining “Biblical Affirmation”

Let’s begin with “affirmation” –

- A dictionary definition of affirmation is a good place to start:
 - Affirmation is “the assertion that something exists or is true.”
 - In affirmation you are establishing the validity of something.
- But when it comes to the affirmation of people, we are saying more than they merely exist!
- Affirmation is similar to a compliment.

But biblical affirmation is something much more than a compliment – Biblical affirmation is described in verses like –

- 1 Cor. 14:26 – “*...Let all things be done for building up.*”
- Rom. 15:2 – “*Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.*”
- Eph. 4:29 – “*Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*”
- 1 Thess. 5:11 – “*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up...*”

So biblical affirmation is the using of words to speak redemptively into the lives of others –

- And there is a purpose for that –
- So that they might know (some of our words are to those who don’t yet know Him) and grow (building up those who do know Him) in the grace of God that is through Jesus Christ.

Every day we are using words – and those words are either redemptive in nature or not.

- Take this along with Proverbs 18:21 – “*Death and life are in the power of the tongue...*”

Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

Pray

Problems at Corinth

In this letter to the church at Corinth that we know as “1 Corinthians” Paul deals with –

- Doctrinal problems – including but not limited to the Resurrection!
- Church divisions
- Gross Immorality
- Members taking each other to court
- Messed up worship gatherings
- Abuse of the Lord’s Table
- Misunderstanding and use of Spiritual Gifts
- Rejection of Paul and Apostolic authority

And yet, as we just read, Paul begins this letter with heartfelt words of encouragement and affirmation!

How Paul Affirms

1 – He reminds them of what is true about them

- They are a true church of Jesus Christ – v. 2
 - “*To the church of God that is in Corinth...*”
- They are sanctified in Christ Jesus – v. 2
 - “*...to those sanctified in Christ Jesus...*”
 - This means God has set them apart to be His treasured people.
 - God is not afraid to say “They belong to Me.”
- 1 Peter 2:9-10

- They are part of the whole body of Christ – v. 2
“...called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”
- They have equal access to God, through Christ, just as every other church that belongs to Him.
- They were not lacking any spiritual gift – v. 7
“So that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ...”
- Paul affirms them by reminding them what is true about them –
 -God has redeemed you – He has sanctified you (made you holy) – He has made you righteous – He has given you every gift of the Spirit – He has made you complete – All this is what God has done for us through Christ.

2 – He praises God for the work of God he sees in them

- He does this by giving thanks to God for the work of grace he sees in them – v. 4
“I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus.”
- Then, he gets specific about the work of God’s grace – v. 5
“That in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge.”
- To say that God’s grace made them rich in all speech is the telling of God’s truth.
- To say God’s grace made them rich in knowledge means they have the capacity to apply the Word in life experiences.
- Paul also sees the work of God in them in that the testimony of Christ was confirmed among them.
 -v. 6 – *“Even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you.”*
- The testimony or witness of Christ is that He was raised from the dead and gives life (spiritual and eternal) to those who believe in Him.
- For this to be confirmed in them would mean that they had believed in Christ and that there was evidence of the life of Christ in them!
- Paul recognizes the faithfulness of God that called them into the fellowship of Christ – v. 9
“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- Sam Crabtree’s book – “Practicing Affirmation”
 -The first words of the book – “Affirmation is the purpose of the universe – specifically the affirmation of God.”
 -This is clearly the message of Scripture –
 -Three times in the first chapter of Ephesians, Paul speaks about the ultimate purpose of God’s work of salvation as being “to the praise of His glory” (1:6, 12, 14)
- But what about the praise of people?
 -Sam Crabtree – “The praising of people does not necessarily preclude the praising of God if the people are commended ultimately for his glory. God is glorified in us when we affirm the work he has done and is doing in others.”
 -That’s what Paul is doing in 1 Corinthians 1 – Praising God by affirming the work of God in the lives of the Corinthians.
- It is no different than what the heavens are doing!
 -Psalm 19

3 – He gives them hope

- v. 8 – *“Who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

For You

Speak what is true in order to encourage for the praise of God’s glory.