

What God's Grace Brings, Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 1:8-9 - February 2nd, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part two of a series I've titled, "What God's Grace Brings."
- Beginning in verse three, the Apostle Paul continues his greeting by focusing on God's grace, and what comes as a result of God's grace.
- So as to hit the ground running, as it were, I'd like to, by way of introduction, quickly revisit the first three, and we'll begin with verse three.

1. Peace (Verse 3)

-v3 Paul greets them according to Greek customs of the day saying, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Thankfulness (Verse 4)

-v4 Paul goes on to express to them how thankful he always is to God for them because of the grace in Christ Jesus that He's given to them.

3. Spiritual Gifts (Verses 5-7)

- Paul commends them in Christ, such that they were enriched and not lacking in any spiritual gifts, which came by way of the grace of God.

4. Strength (Verses 8-9)

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

- v8 Paul turns a corner and tells them God will keep them strong to the end so that they'll be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- v9 He says the reason why God strengthens them is that He, who called them into fellowship with His son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.
- In other words, their strength to make it to the end didn't come from anything they did themselves rather; it's because of God's faithfulness.

- Perhaps better said, any strength to hold fast and remain steadfast to the very end isn't because of who we are, it's because of who God is.
- More specifically, God is faithful when we're faithless; He's our strength when we're weak. His faithfulness to strengthen us is all of grace.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that if our strength is in and of ourselves, then God will withhold the strength that comes from Himself.

Philippians 4:13 NKJV I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 NKJV (9) And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- Here's the bottom line, our strength can only come by grace vis-à-vis our relationship and fellowship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- Lest you think I'm overstating the obvious, let me hasten to say that Paul refers to Jesus in every verse eleven times, in the first ten verses.
- I suppose you could say absent a grace-based relationship with Jesus Christ, we have no hope of ever being the recipients of His strength.

- Furthermore, absent His strength, we also have no hope of making it to the end so we'll be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- You'll forgive my formula, but here's how I figure it out; God's grace multiplied by His faithfulness equals my strength plus blamelessness.
- However, please do not make blamelessness synonymous with sinlessness. To do so would be to err greatly and even stumble profoundly.

- Here's how I get there, to be blameless is to be above reproach in how we live our lives, whereas to be sinless is to be perfect in our lives.
- Blamelessness means without guilt whereas sinlessness means without fault, such that blamelessness is horizontal; sinlessness is vertical.
- Let me explain, none of us can ever be sinless vertically before God however all of us should always be blameless horizontally before man.

- With this understanding we can begin to embrace God's grace and as such, be the recipients of His strength, because of His faithfulness.
- I'm of the belief that I speak on behalf of everyone here in this amazing church when I say, how are we to survive without God's strength.
- Especially in these, the very last hour of human history as the world continues to wax more and more evil seemingly by the day and hour.

- At the risk of being perceived as sensationalizing this, I don't know how it can be possible for casual Christians to stand strong to the end.
- The reason I say that is because the evil and wicked world we are living in today is no longer forgiving of this brand of carnal Christianity.
- To be quite blunt, what I call cotton candy Christianity just isn't going to cut it anymore, this because, it's lukewarm Laodicea Christianity.

- These lukewarm Christians thought they were rich and lacked nothing, but didn't realize they were wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.
- They thought they were strong, but didn't realize they were weak, which is why the Lord rebukes them and tells them they need to repent.
- If they didn't repent and open up the door so that the Lord to come back in and sup with them, then they would not be overcomers either.

- Conversely, the Philadelphia Christians overcame because they knew they were weak, yet they kept His Word and didn't deny His name.

Revelation 3:7-13 NIV "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. (8) I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. (9) I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. (10) Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. (11) I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. (12) Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. (13) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- I'll bring it in for a close by simply asking one question, and please know, I ask it of myself as well, "what is the brand of my Christianity?"