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East Columbus Bulletin

The assurance & motivation of true fellowship (1 Corinthians 1:4-9)

"I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

These verses are from the opening words of Paul in his letter to the church at Corinth. Can you imagine hearing this read? You are a member of a church torn apart by division; destroyed by immaturity; confused by questions and questionable behavior, even with some who deny the resurrection of Christ – and you hear these words written by Paul: "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus?"

Obviously Paul is not thanking God for their misbehavior. He is expressing his reverent gratitude to God "for the grace of God," which was given to these people "by Christ Jesus." Though flawed and fallen Paul didn't just mark them off. He was still thankful they had heard the gospel and had responded. It was the grace of

Times of Services

Sunday

9:00 a.m. Worship
10:00 a.m. Bible Study
11:00 a. m. Worship

Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Other Study and Worship Opportunities

- 2nd Sunday 2:00 p.m. Trinity Care Home Worship Service
- 2nd Saturday 6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study –Ranch House Restaurant
- 3rd Sunday Neighborhood Bible Study 6:00 p.m. (TBA)
- Young Bible Scholars monthly meeting (TBA)
- 5th Sunday Singing (TBA)

News and Notes

- **Home Bound Members:** Mike Butler, Eula Mae Harliss
- **Limited Health:** Joyce Monasco, Willena Woods, Wade and Doris McCrary .
- **Others to remember:** Marion Butler, Steve Coburn, April Green, Marilyn Lavender, Jim Ratcliff, David Allen Williams, Doris Young (Lynette Coburn's mother), & Vickie Stevens (wife of Tim Stevens).
- **Prayer Requests:** Kyle Green's surgery is being scheduled before the end of the year. Leo Briggs, newborn grandson of Dan and Carol Briggs, had successful surgery in October. Virginia Logan had successful arterial surgery and also suffered a fall. Ed Williams' mother, Sara, suffered a fall and broke 5 ribs on Nov. 3rd. Jim King, brother-in-law to Vallie Gallop, is now undergoing cancer chemo treatments. Leon Speck, father-in-law to Teresa Couchman, is very ill. Mike McCrary, son of Wade and Doris McCrary, will have open heart surgery on November 6.

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God in Christ that rescued them the first time. By that same grace they could be re-rescued.

This speaks directly to Paul's character. He would need to write to them strongly about their errors, even shame them for their sin. Nevertheless, he was constantly thankful to God for people who had obeyed the gospel. They were God's people, not his own (1 Corinthians 4:14-21).

Paul's attitude toward these people presents a model for us to follow. Even when brethren are torn apart and acting like children, we should be thankful to God for their initial reception of His grace and prayerful there will be a fresh response to Deity. All our attitudes and deeds toward them should serve that high purpose.

Consider their advantage (imparted by God's grace): "that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge." The problem in Corinth was not any level of excusable ignorance. It wasn't that they didn't know how to act right. They had been taught and "enriched in everything," and this enrichment was from God—"By Him"—and it was adequate "in all utterance and all knowledge." The advantage of knowledge they enjoyed was one expression of God's grace they now needed to return to. And "even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you" means the instruction they had received was confirmed as to origin (see 2 Corinthians 12:12).

So the people in this troubled church had responded to God's grace, being advantaged participants in knowledge and testimony from heaven, confirmed as having that origin. "So that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." This reaffirms the adequacy of their instruction. Spirit-inspired teachers guided them into all the truth, putting them in position to entertain the full measure of hope: "eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." They could expect such adequacy of spiritual resources to continue: "who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." They suffered no inferiority and would experience no lack as long as they lived.

"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

One of the reassuring truths to keep in mind when face to face with any human unfaithfulness is the absolute faithfulness of God. This simply means you can count on Him to carry out every promise, to provide every resource, to help in every way that is in keeping with His will. Christians live "in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began" (Titus 1:2). In this fact there is a combination of reassurance and motivation, to be what we ought to be – individually and collectively (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

The members of the church at Corinth had been "called into the fellowship of" Jesus Christ. The work of gospel preaching should be thought of in terms of being called. When you hear the gospel of Christ, you are being called out of sin into fellowship with God (2 Thessalonians 2:14). When you are baptized, you are accepting that call, thus entering "into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ." The old man of sin was living in relation to the world and the devil. The new man (washed by the blood of Christ) is living in relation to Deity and others who share that fellowship. This also affords reassurance and motivation. As faithful Christians, our reality is "the fellowship of His Son." It is our present possession "which will be more fully enjoyed in heaven" (Mike Willis). That is both comforting and motivating.

Writing to a church torn up by men, the apostle Paul supplies assurance and motivation still needed today. "God is faithful," and by Him (through preaching, 2 Thessalonians 2:14) we are "called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Everything about that should influence everything about us, to a refreshed perspective of what we have and what we can keep.

Resources:

Truth Commentaries, 1 Corinthians, Mike Willis

The First Epistle To The Corinthians, Gordon Fee

Warren E. Berkley, Monday Messages, 3-27-06