

**Text: I Corinthians 1:1-2**

**Title: “When We are Saved”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Open your Bibles please to the book of I Corinthians. If you’re not familiar with your Bible, if you find II Corinthians, hang a left and you’re there. As your opening your Bibles let me encourage you again about PLACE.

You may sign up for a PLACE workshops at the new kiosk in the Welcome Center following each service. We had nearly 500 sign a commitment card on Vision Day. That’s great, and now we need you to register for a particular workshop. There are numerous options available, but each one is limited to a certain number of participants, so you need to register. You also register online at [www.travis.org](http://www.travis.org). Childcare will be provided for all Wednesday and Sunday workshops...and one Saturday workshop each month. So when you register, let us know you need childcare.

The reports we are hearing from the first participants are tremendously positive. I encourage you to make this investment in your own personal spiritual growth.

Speaking of spiritual growth, this morning I’m beginning a new series of messages entitled “Growing Up.” I’ll be moving verse by verse, paragraph by paragraph through the book of I Corinthians. Why is this an important way to study the Bible?

- It takes us to places, passages and topics that we might not otherwise get to study.
- It addresses issues before they become a problem. Example: One of the great themes of the book has to do with division in the church. Sometimes pastors see a threat to the church in this regard and may interrupt whatever else they’re doing to address this issue. But the best thing that could happen is for us to address an issue before it becomes an issue in the church. We can spare ourselves great heartache that way.
- Personally, I think it is just a fun way to study God’s Word. And we’re not going to hurry. If I don’t finish with a verse one week, I’ll just pick up there next week.

Now let’s get started by reading the first two verses of the book ... I Corinthians 1:1-2.

I want to start with a little survey. I’d like to know the physical circumstances of when you came to Christ. If you know you have a personal relationship with Christ today, tell me where or when you prayed to receive Christ. I preached at a revival experience last week out in New Mexico, and several people came to Christ. How many of you were saved at a crusade or revival like that? At Vacation Bible School? At home? In a worship service in here or in another church? A youth or children’s camp?

While we may remember the physical circumstances of when we came to Christ, it’s very important to also understand the spiritual circumstances of when we are saved ... what’s going on from heaven’s perspective when we are born again.

Now I'll show you more about the background of this book of the Bible as we go through the study, but to get started you need to know that if you had asked the question I just asked you in a worship service at the church in Corinth almost 2000 years ago, at least 90% of those present would say that they had been saved a few years before when a traveling preacher/missionary/apostle by the name of Paul came to town and began proclaiming the Gospel. Paul was on what is called his "second missionary journey" (around 50 A.D.). He spent about a year and a half there, and it was during that time that many of the people who first read this letter were saved. That had been about 3-4 years before.

But in that span of 3 or 4 years, some serious problems had developed in the church. The ancient city of Corinth was a degraded city (I'll talk more about as the study unfolds), and tragically, the church had become a degraded church that desperately needed to grow up.

### **1 Corinthians 1:2a - To the church of God in Corinth...**

Unfortunately, the church was in Corinth, but sadly, the wicked city of Corinth was also in the church.

And as Paul continues...

**1 Corinthians 1:2 - To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...**

He's not just making small talk. In these words we have described for us what happens when we are saved.

What happens when we experience the miracle of the new birth? What really happens when a person is saved? Many believers today are unclear and unconvinced of what really happened the moment they were saved. Friend, if you are not clear on this, it will cause:

- Doubt
- Defeat
- Distress

So what *really* happens when we are saved?

### **1. THERE'S A RADICAL BREAK WITH OUR OLD WAY OF LIFE.**

#### **I Corinthians 1:2a – "To those sanctified in Christ Jesus..."**

Now if you aren't familiar with your Bible, that word "sanctified" may be like a foreign language to you, because you probably won't hear it at work tomorrow. If you have been around your Bible much, you've seen and heard the word, but you may not be sure exactly what it means.

The word essentially means "to be set apart for God." In the OT when things were used in the worship of God, they were sanctified, or "holy-fied," meaning that they were made holy because they were connected to God.

So to be set apart, or sanctified, means that something or someone has made a radical break with the old way of life.

Now typically when we talk about sanctification, we talk about the process of a person, after they are saved, growing the become more and more like Jesus ... more dedicated, more set apart to God and Christ.

**EXAMPLE - 1 Thessalonians 4:3 - It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality...**

Now if you go back to I Cor.1:2, you see that Paul says it this way...

**1 Corinthians 1:2 - To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus ...**

It's past tense ... something that has already happened.

So sanctification is something that is a process, but it is also an event. And when does this event occur? It occurs when we are saved.

From a human perspective we realize sanctification in a process where throughout our lives, hopefully we grow to be more and more radically set apart for God.

This radical break with our old way of life doesn't happen all at once. We grow as we experience this radical break in every area of our lives. Some areas go quickly, others we work on for a long time. It's a process.

But from God's perspective, you and I were sanctified the moment we were saved. In God's eyes, this radical break with our old way of life was God's design and God's desire from the moment you were saved.

Turn with me to I Corinthians 6:9. I said earlier that there were some serious moral problems in the church, and Paul was writing to deal with that. And he challenges them...

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

This is what God had in mind for you the very moment you were saved ... a radical break with your old way of life. Does this mean we are perfect instantly? No, obviously not.

Let me see if I can illustrate it for you in this way:

From the beginning, God sees the design, the destiny, of what you really are in His sight. But there is also the process of perfecting us. God is unrelenting in this. He is like a sculptor who takes a lump of clay. In that lump is something precious, his vision of what will become of it. Then he meticulously goes about the work of sculpting.

**ILLUSTRATION** – I have here a statue of David. It's an amazing thing because it pictures David after he has been victorious in his fight with the giant Goliath. This is a smaller version of the larger, more complete sculpture that shows David standing with his foot on Goliath's neck, after he had slain the giant with a stone in a slingshot. David has a victorious look on his face because he's conquered a powerful enemy with the strength God gave him.

This is a special piece of art to us because it was given to us by some dear friends, but also, we watched the development of this work. One day we went over to the studio of Walt Horton, the artist, and watched him work on this.

Walt started out with a lump of clay, but in his mind there was a vision of what that lump of clay would become. He went to work over the next months pressing and carving on the soft clay. It was a work in progress, but in His mind it was already finished. He could see it. And he's the artist, the sculptor, so what's in his mind is going to happen to that clay.

So Walt Horton could look at that lump of clay, and see the victorious, conquering David.

Listen, that is what happens when we are saved. We start out with things that we know God wants to change. He calls us to make a radical break with our old way of life. But it doesn't happen in the first week ... the first month ... the first year. It takes a lifetime. That's sanctification the process.

But it is not optional! It is the will of God ... because from God's perspective, this is what happened to you when you were saved. In God's mind, in God's vision, the radical break with your old way of life happened when you were saved.

That's God's design ... and our destiny. God looks at that lump of clay and He sees in it the victorious conqueror that you will become through His Son Jesus Christ. That's God's design ... that's what God had in mind for you when He let His Son hang on the Cross.

## **CONCLUSION**

Go back to that scene long ago. Fix in your mind the last hours of Jesus death ... the betrayal in the Garden ... the arrest ... the cruel whippings and beatings ... the crown of thorns being pressed upon His head ... the nails being driven into His hands and His feet as He is fastened to the Cross ... the agony when the weight of His body on the Cross began to pull against the flesh ... the dreadful moment when God heaped upon Jesus the sins of us all and then had to turn His head away because He could not look on sin ... Jesus crying "Father why have you forsaken me?" ... the fighting for His breath ... and then breathing His last breath.

Oh, the darkness of that hour. But let me tell you what God had in mind. He saw you ... that sinful lump of clay that would become a victorious conqueror.

Now, take an honest look at your life today. Is it what God had in mind when Jesus died on the Cross? Is it what God had in mind for you to experience through the new birth?