

Advent 1

“Jesus’ faithful work to confirm you blameless to the end!”

(1 Corinthians 1:8-9)

December 3, 2023

Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this first Sunday of Advent is from our epistle reading 1 Corinthians 8-9.

“eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

So far the text...

We’ve come by the grace of God to the start of a new Christian year! And in this new season of Advent, which means “coming”, we, with Paul, **“thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus.”**

We begin this new year remembering with much joy who we are...the grace which has been given to by Christ Jesus, your calling through His Word, into an amazing fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Yes, Paul is writing specifically to the Corinthians of their amazing fellowship – their “koinania”, with Jesus, but he makes sure to keep the big picture before them and us, of this bond with Jesus that includes all His believers.

So, Paul begins his letter in our text saying:

“2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:”

“Called to be saints” – sanctified – made holy in Christ Jesus, that’s why Christians are called saints...and God these believers have been called not just in Corinth, but in every place, wherever saints are calling on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. And thanks be to God that He has called you, sanctified you and made you saints here in the church of Immanuel in Mercedes, TX! So that you too call Jesus your Lord! You too have been given an amazing fellowship, your koinania, with Jesus your Lord!

This is how we begin the new year, the Advent season, thanking God that He has come to you with His Word and Sacraments and given to you His grace and peace **“from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”**

We begin this Advent season remembering that you and I have the greatest bond of fellowship that there is. There is no greater bond than your bond with Jesus Christ. We celebrate your calling into the faith of Jesus, your fellowship with your Lord, your koinania, as we begin the new year.

On this first Sunday of Advent, Paul lets us take in the magnificence, grandeur and comfort of your fellowship. For it is enduring. God is faithful. He continues to sustain your bond with Jesus.

Why is your most holy calling with Jesus so magnificent? Look what He has done for you and all people. Paul wrote to another Christian congregation in Colossae these words in the opening chapter to them.

“19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

Jesus’ advent, His coming into the world, was for no other reason, the most precious reason than to reconcile the world to Himself. How did Jesus, the Son of God make peace with our sinful world? By becoming one of His creation, a true man and shedding His blood on the cross. Jesus is the reason for this coming season of Christmas and always!

Paul continues to tell the Colossians and us how desperate our situation was before He called us into fellowship with Him. Listen to who you were straight and to the point.

“21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works”

Enemies of Christ, wicked, no fellowship. But the rest of this verse tells us the good news of what Christ did. **“yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—”**

Through Jesus’ death, yes the body of His flesh as a true man, born of the Virgin Mary, He presents you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight!

That is your fellowship with Jesus. United to Jesus through faith in Him, sealed in your baptism, He presents you to Himself, holy and blameless! No one can condemn you.

This is what Paul is telling the Corinthians and all of us. Jesus will **“confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ”**. That is who you are right now and Jesus will not all of sudden stop confirming you blameless. He won’t all of a sudden take away His means of grace of His Word and Sacraments that give to us His forgiveness. No! He promises us that He will confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ!

What day is that? Well, that day of judgement happens either when die or when Jesus returns, whichever comes first. As we heard last week, there is no reproach of the sheep on the final day of judgement in Matthew 25. They are called “blessed of My Father”. **“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:”**

There is never a moment that God’s sheep are not blessed with blamelessness. Not guilty by the blood of the Good Shepherd, Jesus.

So. Paul also tells the believers in Rome the same message in chapter 8:1.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

And to make you sure of your calling, that you walk according to the Spirit, Paul tells the Corinthians that they have everything they need.

“4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, 5 that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

God has enriched you also, saints at Immanuel, in all utterance and all knowledge of the testimony of Christ. You know the Gospel, the testimony of Jesus, coming to die, pay for the world’s sins, and rise again in victory! This is confirmed in you so that you confess it in all utterance, teach it in all utterance in your homes and through pastors here at church. You lack no gift in your fellowship with Christ as you wait for His final coming!

And as Paul says to the Colossians, he says to us and all Christians, **“if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.” (Colossians 1:23)**

You have the power to move away from what has been grounded in you, the hope of the gospel. You have the power to reject this hope like the goats and then stand with all your blame before you on that last day. But why would you do such a thing? Why would you throw it all away? In this new year, may we stand always ready to confess our sins and our unfaithfulness to God and receive His confirming of His love and forgiveness to us often in Word and Sacrament.

And may we be filled with all utterance of this hope to share with one another the words which we heard from 1 Thessalonians 5 two Sundays ago.

“9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”

What better way to begin the new year than to ponder the magnificence of one's calling to faith by the work of Jesus. There is no better way to enter 2024 except being enriched by His steadfast, faithful confirming of His love to you through His Word and the Lord's Supper. And, then by the power of the Holy Spirit to use your utterance to comfort one another as we wait for Jesus final coming, where you will be fully and publicly confirmed as blameless and holy by His blood! Amen

“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)