

What God's Grace Brings, Part 1 - 1 Corinthians 1:3-7 - January 26th, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part one 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.
- I suppose you could say from verse three on through the rest of the chapter Paul is highlighting all that can be ours by way of God's grace.

1. Peace (Verse 3)

(3) Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 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.
- Namely, he greets them with grace to you then, as was the Hebrew custom Paul adds peace to you and in so doing couples them together.
- It's important to note that he says grace and peace and not peace and grace. Here's why, the grace of God must precede peace with God.

- Perhaps better said, we cannot have the peace of God or with God absent the grace that's from God. His peace comes vis-à-vis His grace.
- Pastor Chuck Smith used to call grace and peace the Siamese Twins of the New Testament, in that they are always together in that order.
- The reason they're in that order is we can't truly know the peace of God until we've experienced and been the recipient of the grace of God.

As one commentator so aptly put it, "Grace is always first, peace always second. This is due to the fact that grace is the source of peace. Without grace there is and can be no peace, but when grace is ours, peace must of necessity follow."

2. Thankfulness (Verse 4)

(4) I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.

- 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.
- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that Paul isn't actually thanking them rather, he's thanking God for them.
- The reason I point this out is that it seems to fit with Paul's sanctified shaming of them, in his address to them, in the previous two verses.

- Let me explain, Paul addresses them as the church of God in Corinth in spite of how Corinth's carnal culture had influenced God's church.
- Then if that weren't bad enough, in what could be perceived as a sanctified sarcasm, he goes on to call them saints set apart as being holy.
- I think you'd agree that the carnal Corinthian church was anything but holy and godly, and those in this church certainly wouldn't be saints.

- So why is it then that Paul would address them in these ways, and always even be thankful to God for them, knowing of their carnal ways?
- The only answer is a one-word answer, "grace." More specifically, God's grace such that it's all of grace, which is what brings thankfulness.
- Maybe this is why Paul is thanking God and not them. It's almost as if Paul is saying you Corinthian's make me so thankful for God's grace.

I like how one commentator said it, "Paul couldn't say, 'I thank my God for your righteousness,' because the Corinthians weren't very righteous. He couldn't say, 'I thank my God for your faith,' because they weren't very faithful. Paul could, however, say, 'I thank my God for His grace given on your behalf' - because they needed it! Although he realized the seriousness of the situation, I, nonetheless, picture Paul with a smile on his face as he wrote, 'When I think about you, I thank God for grace.'"

- Be that as it may, one has to wonder whether or not the Corinthians will be very open to receive correction and rebuke from Paul after this.
- One would think they'd be so offended by just these first few verses here at the beginning of Paul's letter they'd be unwilling to listen to him.
- However, they did listen and heed this by virtue of what we'll see next in verses 5-6, where Paul both acknowledges and commends them.

Charles Spurgeon of this says, "It is always well to acknowledge and commend all the good which we see in our brethren, even though we may discern much to mourn over. They will all the more readily receive our reproofs, if we are just enough to admit and admire their excellencies."

3. Spiritual Gifts (Verses 5-7)

(5) For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge— (6) because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. (7) Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

- v5 Paul commends them in Christ, such that He had enriched them in every way, specifically in all their speaking, and in all their knowledge.
- v6 He goes on to explain why, saying that it's because his testimony about Jesus Christ had been confirmed in them as believers in Corinth.
- v7 He then says this is the reason why they are not lacking in any spiritual gift as they eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

- From what Paul says to them here, it would certainly appear that there was something the Christians in Corinth could be commended for.
- Actually, I found a total of five, the first of which is that they were enriched in every way, and secondly, speaking was one of these ways.
- Then third, they had also been enriched in all their knowledge, and fourth, they were not in any way lacking in any of the spiritual gifts.

- It's this fifth one that caught my attention, and maybe yours as well, but it seems the church in Corinth was eagerly awaiting Christ's return.
- As you might imagine we in this church have this in common with this Corinthian church and as such, we would do well to take notice of it.
- Here's why, all five of these are spiritual gifts, which come under the banner of God's grace. In other words, we can't attain to or earn them.

- I very much doubt this truth can be overstated, and the reason I say that is because we are all prone to think giftedness equals spirituality.
- Often times we wrongly think that just because someone is gifted spiritually, then so too must they be superior spiritually. This is not true.
- The truth of the matter is, being gifted spiritually has nothing to do with how good we are it has everything to do with how gracious God is.

Charles Spurgeon - "Should it not show us that gifts are nothing, unless they are laid on the altar of God; that it is nothing to have the gift of oratory; that it is nothing to have the power of eloquence; that it is nothing to have learning; that it is nothing to have influence, unless they all be dedicated to God, and consecrated to his service?"