

“The Priority Of Proclaiming The Gospel!”
1 Corinthians 9:15-18

Introduction:

1. As We Head Back To 1 Corinthians 9 This Morning:
 - We Come To A Remarkable Passage:
 - That Is Nestled Right In The Middle Of Paul’s Discussion On Christian Liberty & The Right Way To Use Your Rights As A Christian!
 - Here In 9:15-18:
 - Paul Describes The Priority Of Presenting & Proclaiming The Message Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
 - And In These Verses:
 - He Shows That Any & All Liberty You Have As A Christian, You Really Need To Use:
 - Not For Yourself!
 - But For Others – And Especially In Sharing The Gospel With Those Who Are Lost & In Need Of Jesus Christ As Their Savior From Sin!
2. **IE: A Missionary By The Name Of George Atley Understood This Priority!**
 - In The Late 1800's, George Atley Was Serving In Central Africa!
 - One Day - As He Was Traveling Through The Jungle:
 - He Was Confronted By A Band Of Hostile Tribesmen!
 - George Was Carrying A Fully-Loaded 10-Chamber Winchester Rifle!
 - And He Had A Choice!
 - He Could Choose To Shoot His Attackers:
 - But Run The Risk Of Hindering The Work Of Missions In That Area!
 - Or - He Could Choose Not To Defend Himself:
 - And Risk Being Killed!
 - When George Atley’s Body Was Later Found In A Stream:
 - It Was Clear What His Choice Was!
 - Nearby His Body Lay His Rifle – With All 10 Chambers Still Loaded!
 - He Made The Supreme Sacrifice!
 - He Was Motivated By His Burden For Lost Souls & His Unswerving Devotion To The Lord!
 - Like The Apostle Paul:
 - George Wanted Christ To Be Magnified In His Body, “Whether By Life Or By Death!”
3. Both Paul & George & Countless Other Christians:
 - Have Used Their Liberty – Not For Themselves – But For The Lord!
 - And Had As One Of Their Highest Priorities - Proclaiming The Gospel – The Good News – Of Jesus Christ To The Lost And Dying!
 - The Question I Want Us To Consider This Morning Is:
 - What Did It Take For Paul – To Have Proclaiming The Gospel As A Priority In His Life?
 - What Did It Take For George Atley & Others – To Have Proclaiming The Gospel As A Priority In Their Lives?
 - And What Will It Take For Us?
 - To Have Proclaiming The Gospel As A Priority In Our Lives?
 - What Will It Take?
4. This Morning - We Will Look At 5 Things That It Takes!
 - And 5 Things That We Need!
 - In Order To Make Sharing & Proclaiming The Gospel A Priority In Our Lives!

* Proclaiming The Gospel:

1. ***Has A Price!***
 - Are You Willing To Pay This Price? What Is The Price?
 - 9:15a - “But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me!”
 - After Spending Verse After Verse Describing The Freedom & Rights That Belong To Christians – He Tells The Corinthians That As Dear & Precious Those Freedoms & Rights Are – There Is Something Even More Dear & Precious! And That Is Sharing The Gospel With Others – Like He Did With Them When He First Came To Corinth!
 - And So - He Was Willing To Pay The Price To Proclaim The Gospel To Them & To Many Others!

- The Price Of Surrender!
 - Paul Willingly Surrendered His Liberty In Order To Share The Gospel With Them!
 - “But I Have Used None Of These Things!”
 - What Things?
 - The Rights Mentioned Earlier In Chapter 9!
 - The Right To Eat & To Drink (9:4)!
 - The Right To Marry (9:5)
 - The Right To Receive Support (9:6)!
 - He Surrendered Them All! Willingly!
 - In Order To Reach Them For The Lord!
- The Price Of Sacrifice!
 - Not Only Did He Surrender His Rights:
 - He Was Not Seeking Them Either!
 - After Describing The Biblical Right Of Support:
 - For Christian Servants – And In Great Detail!
 - See 9:7-14 - “That They Which Preach The Gospel Should Live Of The Gospel!”
 - He Says - “Neither Have I Written These Things, That It Should Be So Done Unto Me!”
 - He Sacrificed It All!
 - In Order To Proclaim The Gospel More Effectively!
- And If We Desire To Be Effective In Proclaiming The Gospel:
 - Remember That It Still Has A Price!
 - The Price Is Surrender & Sacrifice - Even Of Some Liberties & Rights That You Might Hold Dear!
 - Are You Willing To Pay This Price?
 - This Is What It Takes To Be A Priority!

* Proclaiming The Gospel:

2. ***Is A Pleasure!***

- Where Are You Finding Your Pleasure? What Is The Pleasure?
- 9:15b - “For it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void!”
 - Why Would Paul Surrender & Sacrifice So Much?
 - In Order To Bring The Gospel To Them & Others?
 - Because He Understood What Brings Greater Pleasure!
- There Is Pleasure In The Lord!
 - “For It Were Better For Me To Die, Than That Any Man Should Make ***My Glorying Void!***”
 - What Did Paul Glory In?
 - What Did He Take Pride In? What Brought Him Great Joy & Pleasure?
 - He Wasn’t Talking About His Rights & Liberties!
 - That Wasn’t What He Gloried / Took Pleasure In!
 - So - It Was Fine If Someone Made Those Void, Or Took Them Away From Him!
 - So - What Is Paul Talking About?
 - It Has To Be The Lord & His Gospel!
 - Galatians 6:14 - “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!”
 - Paul Found Greater Pleasure In The Lord:
 - Than In His Liberties!
 - And He Wanted Absolutely Nothing To Take Away From The Lord & His Gospel!
 - MH - “It Was A Singular Pleasure To Him To Preach The Gospel!”
 - And Because His Greatest Pleasure / Glory Was In The Lord, He Found That:
- There Is Pleasure Even In Loss!
 - “For It Were Better For Me To Die!”
 - He Would Rather Die – Than For Him To Hinder The Gospel!
 - So - It Was Even Fine If He Experienced:
 - Poverty / Perils / Even Pain!
 - And He Even Learned To Take Pleasure In Them, As Long As The Gospel Was Moving Forward!
 - 2 Corinthians 11:30 - “If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities!”
- And If We Desire To Be Effective In Proclaiming The Gospel:
 - We Need To Find Our Greatest Pleasure In The Lord / His Word / The Gospel – And Sharing Him With Others!

- 1 Corinthians 1:31 - "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord!"
- Is It Your "Singular Pleasure" To Proclaim The Gospel?
- This Is What It Takes To Be A Priority!

* Proclaiming The Gospel:

3 Is A Privilege!

- What Do You Consider To Be The Greatest Privilege In Your Life?
 - Is It In Knowing & Sharing The Gospel?
- 9:16 - "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"
 - One Of The Reasons That Proclaiming The Gospel Was A Priority For The Apostle Paul:
 - Was Because He Realized That:
 - It Was **His Privilege** To Proclaim It!
 - It Wasn't The **Lord's Privilege** To Have Him Proclaim It!
 - In Great Humility:
 - Paul Knew That The Honor Was All His!
 - Paul Knew That All He Had & All He Could Do Came From The Lord Anyways!
 - As Charles Spurgeon Once Said - "All His Gifts Were Borrowed! His Life, His Voice, His Talent Were All Gifts From God!"
 - Like Paul - We Need To See:
 - The Great Privilege / Honor **We** Have To Proclaim & Share The Gospel Message With Others!
- We Receive The Blessing!
 - "For Though (Or When) I Preach The Gospel, I Have Nothing To Glory Of!"
 - It Was Not About Paul – It Was About The Gospel!
 - It Is Not About Us – It Is About The Gospel!
 - And There Is No Greater Privilege & Blessing:
 - To Bring Life To The Dead!
 - To Bring Light To The Blind!
 - To Bring Hope To The Hopeless!
 - Romans 10:15 - "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"
- We Have A Burden!
 - Because It Is Such An Honor & Privilege To Bring The Gospel To Others – We Need To Have A Burden Like Paul!
 - "For Necessity Is Laid Upon Me!"
 - The Honor That God Gave Him Overwhelmed Him - To The Point That To He Could Do Nothing Else But Proclaim / Share The Gospel!
 - It Became His Duty & Responsibility!
 - In Fact - If He Didn't - He Writes:
 - "Yea, Woe Is Unto Me, If I Preach Not The Gospel!"
 - His Burden To Share The Gospel Was So Great:
 - If He Didn't:
 - He Would Experience Tremendous Guilt!
 - He Would Experience Tremendous Grief!
 - He Would Experience Tremendous Gloom
 - "Woe Is Me!"
- And If We Desire To Be Effective In Proclaiming The Gospel:
 - We Need This Same Kind Of Burden!
 - We Need To See That Sharing The Gospel Is One Of The Greatest Privileges / Blessings / Honors That We Have As Christians!
 - Where Is Your Burden?
 - This Is What It Takes To Be A Priority!

* Proclaiming The Gospel:

4. Needs A Passion!

- When You Have A Burden – There Needs To Be A Passion To Go With It!
 - Do You Have Passion In Sharing The Gospel With Others?
 - What Kind Of Passion Do We Need?

- 9:17 - “For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me!”
 - We Need A Passion That Will Keep Us Proclaiming The Gospel No Matter How We Feel!
 - In 9:17 - We Find 2 Different Ways Of Ministry:
 - But When The Burden Is Great / And The Passion Is Strong / You Will Continue To Keep Proclaiming The Gospel A Priority In Your Life!
- When You Share The Gospel Willingly: (First Way)
 - You Need A Passion! It Is A Delight!
 - Because There Is A Reward When You Do!
 - “For If I Do This Thing Willingly, I Have A Reward!”
 - There Are Times When Our Burden To Share God’s Work In Our Lives Is Deep & Strong!
 - And We Feel Like Witnessing / Proclaiming The Gospel! And We Do So: “Willingly!”
 - Out Of Nothing But Love & Gratitude For What God Has Done For Us!
 - Keep This Passion!
 - There Is A Reward For This Kind Of Service!
 - Not That We Deserve One - But God, In His Love & Grace, Offers One!
 - But What About Those Times When We Don’t Feel Like Witnessing / Proclaiming The Gospel?
- When You Share The Gospel Unwillingly: (Second Way)
 - You Still Need A Passion! It Is Your Duty!
 - Because It Is A Responsibility You Have!
 - “But If Against My Will, A Dispensation (Or Stewardship) Of The Gospel Is Committed Unto Me!”
 - For Those Times When You Don’t Feel Like:
 - Witnessing & Proclaiming The Gospel:
 - Remember What God Has Given / Entrusted To You!
 - Every Christian Has Been Given A Dispensation:
 - Or Stewardship!
 - A Steward Is Someone Who Has Been Given Authority / Responsibility To Manage The Affairs Of Someone Else!
 - And You Have Been Given The Responsibility:
 - To Share The Gospel With Others!
 - Whether You Feel Like It Or Not!
 - There Is No Excuse Or Reason To Avoid It!
 - **IE:** What Would You Do If You Stopped Enjoying The Work You Do? Give Up? Quit? Some Might, But How Many Times Do You Work Through It?
 - When It Seems Hard To Serve / Share Willingly:
 - Then Remember The Great Responsibility God Has Given You To Share His Gospel With Others!
 - But - I’m Pretty Certain That A Christian Who Is Witnessing Even When They Don’t Feel Like It:
 - Won’t Feel That Way For Long!
 - Because The More You Share The Gospel & See The Gospel At Work - The More Willing Your Service Will Become!
- And If We Desire To Be Effective In Proclaiming The Gospel:
 - We Need A Passion!
 - And Especially A Willing Passion!
 - A Colossians 3:23 Kind Of Passion - “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men!”
 - MH - “It Is Willing Service Only That Is Capable Of Reward From God! It Is Not The Bare Doing Of The Duty, But The Doing Of It Heartily (That Is Willingly And Cheerfully) That God Has Promised To Reward!”
 - This Passion Is What It Takes To Be A Priority!

* Proclaiming The Gospel:

5. *Has A Purpose!*

- What Is The Purpose For Sharing The Gospel With Others?
 - Is It Just For The Reward Mentioned In 9:17?
 - Paul Gives Us A Surprising Answer!
 - In 9:17 - Paul Says - “I Have A Reward!”
 - In 9:18 - Paul Asks - “What Is My Reward Then?”

- In The Rest Of 9:18 - Paul Shows That His Reward Is The Result Of Sharing The Gospel!
- 9:18 - "What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel!"
 - Even The Reward Paul Received For Proclaiming The Gospel Wasn't About Him – It Was About Others!
 - And This Is Why He Did It!
 - This Was His Purpose!
- To Present The Gospel Freely!
 - This Was Paul's Purpose As Well As Paul's Reward!
 - "Verily That (So That), When (While) I Preach (I Am Proclaiming) The Gospel, I May Make The Gospel Of Christ Without Charge!"
 - Geneva Bible - "I Make The Gospel Of Christ – Free!"
 - With No Strings Attached!
 - Freely He Had Received!
 - Freely He Was Going To Give!
 - The Free Gift Of Eternal Life To All Those Who Believe In The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - There Was Nothing In It For Himself!
 - Except Perhaps The Blessing & Joy Of Sharing The Truth That Set Him Free!
 - And Seeing Others Receive It & Being Set Free Themselves!
 - That Is Our Purpose! And That Is Our Reward As Well!
- To Promote The Gospel Forward!
 - "That I Abuse Not My Power In The Gospel!"
 - Paul Wanted Nothing In His Life To Hinder The Message Of The Gospel!
 - Not Even His Own "Power" Or Rights & Liberties As A Christian / As A Preacher / As An Apostle!
 - Even His Right To: "Live Of The Gospel!" (9:14)
 - And Receive His Support & Livelihood From Those Who Benefitted From His Ministry!
 - He Wanted Nothing To Get In The Way Of The Gospel!
- And If We Desire To Be Effective In Proclaiming The Gospel:
 - This Must Be Our Purpose Too!
 - To Present The Gospel Freely!
 - And To Promote The Gospel Forward!
 - By Not Hindering Its Message & Its Movement!
 - When This Is Our Purpose:
 - Proclaiming The Gospel Will Be A Priority!

Conclusion:

1. Is Proclaiming The Gospel A Priority?
 - For You? For Our Church?
 - It Needs To Become More Of A Priority!
 - Even More Than Claiming Our Christian Liberties & Rights!
2. If Proclaiming The Gospel Is To Be A Priority:
 - What Is It Going To Take?
 - It Has A Price!
 - Are You Willing To Pay The Price?
 - Of Surrender & Sacrifice?
 - It Is A Pleasure!
 - Where Do You Find Your Greatest Pleasure?
 - Is It In The Lord & His Gospel?
 - It Is A Privilege!
 - What Is Your Greatest Privilege In Life?
 - Do You Have A Burden For Sharing The Lord With Others?
 - It Needs A Passion!
 - Do You Have A Passion For Souls?
 - Wanting To Tell Others Willingly / Heartily / Cheerfully?
 - It Has A Purpose!
 - Freely You Have Received!
 - Now - Will You Freely Give?
3. This Is What It Is Going To Take!

- If You Are Going To Make & Keep Proclaiming The Gospel A Priority In Your Life!

Grace Baptist Church

Stephen Elmer, Pastor

4245 North 200 West

Greenfield, Indiana 46140

317-326-2362

www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace

www.growatgrace.org

pastor-elmer@hotmail.com