

BLESSINGS OF GOD'S GRACE **FOR BELIEVERS IN CHRIST JESUS**

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:4-9—⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanksgiving:

I always thank “my God”. “My so and so” speaks about *possession* [my car, my house...etc.] and *close relationship* [my teacher, context of being renowned, how do you feel...etc]. God is a God of all but for Paul God is very personal.

- i) Paul thanked God for Corinthian believers. We thank God for earthly things, but do we thank God for people?
- ii) Paul thanked God for Corinthian believers in spite of their weaknesses and problems. People don't have to be perfect and always good in order to thank God for them. We thank God for people, not because of their goodness, but because of His grace upon them.
- iii) Paul's prayer and thanksgiving is predominantly for spiritual blessings. Our prayers and thanksgiving are primarily for earthly things. We need to learn to value spiritual blessings above earthly things.
- iv) Every blessing we see in others is because of God's grace upon them. **The best way to appreciate people is by thanking God for His blessings upon them.**
- v) The best way to deal with problematic people is to thank God for them for His grace. This sets our attitude right in dealing with the problems in people. We cannot thank God for people when we are bitter against them.

Gordon Fee: “To delight in God for his working in the lives of others, even in the lives of those with whom we feel compelled to disagree, is sure evidence of our own awareness of being the recipients of God's mercies” (*First Corinthians, 37*)

Why did Paul thank God? Because of His grace given you [Corinthians] in Christ Jesus. God is gracious but His grace [special] is given only in Christ Jesus. There is no grace given apart from Christ Jesus.

Illustration: Think about people suffering from famine. King says to come to his palace and eat the food. King is generous and he invites us to his palace. If I don't go to his palace, I don't get food. Christ Jesus is the shelter of God's grace in which we find salvation and every spiritual blessing Apart from Christ, there is wrath and curse.

What Blessings God Us has Given by His Grace for Those in Christ Jesus?

1) BLESSED WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL GIFT.

Scripture 1 Cor. 1: ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in Him in all speech and all knowledge—
⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift...” [you are not deficient in spiritual gifts]

In Christ, God has richly, abundantly blessed the Corinthian believers with every spiritual gift with no lack.

- a) **With all kinds of speech (logôî):** *abilities of speech* (teaching, prophecy, tongues, interpretation of speaking in tongues, encouragement...etc)
- b) **With all kinds of knowledge (gnôsei):** *abilities of knowledge* (word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discernment of spirits...etc)

Application:

- i) We are sufficiently blessed in the Lord with every spiritual gift.

Note: “even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you.” Spiritual gifts are the confirmation of the gospel of Christ in us. This shows that every person who accepts the gospel of Christ and becomes born-again is blessed with spiritual gifts. And he/she must use these gifts with other gifted saints in the church of Christ.

- ii) These gifts are given to the entire church, not to an individual. We are complete *only* together.

David Prior: It is important immediately to point out that these statements are about the church of God at Corinth, not about individual believers. If we to know the fullness of God’s blessing, if we are to experience all the gifts of His grace which are ours in Christ, it has to be together in fellowship. No individual Christian can claim to be ‘not lacking in any spiritual gift’. [*The Message of 1 Corinthians*, pg. 23-24]

- iii) We need to work together, as a church, using these gifts, to build up the body of Christ [each other].

2) BLESSED WITH GOD’S PRESERVATION OF OUR SOULS TILL THE END.

Scripture 1 Cor. 1: ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What will God do to the Corinthian believers?

- He will keep them firm; He will keep them strong.
- He will establish and sustain them.
- He will preserve them from *sin* and *the evil one* and *under trials*.

Until when will God preserve the Corinthian believers? Till the end [till the end of the world and the second coming of our Lord Jesus]

Craig Blomberg: "It is also important to note that Paul speaks to the church collectively. In our day of so many "lone-ranger" Christians, it is important to recall that neither here nor elsewhere does Scripture envisage Christians apart from a local church. So God is also in the process of perfecting His people corporately as well as individually." [1 Corinthians, *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 41]

What will happen as a result? They will be guiltless/blameless on the day [coming] of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **"Guiltless" or "Blameless" [anegkletos]**—one cannot be accused of any wrongdoing in a court of law; no charge can be brought against him. This is not because of one's sinlessness or perfection, but because of God's forgiveness in Christ Jesus and sanctifying work in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.
- **J. I. Packer writes,** "The judge declares guilty sinners immune from punishment and righteous in His sight. The *great exchange* is no legal fiction, no arbitrary pretence, no mere word-game on God's part, but a costly achievement."

Note: "The day of the Lord" is a common phrase in the OT about the judgment of God. This is another evidence of Christ's deity, "The day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Application:

- Trust in God who saves us and sustains us till the end.**

Question: When we look at the worldly temptations [without] and sinful passions [within], we may think, "Can we make it to the end?" We cannot but God can.

- Just as we have looked to the Cross, Christ Jesus, to save us from sin, so also we need to daily look to God to preserve us till the end.
- Yes we have to live holy, do good works in Christ. But our hope is not in our works but only in the grace of God which preserves us till the end.

Illustration: There is fire in an apartment. A man ties a rope from one building to another building. This man is an expert in walking on the rope and he wants to save his son. He tells his son to hold him tightly as he walks on the rope from one building which caught the fire to another building of safety. Now, what will the son do? Would he hold his father recklessly [anyway my father is an expert] or steadfastly?

- ❖ **Philippians 1:6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
- **God is faithful (1 Cor. 1:9)**, (Grk. Pistos), God will do what He has promised.

Lead, kindly Light [John Henry Newman 1801-1890]

1) *Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom, lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home; lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.*

4) *Meantime, along the narrow rugged path, Thyself hast trod,
Lead, Savior, lead me home in childlike faith, home to my God.
To rest forever after earthly strife
In the calm light of everlasting life.*

ii) Eagerly await the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture: “as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Note: The word *apekdechomai* means “intensified expectation” of Christ’s return.

- “awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB)
- “as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed” (NIV)
- “eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (NKJV)

The Corinthian believers were eagerly waiting the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The coming of Christ is the forgotten expectation/waiting of modern-day believers.
- Let us not be immersed in material comforts or engrossed in earthly problems—for they both perish; let us look unto the coming of Christ to take us into His eternal kingdom, for this is our eternal home.
- We sanctify ourselves by our eager expectation of Christ’s coming.

3) BLESSED WITH THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

Scripture: ⁸ He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Why did God call the Corinthians? To *fellowship* with Christ Jesus, not just to *make petitions*.

- Fellowship (KOINŌNIA) it means ‘fellowship’ or ‘intimacy’.

Note: Call to salvation is call to fellowship with Jesus Christ.

- Christian life is not about rituals; it is about relationship with Christ Jesus.
- Christian life is not about activities; it is about intimacy with Christ Jesus.
- John Piper’s book “God is the Gospel.” [Giving of Himself for the enjoy of people]

Application:**i) Focus on our daily fellowship with Christ Jesus.**

* **What is life's purpose?** Created for God, to fellowship with Him and delight in Him. (Col. 1:16)

* **What is sin?** Separation from God.

* **What is salvation?** Reconciliation with God. Again having fellowship with Him and delight in Him.

Remember: The greatest gift of salvation—is not forgiveness of sin, is not heaven, is not eternal life, is not peace and joy. The greatest gift of salvation is Jesus Christ Himself. Let us fellowship with Him and enjoy Him daily.

ii) Focus on our eternal fellowship with Christ Jesus. [See Him face to face, greater intimacy]

God is faithful in doing this, i.e. He will keep you firm to the end so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He has called you into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- The reason God saves us till the end is so that we would have eternal fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- God saves us for Christ, for His eternal fellowship.

Paul's Focus on Christ's Eternal Fellowship:

- ❖ **Philippians 1:21-24**—²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴ But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

SUMMARY: Blessings of God's Grace in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1: ⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless 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.

- 1) WE ARE BLESSED WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL GIFT.**
- 2) WE ARE BLESSED WITH GOD'S PROTECTION OF OUR SOULS TILL THE END.**
- 3) WE ARE BLESSED WITH THE FELLOWSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.**

Remember—all these blessings are by God's grace. We don't earn them; we don't deserve them. We simply receive them as gifts because of God's grace manifested in Christ Jesus.

Name: _____

Date: _____

1) What do you learn from Paul's thanksgiving to God for Corinthians?

2) What is the first blessing for believers in Christ?

3) What three things we can apply from this first blessing?

4) What is the second blessing for believers in Christ?

5) What two things we can apply from this second blessing?

6) What is the third blessing for believers in Christ?

7) What two things we can apply from this third blessing?

8) How did God use this teaching to speak and encourage your heart?

9) Do you have any doubts or questions regarding the teaching?

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