



Uncommon Sense 1 Corinthians
Wk. 1 Called to be Saints
By Pastor Jody May 04/27/2025

1 Corinthians 1:25 - For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Uncommon Sense - *"God's Wisdom over man's pride through a Flawed Church."*

[CALL TO HEAR]

1 Corinthians 1:1-3 ESV

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

²To 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:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."

People - "Thanks be to God."

Pray

Illustration

When people use the wording **to be called up/out**, it means that it is time to step up to the challenge.

You could think of different type of sports, like a minor league baseball player and when he gets '*the call*' that means he is getting the call up to the big leagues. He is going to get a chance to show people whether he is worthy to play in the major leagues or not. I saw it in the NFL draft where the young men literally were on the phone after a selection being welcomed to the team.

It is a way to describe an apprentice or student that must fill in for their master teacher in all sorts of different walks. They may get the call because their teacher is not available, so they got the nod to take their place. That has been used from everything from actors, to musicians, to trades men like



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plumbers and electricians, and even karate sensei's; to get the call means your name has been passed along to be next in line for promotion.

As well, in our lives it is a way to describe getting an unpleasant phone call from someone to tell you bad news. I know I have had it used with me to describe the getting of bad news as in a loved one passed away or was in a bad accident. Some of us have gotten 'the call' in the middle of the night that we were not ready for.

Some have used that term to describe getting drafted or deployed or even used in the feeling or compulsion of joining the military. I knew of a few people that would use that term after 9/11 that they got the call to serve their country.

That term is even used as a way to describe someone getting a challenge publicly from another person. When you or I get *called out*, it means you were demeaned, slandered, or belittled. This type of call out was made famous in old western movies, Saturday morning wrestling promos, and of course the TikTok ice bucket challenges.

To be called out or to receive a call means that you weren't looking for it, but you get the message that it was time to put up or shut up, it was the offer to prove yourself.

Introduction

The word "called" κλητός (*klētos*)¹ in our text, is something used exclusively within the Bible to describe when the Divine God through general means (scripture/preaching) calls people to Him. It is a word used to describe that there was an offer for the challenge to follow God, but it does not always mean an acceptance of such a challenge.

¹ κλητός (*klētos*). adj. **called**. Describes those who have been called. This adjective is related to the verb καλέω (*kaleō*, "to call") and is used in the NT only of those called by God (e.g., Matt 22:14). Those who respond to God's call in faith are called (*klētos*; Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2, 24; Jude 1:1. William A. Simmons, ["Calling or Commission."](#) in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).



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Matthew 22:14 ESV (Luke 13:23-24)

For many are **called**, but few are chosen.

We call this the **General Call**, it is when the Gospel is proclaimed for all to hear but not all accept it. But then we have something in Theology we call the **Effectual Call**, or the call that is undeniable, irresistible, irrefutable call of God by which no person can say 'no' to. That is how this word is use here in 1 Cor. 1:2&4 (see also Rom 1:7; Jude 1:1)

This is the type of call we see in the text; this is how it is being used to describe both Paul and the people of Corinth. If you are a Christian, that believes by Faith, then you too have experienced the **effectual call** of God, it has saved you, His decree over your will. But just because it is effectual, just because it is a demonstration of the irresistible will of God, it does not mean it comes without challenges.

2 Challenges. There is a challenge for us because it will be hard, the challenge is just starting when we are converted. Being converted by the steadfast love of God **does not mean an end to the temptation to sin**, it just means you now have something bigger in your life to live for. There is a challenge now to become more like the God you serve. Your success will be based on the ever-enlarging picture of Jesus and who He is in our lives.

It is also challenging because the enemy wants to ensure that what you have was just a **general call** not an **effectual call**. He is looking to show that to you and others to defeat you mentally. The world and demon kind doesn't walk away from you once you are converted, the tactics just change (moves from seduction to doubting). There is a challenge now not to be pulled back into the world you once served. Your success will be based on pursuing the Narrow Way (Mat 7:13-14) and God's continual intervention on your behalf.

Those two challenges to your '*effectual calling*' mean you will continually need God's Word, You will continually need His people, and you will continually need to discover and work out your role in the call. This is the challenge that the Corinthians were failing at, living out their lives as **called saints!** Someone that had already been converted but they were quickly descending back into



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their worldly ways, and out of love Paul pumps the brakes on their descent in the first 3 verses of this greeting, reminding them the truth about God and themselves.

This whole letter is loving and a corrective rebuke about where their identity lies FOR Corinthians still identified as a Corinthian first and as a Christian second, as proven by their actions.

Our Challenge. You know that's a big issue for us in our day and age as well. Our secular culture in the west has determined that one can decide to be whatever they want to be and that the DNA you were conceived with and born into has nothing to do with who you think you are. Identity comes from your desires and one's desires are shaped by carnal culture. People are encouraged today to identify according to one's feelings based in the moment, never giving a thought to their future, the future of others, the will of the parents, nor to the God that made them. Many in the American church identify wrongly as an enlightened acculturated individual first and a Christian second. Therefore, we too have a need for this teaching by Paul to heed the call, to know who called you, and discover what you have been called to.

Here's where we receive our "wake-up" call this morning.

MP:

**The Calling of God, provides the greatest of need,
the Lordship of Jesus Christ.**

Today we want to work at understanding, for the Corinthians and ourselves, how our **effectual calling** gives us a new identity in Christ. So along with some background information in this introduction sermon to Corinthians we are going to talk about how God's calling provides the authority we need to live, God's calling provides the righteousness we didn't have, God's calling provides the leader we need for life, and God's calling provides the Grace and Peace we don't deserve. All of that to call us and the Corinthians into a lifestyle where our **identity is determined by the Lordship of Jesus Christ** ensuring our lasting holiness, righteousness, and evangelistic allure.



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1. God's Calling provides the **Authority** we need to live.

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

The Apostle Paul starts off this letter like all his other letters, it is **I Paul** who is writing you. This is the Greek way of giving a proper introduction, you give your name upfront, it lets the reader know that this was not penned by another person, that what you are reading comes directly from the stated source. It is not third-party information, a pass along, something that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted, it means you are getting it straight from the source. For the next 16 chapters this is all Pauline Theology, it is all written by a converted man who was the top Pharisee at one time, written by a man that understands culture of both the Gentile and Jewish world, written by a man that **understands the morality of the OT helps to build the new identity** of the called in Corinth.

He also has a man with him named **Sosthenes**. This man, most believe is the same man we were introduced to in Acts 18 on Paul's first trip to Corinth. The fact that he mentions him as if they know him tends to make one believe it is the same guy. It was at the end of Paul's time in Corinth during his second missionary journey, and as usual, he had caused quite a stir in the town. The problem though was the Corinthians liked Paul, but the Jews did not. When Paul had sensed they would not heed the **general call** of the Gospel, he left them and went to continue preaching to the Gentile Corinthians.

Acts 18:5-6 ESV

⁵When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. ⁶And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

Well on his way-out God let him get a little vengeance and gave the **effectual call** to a couple of influential Jews.



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Acts 18:7-8 ESV

⁷And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, **believed in the Lord**, together with his entire household. And **many of the Corinthians** hearing Paul believed and were baptized.

It was then after a year and half the Jews had enough and drug him to court in Corinth. They tried to charge him basically with the disturbance of peace against the Jews, claiming he was misteaching people about God. Gallio, a famous name in Roman judicial history, pronounces a sentence of not guilty claiming since it is the same God then both Jews and Christians get the same protection. Jews were so upset at this that they blamed it on their new ruler of the synagogue.

Acts 18:17 ESV

¹⁷And they all seized **Sosthenes**, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

OK, so poor Sosthenes had become a punching dummy for the Jews, and well, the good news is the Lord uses harsh lessons for our **effectual calls**. It seems Sosthenes saw the light about Jesus and His Lordship, and he left that synagogue and followed Paul right on out of town.

So, Paul is writing as the man that started the church, as the man that taught them the Doctrine of God, with a man that knows the doctrine of God, knows the people there by name, and knows first had their worldly temptations. Paul then adds the cherry on top and says, I have been called as an Apostle, **ἀποστόλος** (*apostolos*). *One sent out; in the NT, especially those sent out by Jesus to preach the gospel.*² Paul's authority to preach for Jesus was in his

² ἀποστόλος (*apostolos*). n. masc. **messenger, apostle**. *One sent out; in the NT, especially those sent out by Jesus to preach the gospel*. Soon the early church adopted the term "apostle" (*apostolos*) to designate those who proclaimed the gospel (Acts 14:14) and more generally those who were gifted by God and understood themselves as being sent on behalf of and belonging to Christ (1 Pet 1:1), who is the founding and paradigmatic apostle (*apostolos*; Heb 3:1). Apostles could be of either gender, as the case of Junia



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calling, God had not only called to him for Salvation but in that calling placed Paul's destiny by which he could not refuse.

Acts 9:5b-6 ESV

"I am Jesus, whom you (Paul) are persecuting, ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."

Acts 9:15 ESV

But the Lord said to Him (Ananias) "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel."

The point is family for the Corinthians and for us we have all that we need in the calling of Paul **for he speaks for Christ**. Whatever Paul says to Corinth if they disobey him, they disobey Jesus. While we study this epistle what the Spirit shows us, if we refuse, we show our foolishness and perhaps our lostness, for Paul is speaking for Christ to us.

MP: Our greatest need is to obey the word of the Lord Jesus Christ found in His Word, in this letter, family let us take seriously what we are reading.

2. God's calling provides the **Righteousness** we didn't have.

²To the **church of God** that is in Corinth, to those **sanctified** in Christ Jesus, **called** to be **saints** ...

Verse 2 sets the tone for the rest of Paul's letter. After we have established the fact that Paul speaks for Jesus, then the church of Jesus should recognize the voice of Jesus.

Paul calls out the Corinthians and reminds them who they belong to. *To the church of God, ἐκκλησία (ekklēsia). n. fem. **church, assembly, congregation**. A group recognized to accept the Gospel of Jesus by the Apostles.*³ This term

demonstrates (Rom 16:7). Craig A. Smith, "[Church Leadership](#)," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

³ ἐκκλησία (ekklēsia). n. fem. **church, assembly, congregation**. A group that meets together for various political, religious, and civic purposes. On the whole, Acts uses the term to denote a local community



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helps set the standard for the Corinthians who still lived in a town of major polytheistic worship, where the practices they are holding onto do not coincide with the worship of the one true God.

This true church is synonymous with those sanctified in Christ Jesus. The church of God is made up of people brought through the efforts of one man, His life, His death, His sacrifice, which sanctified them. This word for sanctified ἁγιάζω (*hagiazō*)⁴ is being used as the initiating action by which Jesus, when He saves you, sets you apart, He removes you from the rest of the world, it means to **set aside as sacred**, only to be used now for God's purposes. Then he uses a word we would never use for ourselves, but he calls them **saints**; a holy, set apart person, dedicated only for God to be used for His purposes.

Now when you read the rest of this letter that will be shocking because of how the Corinthians are behaving. Just to name a few shortcomings: they are divided in the doctrine of the church by arguing over what they believe and who they follow who, they have people committing incest, they are suing each other in courts, they are practicing all sorts of sexual deviancy, eating food sacrificed to demons, making a mockery of the Lord's Supper, and some were abusing lowly people, for gain and giggles, power, prestige, and wealth by the so called wise. Paul is calling these worldly looking people not SATANISTS but SAINTS!?

This right here should destroy any arguments for people believing in Salvation through works. This shows Paul's dedication to the belief that **people are saved by Grace through faith alone**. For the case of the Corinthians what now needs to be corrected is they are coming out of a culture/town that mixes all god worship together so that religious practices and beliefs are like a spiritual buffet for however you want to live. A glaring fact we should take

comprising those who embraced the gospel preached by early Christian missionaries (e.g., Acts 9:31). Derek Leigh Davis, "[Assembly, Religious](#)," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

⁴ ἁγιάζω (*hagiazō*). vb. **To consecrate, to make holy, sanctify, hallow, treat as holy.** Describes the divine act of setting aside as sacred. Can also refer to a human attitude of reverence shown to divine things. Hon-Lee Kwok, "[Holiness](#)," in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).



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notice of is that even for these people, who I believe are participating in some heinous acts, Paul **still sees them as righteous!?**

Family, here's the takeaway from here in v. 2, when you are saved/sanctified **you are saved by the worth of Christ not the worth of you.** *You and I are just as righteous as Jesus*, for it is His righteousness we bare. Therefore family, as called people to live saintly, let us all put off those things we know do not represent Christ well, for we no longer belong to this world, this culture, this idolatrous generation, we have been called to a higher way of living for we are already have the imputed righteousness of Christ!

Problem. A lot of times for us in our culture we revert to sinful patterns because of faulty theology. We show it all the time; we tend to believe we add to our Salvation/Sanctification by our works, so when we get into a sinful pattern it becomes a long-term practice, for we look at it through the lenses of, **How can I ever fix that!?** When the truth is that it has already been fixed, we already have the righteousness of Christ, we just choose to believe otherwise, we choose to believe we need to fix ourselves before we decide to live differently. You live differently because you already have a right standing with God! Family we too have been set apart in the Church of God, we too have been sanctified by the work of Christ, and we too ARE SAINTS!

The calling of God to us has provided ALL the RIGHTEOUSNESS we will ever need, because of the Lordship of Jesus Christ establishes His righteousness in our lives.

3. God's calling provides the **Leader** we need for Life.

² **...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:

When God the Father calls us, He preserves the lives He has ransomed, putting us under the **leadership** of the Lord Jesus Christ. He provides a leader for us so that we are not unmoored, unprotected, and uncared for. Calling on the name of the Lord means you believe in Him, you sacrifice your



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individual rights to Him, and you accept His Gracious and kind leadership from Him.

Galatians 2:20 ESV

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Having Christ as Lord means I exchange the way I think about getting the things out of this world I like, rather I surrender to His leadership, His love for me, and I commit to building His Kingdom. So often Christians miss the blessing of having His leadership because they think Jesus' leadership always leads to a life of self-fulfillment. Folks, if that is what you're reading in the Bible you are gonna have to get me some new glasses I aint seen that yet!

Instead, our contentment comes through discovering the work our leader has set out for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10 ESV

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

The way in which the Corinthians were going to begin to replace some of those nasty habits they had gotten into was they would **replace them with the desires of Jesus**, how He wants people treated, how He views His creation. It is replacement theology, we begin to think about what He wants, that is what we call worship. We don't begrudgingly do for Him, we get to love Him, we get live for Him, we get to represent the most fantastic being in this Universe. **You don't deserve this so relish it family!** When you start living this way, trust me the things of this world will begin to fade.

MP: Our greatest of Need was to have a leader worth loving wholeheartedly, to have a leader worth living for, and if it calls for it, to have a leader we would gratefully die for. Our biggest need was to have someone worthy of a life of loyal praise and the Father has provided it in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.



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4. God's calling provides the Grace and Peace we don't deserve.

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul ends his greeting with pretty much the same way he ends all his greetings, he assures the Christians that he is writing that there is Grace and Peace for them. He writes it up front in his letters so that the correction they receive in his writings they should accept as the Grace and Peace of God being administered to them.

For the Christian it is Grace to have the Gospel explained again.
It is Grace to have it laid out again why Jesus is worth it.
It is Grace to have it pointed out where we are holding onto worldly practices.
It is Grace to be called out on how we treat one another.
All of it is Grace, for it offers us a chance to self-correct for the leader we love.

Jesus has absorbed the wrath of God on the cross and now His called children instead of being turned out as in the OT are now lovingly reminded with the conviction of the HS to turn back to Him. This is something we don't deserve; again, let us be thankful God is not basing His decisions on our righteousness but Christ's!

[CALL TO OBEY]

First, in the calling of God in our lives we need to recognize that all the authority of God is found in God's Word, so therefore let us respond to it not as a guide, or a road map for living, but as the will of the living God.

Over the next several months take to heart that, *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* Heb 4:12 Take it as God's will for your life.

Secondly, remember you have all the righteousness you need and will receive so act accordingly. Stop looking as if you don't have the right to live for God, represent God, or call on His name in this world, you have a perfect



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standing with God already. Believe in your justified standing with God, act on God's behalf for you are good enough, and start reminding yourself in sinful acts that's not who you are anymore, you have been bought with a price.

Thirdly, since you already have a leader that has called you, that has prepared for you works before time to do, start praying and asking Him what those are. Two places to think about that, one is in this church. What could you be doing for the body, start talking that up among your friends here. Secondly, what are those things in this world that you can do to bring glory to Jesus? Again, believe in your leader's preparation for your life, take steps, and move out in His name.

MP:

**The Calling of God, provides the greatest of need,
the Lordship of Jesus Christ.**

Prayer

Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."²⁵In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus which was lived for us. He has heeded the call to be our Savior, He obeyed the call to live His life showing the righteousness of God, by His obedience we now receive Grace and Peace we could not earn. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood for the new covenant. Jesus made a better way for us, by obeying and



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completing every stipulation of the old covenant and even absorbing the wrath of God we deserved. In its' place we have been rewarded a righteousness we could not produce. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love!

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – “Christians, what do we believe?”

Congregation - LBCF 1689 Chapter 10 Section 1 - God Effectually Calls the Elect

In his appointed and decided time, God effectually calls those whom he has predestined to life 1 out of their natural state of sin and death to grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. He effectually calls them through his Word and Spirit. 2 He enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly so they can understand the things of God. 3 He takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh. 4 He renews their wills, and by his almighty power he gives them a desire to do things that are good. He effectually draws them to Jesus Christ, 5 so that they come freely, since by his grace, he has caused them to be willing to come. 6

1. Romans 8:30, 11:7; Ephesians 1:10, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14. 2. Ephesians 2:1-6. 3. Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:17-18. 4. Ezekiel 36:26 5. Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:27; Ephesians 1:19. 6. Psalms 110:3; Song of Solomon 1:4

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that has called us to live as His people set apart to declare His glory.

Go in the name of the Son, that lived His life perfectly calling us to follow Him, living out blessings when we call on His name.



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Go in the name of and power of the HS, that establishes in our lives the Grace and Peace of God we did not deserve, now go and share that good news with others.

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