

When the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he wrote to a people who he said were eagerly waiting for the revealing of Jesus Christ. “I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge” (vv 4–5). According to Paul, these Corinthian Christians were living in anticipation of the day when Jesus would visibly appear at the end of time as King of kings and Lord of lords. They were looking forward to the Last Day, when Jesus would return as judge and bring about a new heaven and a new earth. On that day, all wrongs would be made right. Sickness and death would be a thing of the past. The Corinthians would live face-to-face with Jesus, who had gone on before them to prepare a place for them in their heavenly Father’s home.

When the apostle Paul wrote to the children of God at Corinth, he saw people who were looking forward to the Last Day. “You are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v 7). Paul saw people who longed for Jesus to reappear visibly.

1. But just a quick read-through of 1 Corinthians seems to indicate otherwise. When you read 1 Corinthians, it doesn’t seem as if Jesus’ return is at the heart and center of who these people are. No, when we read 1 Corinthians, we discover that they’ve formed factions and cliques among themselves. They’re fighting with one another. There is sexual immorality amongst them. They’re even celebrating it. They’re exalting themselves and their gifts. They’re putting themselves first at the expense of others. There is a very clear lack of love for others. There’s abuse of the Lord’s Supper, and they’re warned about idolatry. A quick reading of 1 Corinthians would seem to indicate that the children of God at Corinth were **not** eagerly waiting for the revealing of Jesus Christ on the Last Day. They seem to be living for the here and now, just like their unbelieving neighbors.

So, how could Paul write that the Corinthians were waiting for the revealing of Jesus Christ when the rest of the letter seems to indicate the exact opposite? Is Paul simply putting on rose-colored glasses and ignoring how they’re living when he says that they’re “eagerly waiting for the revealing of Jesus Christ?”

2. Would he say the same thing about us? After all, our lives are often in conflict with how Scripture says we should live. How would Paul see **us**, and what would he say about us if he could see how we live? More importantly, how would **God** see us, and what would He say?

Like the Corinthians, we engage in quarrels and fights. We scheme to get ahead, sometimes at the expense of others. We sacrifice principles and family for careers because we want to get ahead. Sometimes we look the other way and go along with

cultural norms when it comes to cohabitation and marriage and family. In short, our lives are often in conflict with how God says we are to live. At times, it doesn't seem as if we are eagerly awaiting the revealing of Jesus Christ on the Last Day. Instead, it seems we're living in the here-and-now without a single thought about God's plan for our lives. Often, our focus is on a lot of other things and not on the revealing of Jesus Christ.

What would Paul say about us? How would he see us? More importantly, what would God say? How would He see us? It matters because we don't always see ourselves as guiltless. And while God is always faithful, we're not. What would Paul say about us? How would he see us? More importantly, how would **God** see us?

3. The answer is found right here in our reading. Did you notice how many times Paul refers to Jesus? It's a lot. Verse 3: There's "grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Verse 4: Grace is given to the Corinthians in Christ Jesus. Verse 5: "In him," that is, Jesus, the Corinthians are enriched. And Paul goes on all the way to verse 9. Paul says that the Corinthians will be sustained, guiltless at the end, "in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v 8). They are in fellowship with "Jesus Christ our Lord" (v 9). In seven verses, Paul refers to Jesus doing something for the Corinthians seven times.

When we hear Paul refer to Jesus' work for the Corinthians seven times, it becomes clear that Paul does not see them as they are on their own. He sees the Corinthians as **God** sees them *in Jesus Christ*. Paul isn't waiting for them to get their act together and do something for God. He knows that God has done something for them in Jesus Christ. He sees them as God sees them in Jesus Christ. Paul sees them as guiltless because **God** sees them as guiltless. Paul sees the Corinthians as eagerly waiting for the revealing of Jesus Christ because **God** sees them that way.

That's the way God sees us too. He sees us guiltless in Jesus Christ as we wait for Him.

4. God was never waiting for us to do something for Him. He was always waiting to do something for us. When the fullness of time had come, God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to do something for us. He sent Jesus to redeem us and bring us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. When Jesus came, He was in perfect fellowship with His heavenly Father. He lived perfectly without sin. He eagerly looked to the day when He would offer up His holy and perfect life as a sacrifice for sin. When Jesus died on a cross in your place, God the Father saw Him with your sin. Jesus claimed all your sin as His very own so He would die under the judgment of God for you & your sin.

When that happened on Good Friday, Jesus gave you incredible gifts. He gave you

everything that matters most in life. He gave you the gifts of His holy and sinless life. You received mercy and forgiveness from God. You were eternally enriched with the gifts of eternal life and a resurrection to come on the Last Day, when Jesus Christ will be revealed.

When God looks at you, He doesn't see you as you are. He sees you as the apostle Paul saw the Corinthians. God does not see your faithlessness. He doesn't see the moments you stumbled in sin, the times you quarreled and fought, the times you schemed and plotted, the times you went along with the cultural but ungodly norms of the day. God sees you as perfect in every way. He calls you righteous and beloved. He sees you as faithful. God calls you His beloved son or daughter. God sees you as holy and in fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ. No matter who you are and no matter what you've done or not done, you are **guiltless** in God's eyes. God sees you guiltless in Jesus Christ, not lacking any gift as you wait for Him.

5. That changes how we approach the future. Like the Corinthians, we are waiting for Jesus to reappear visibly on the Last Day as King of kings and Lord of lords. We can look forward to that day and eagerly wait for it because of who we are in Jesus Christ. On that day when Jesus publicly renders judgment, you won't have to fear that some secret sin will be revealed for everyone else to see. You won't have to be afraid that sins will be revealed for others to know about. Everyone will see you as perfect in every way, without sin. You will stand tall, because God will see you as guiltless. He will declare that you are perfect in every way, without sin, as He ushers you into your eternal, heavenly inheritance, along with the apostle Paul and the Corinthians. Amen