

# Surprised By Encouragement

Scripture: **1 Corinthians 1:1-9**

Series: **1 Corinthians: [Un]Entitled**

Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023



## Overview

In 1 Corinthians, Paul addresses the issues within the church in Corinth. Pastor Aaron explains that the city of Corinth was an up-and-coming Roman Empire city with many temples to the Greek and Roman gods, attracting young, upwardly mobile people from across the empire.

Paul had planted this church on his first missionary journey and stayed there for about a year and a half, during which he led many young Corinthians to Christ. However, after he left, he started receiving reports of issues within the church, including divisions among the body, sexual sin, differences of conviction, chaotic church services, and confusion over the resurrection of Jesus.

Pastor Aaron highlights that Paul follows a pattern of defining the problem and then leads the readers to see that problem through the lens of the gospel. The sermon emphasizes that the gospel is the cure for any spiritual problem, regardless of the sickness.

## Discussion Questions

1. In the opening of his letter to the Corinthians, how does Paul encourage them in their identity? What significance does this have for the Corinthians and for us today?
2. How is Paul's encouragement to the Corinthians surprising and different from what they may have expected? How can we apply this type of encouragement in our own relationships with others?
3. Why is encouragement important for human beings? How does it impact our lives?
4. Why is it important for us to have a sense of trajectory? How does Paul provide encouragement to the Corinthians in this area, and how can we have hope for our own futures?
5. Paul's strategy for addressing problems in the Corinthian church was to define the problem and then apply the gospel to it. Can you think of an example of how this strategy might apply to a current issue in our culture or church?
6. In what ways do you need to apply the gospel to the brokenness in your own spiritual life, whether it be in the areas of division, sexual sin, differences of conviction, disruptive behaviour, or doubt about essential Christian beliefs? How can I cultivate a heart that is open to God's transforming work through the power of the gospel?
7. What gifts, skills, and abilities has God given you? How can you use those to live out your purpose?