Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Benefits of Being a Saint
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:4-9
Code: 1811

First Corinthians Chapter 1 is our study for this morning. We're going to be continuing what we began last time On the Benefits of Being a Saint. As I mentioned to you last time the word saint has come far from its original New Testament meaning. And today when you think of the word saint you think of some angular figure crystallized in stained glass or you think of some person long dead who has been officially declared as an ecclesiastical relic. Ambrose Beer said one of the best definitions of a saint I ever read, he said, "A dead saint is a dead sinner revised and edited."

Unfortunately none of those is the biblical perspective on what a saint is. In all of Paul's letters Paul uses the word saint to refer to Christians, not dead ones but living ones, not a few but all. In fact, I think, it must have been his very favorite word for Christians because he used it about 60 times. We who know the Lord Jesus Christ are saints.

Just to review that go back to verse 1 of I Corinthians where we began and studied in detail last week. "Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God and brother Sosthenes, unto the church of God, which is at Corinth. To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, and they are not the only saints but all also that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord both theirs and ours." And so here he says you are saints along with everybody else that calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. So a saint is somebody who calls upon the name of Christ, a Christian, anyone who is saved, who knows the Lord Jesus Christ is a saint.

And we said last time that he starts out by saying, "You are sanctified," it's the same root word as saint, "You are called saints in order to make them aware of the fact that the foundation for his exhortation to their behavior is in the fact that they are saints. In other word you have been made holy, you are called holy; therefore, I am writing you this letter to tell you to act holy. That's really the purpose of his first nine verses where he talks about being a saint.

We talked about that in some detail last time. That the basis or foundation for all behavior in Christian life is our own identity. The fact of who we are is the premise upon which the word of God bases the fact of what we ought to act like. You might put it this way: the indicative, you are, is the basis for the imperative, you ought. And that occurs all through the New Testament. In fact, it tells us we are holy because of what Christ is; therefore, we ought to be like him. We ought to act like him. Our lives ought to conform to him. I think of an illustration, you remember in John 8, the woman taken in adultery and Jesus said to her the words, "Go and sin no more." And I think that's an interesting thing

to look at because he was commanding a woman who was a prostitute, who lived a vile life, who had been caught in the very act of adultery to go and stop doing it.

Now to ask her to do that would have to assume there had been some kind of change in her process of thinking or in whatever dominated her behavior. What had happened, of course, to the woman I believe was she had been saved. She had been granted a new life and Jesus said, before he said, "Go and sin no more," he said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." In other words from now on I hold no sin against you. You are holy in my eyes; therefore, act like it. See that's the same point that's made throughout the New Testament. As a Christian you are not condemned, you are holy. Your sin is forgiven, your sin is set aside; therefore, you ought to act in consistency with your own nature.

In Colossians, for example, Paul says in Chapter 3, verse 5, he says, "Kill; therefore, your members, which are on the earth. In other words your orientation to the world, your physical body and its physical desires and mental desires are to be killed. Why? For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. Since you have come into a unique relationship with Christ and God those things have no part in your life. And that again is the same impetus .

In Colossians Chapter 3 again and verse 9, I think, it interesting to see what the apostle says. He says, "Lie not one to another." Quit lying. Now what's the basis of that? "Because you have put off the old man with his deeds, and you've put on a new man, renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him." The reason you are not to lie is because it's inconsistent with who you are. You have put off the old man and you put on what, the new man and the new man doesn't do that. The new man is conformed to the image of Christ. You are holy in Christ before God so act like Christ. And you can govern your life that way. Since I'm in Christ, I would never do anything that He would not do. I don't lie because He won't. I don't steal because He doesn't. I don't commit adultery because that's totally foreign to the life of Christ. All of the things in my life are to conform to His life because I am in Him.

And that is the foundation then of behavior in the Christian life. And so Paul begins the first chapter of Corinthians verses 1 to 9 by telling them who they are. And he lays down that foundation of here's who you are than from 1:10 clear through the end of chapter 16 he says here's how to act commensurate with who you are.

Now Paul then in verses 1 to 3 just simply calls them saints. Now from 4 to 9 he expands what that means. What does it mean to be a saint? What is involved in being a saint? What is it to be a saint in terms of what do I receive for it? What are the benefits of being a saint? Now if you've come this morning looking to find out the benefits of Christianity, this is a sales pitch. This is a divine presentation of why you should be a Christian as opposed to not being one. So if that's in your mind to consider then these are the things you ought to think about. These are reasons to be a saint and

they are the results of being a saint that become the reasons to be one. They come in verse 4 t 9.

Now there are three dimensions in this and you have an outline there to follow and you can look at it as we go. Simple things, but they come in three dimensions and in three tenses: past, present and future. The benefits of being a saint cover all of the periods of a life: the past, the present and the future. In the past there's grace, for the present there are gifts and the future there are guarantees. What it boils down to is your past is forgiven, your present is taken care of and your future is guaranteed. You can't beat that. That's the greatest kind of policy there is. Takes care of all the past mistakes, gives you all you need to live in the present, and secures absolutely your future. That's what Christianity offers. If you want all that, all that's necessary is for you to be a saint. You say right. How do I be a saint? Not becoming canonized, but by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what we're going to talk about.

All right first of all let's look at the grace concept, which deals with the past. Verse 4 and verse 6: "I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God, which is given you in," the preposition in the Greek is en e-n, in Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God." The first benefit of being a saint is grace. And these are Aorist verbs. It was given you in Christ Jesus. The idea is some time in the past at a very point in time, a moment of time, that's what an Aorist verb is, it happens in a moment of time, you were given grace. When did it happen? Verse 6, "when the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you." And that again is an Eros verb, something in the past that happened in a moment of time.

So from the past standpoint, at a moment in time, you received grace, and it was at the moment the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So he says the first benefit of being a saint, just think of it people, he says to the Corinthians, just think of what you have had. I thank God that you had received the grace of God. At a moment in time in the past it became yours. And he refers, of course, to their salvation, the time when they received God's saving grace. This is the first, and most obvious benefit, of being a saint. It's what happened to you when you became a saint you were saved, you received salvation. It was commensurate with you being a saint. And he says, "I thank God for this."

Now notice the term in Christ Jesus. This is familiar to Paul and all blessing and all grace comes when you and I are united in Christ. And again this is unique with Christianity. This isn't believing the teaching of Christ. Many do that. It isn't believing about Christ. It is being in Christ. And that is an appropriation of committing myself to Him in total unity by faith. And once I am in Christ then the grace of God is mine.

Now what is this grace? I want to look at it for a minute because it's so basic to Christianity. I mean we talk about grace all the time. That's the name of this place, Grace. That's a very important thing for us to understand. Now the word grace is *chari*sa very familiar word and it was a greeting people used back in verse three. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. That

was the familiar Christian greeting. It's a lot better than hi how are you? And we ought to use it. But here we find the word grace and it means favor, but it doesn't mean favor like we think of. We use the word for party favors, and I do so and so a favor, and it really is kind of watered down. But the word literally means undeserved, unrecompensed kindness. It means mercy. It is not some little ingratiated act. It is undeserved unrecompensed kindness. It is super magnanimous for it is undeserved. And it cannot be paid back. Grace always in Scripture has to be a free gift, unearned.

Now let me expand this for a minute. In order for us to understand grace and saving grace we need to understand some things. And I think maybe the best way to approach this would be to see three things that can't coexist with grace. And this will help you to define grace. First of all any recognition of human guilt cannot coexist with grace. Now mark it. Grace and guilt cannot go together. Grace must provide for the alleviation of guilt. God cannot say I am gracious and I give you salvation. One false move and I'll take it away. No, that's not very gracious; that's just laying a law on us, isn't it? Grace cannot coexist with human guilt. Grace must provide for the elimination of guilt. It has to. Grace is not grace if God says I will be gracious unto you if you don't sin. That's no grace.

If grace is withheld from the sinner in the least degree because of his sin then it isn't grace. Grace is undeserved unmerited forgiveness. Grace must allow for sin. Grace can only operate if there's sin there. If there's no sin there's no grace, right? There's got to be something to forgive or grace isn't grace. And so what happened? God knowing that the penalty for sin had to be paid sent Christ to the cross. And in Romans 3:25-26it says, "Christ died to take care of sin so that God might still be gracious." God had to do with his justice. God had to deal with it. God is a God of justice. He can't just say, "Well forget the sin who cares." No, no, because of justice he sin had to be taken care of. Once sin was taken care of in Christ God could be gracious to sinners because the price had been paid.

So the cross pays the penalty for all sin? It fees God from the obligation of His justice and He says I will be gracious to you and He acts in grace. Now watch, once God acts in grace, grace will never be able to recognize guilt. So once you are forgiven and have received saving grace how much guilt do you have? None because grace is that by definition, which over rules guilt.

I talked to a Christian this week who is so absolutely distraught with guilt that he cannot even cope with life. He cannot accept forgiveness, he continues to hold himself guilty for things, he is overwhelmed by his sin and will not recognize the freedom he has in being forgiven of God, he does not understand what grace is. He may understand it theologically; he doesn't understand it practically. Grace means there will be no guilt. I forgive you. I will be gracious to you. I know you don't deserve it. I know you can't earn it and I know you can't pay it back. That's okay grace is grace and grace means you can't pay it back and aren't expected to.

How much then of a sinner's sins are forgiven? All of them! Listen no wonder he thanks God for grace. Are you thankful for that kind of grace? Are you thankful for the grace that's forgiven you all

your sin and holds you absolutely guiltless before God for the rest of your eternity? You say that's terrific. And I say to you if you're not a Christian isn't it somewhat inviting for God to say to you, "I will cleanse all your sin before My eyes, I will forgive all of it, I will set aside all your guilt, I will hold you blameless and holy forever." Isn't that kind of nice offer?

Well that's the first thing. Grace can't coexist with human guilt so mark it. When God saved you He took away all guilt and all sin, forgiven all your trespasses for His name's sake, all of them. Grace reigns in your life. Secondly grace can't coexist with human obligation. Grace is not something you have to pay back. Grace is not to be remunerated. You're not to say, "Well God was gracious to me and He saved me and now I've got to pay Him back." You can't do that. It was a gift. Can you pay a gift back? No. It's not a gift if you do.

In Romans Chapter 4 it says, "Whatever is earned is not grace." Grace cannot be reckoned of debt. In other words when the week is done or two weeks and the guy comes around with a paycheck you don't say, "Oh my boss, my boss, how gracious you are. Oh this extended love is beyond me. I thank you, I thank you." No. No if the check doesn't come you go and say, "Where's the money?" Why? It isn't grace. You earned that money, you want that money. Whatever is reckoned of reward, whatever is earned is not grace. So if you could do one single thing to earn saving grace it isn't saving grace. And believe me, friend, it is saving grace so you can't earn it. You can't pay God back so don't think that because of what God has done for you, you've got to pay Him off. There's no way you can do that. Besides that'd be like throwing pennies at J. Paul Getty. God is so far richer than you can even dream and His holiness is so absolute that you're little pittance of offering Him your works and your recompense wouldn't even be minimal. You see there is no way that you can find grace coexisting with human recompense or with human obligation. And one of the wonderful things about salvation is God just gives it to you and you don't have to pay Him back. Notice this, you don't have to pay Him back. I'll tell you one thing, you will want to show Him your love, won't you? But it's one thing to want to, it's one thing to love Him, it's one thing to serve Him out of a heart of gratitude, it's something else to think that you've got to pay Him back because you owe Him something. You owe God nothing. God gave you salvation as grace. In a deep sense we own Him affection just naturally and I think that comes to the genuine Christian. But we cannot pay God back for His gift.

Thirdly, grace cannot coexist with any recognition of human merit. That is it does not come to the best people. You can't say, "Well it's obvious who the good people are. Look at us who are saved." You're no better than anybody else, neither am I, and that's wonderful consolation. It wasn't my goodness that got me here. Aren't you glad of that? Some of you aren't too sure about that. Grace cannot exist with human merit. In other words God didn't save the good ones. You know who got that in their heads and had it there for centuries? Israel. Yeah, they thought that God chose them because they were better than everybody else. And in Romans Chapter 3 Paul really nailed that one down. Are we better than they? No. God renders all of you guilty. "He stops the mouths of the whole world," Romans 3 says. No you're not better than anybody else. Paul said, "I am the chief of what, sinners."

You did not deserve salvation. Grace doesn't go with that. Grace is the free loving forgiveness of God independent of your deserving it. All of us are vile sinners. "There is none righteous," Romans 3:10 says, "no, not one. There is none that understand it, there is none that seeks after God. The poison of asps are under their lips. They are full of bitterness and cursing." All men are the same, sinners before God. No, grace cannot coexist with human merit. You did not earn your salvation. It was only God's grace.

Now do you see how giving you those three concepts help you to understand what grace is? Just think of it people, just think of it. When you were saved grace included the fact that no sin or guilt would ever be held against you the rest of your eternity. When you were saved you were given the freedom to know that you'd never have to pay that back. That's His gift. There are no have to's. Thirdly, know this: that He saved you even when you did not what deserve it. That's grace. That's the sum of it. I don't know about you but that helps me define it. And I'll tell you, I can say with Paul, I thank my God for that kind of grace.

You know I've been looking at the television, like you, and I've been watching the masses of humanity running and Viet Nam and Cambodia and I say to myself, "God why me? Why me? Why did you do this for me?" Have you said that? Why such grace? And grace beyond saving grace, the grace of Christian fellowship, the grace of a blessed church, the grace of a precious wife and beautiful children, grace beyond grace beyond grace, and I say to myself, "Well did I deserve it?" It takes me about one half of a second to answer that, no. Can I pay Him back for it? No. Beyond that He never holds a sin against me.

That's the first benefit of salvation, people. Let me help you to understand a little further why God is gracious to us. There are three reasons for which God did this. Three motives. God saved us by His grace in order to produce good works. You know why? Because god knew that good works could touch the lives of the people in this room. Saving grace is to produce good works. Titus tells us this in 2:14. "God, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us in order to redeem us from all iniquity, watch, purify a people of His own zealous of good works." All right He wanted us to be zealous of good works. Why? Verse 8 of three. "This is a faithful saying: These things I will that thou affirm constantly that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works for these things are good and profitable unto man." You know God saved us to do good works because good works benefit men. I mean it's good to do good in the world even from the standpoint of an unbeliever it's good to do good. I mean even when we do good we bless them. God want us to touch all the people in the world with our goodness and so first of all saving grace was to produce good works in men that would touch the world.

Secondly, saving grace is to bring blessing to Christians. I can't help but think of Ephesians 2, where he says he has quickened us together with Christ, raised us and made us sit together in heavenly places. Then in verse 7, "In order that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His

grace and His kindness toward us." God saved us, not only to do good works for the world's sake, but He saved us to pour blessing on us for our sake, to pour out His riches on us forever.

And lastly, and most importantly, saving grace is to glorify God. God saved us to be to the praise of His glory. And that's in so many passages. Ephesians 3, He said, "I saved you that all men might see the mystery that was hiding in the past." He says in Ephesians, "Now unto Him by glory in the church." He says if you let your light shine among men they'll glorify your Father who is in heaven.

The Lord saved us, number one, to do good works for the sake of unsaved men, two, to pour out blessings on the sake of believers, three, to give glory to His name, because when we do what is right God is honored. And so He was gracious for our sake, for the world's sake, for His sake. You say, "That's great, that gift. How did it become ours? How does it become ours?"

Look at verse 6. "You have the grace of God given you in Christ Jesus," when? "When the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you." The word confirmed means settled, made steadfast, made solid. How is it that the testimony of Christ is made solid? The word testimony in the Greek is *marturion*, from which we get the word martyr. It is translated in Acts 1:8witness. It's the same word as witness and it refers to the gospel. Look at it there. Even as the gospel of Christ, the witness of Christ was confirmed in you or settled in you, made steadfast in you. It could have reference as well to the apostles who came and preached and did signs and miracles to confirm it. But the thing that He's pointing out is that they accepted it and it became theirs. It was confirmed, not before you, but where, in you. It was settled in you. It was made solid in you and how is it that the gospel of Jesus Christ becomes confirmed in me? It is by what? By faith. It is by believing.

In Acts 20, we find the very same word used, just to give you some verses to support its meaning as referring to the gospel. Acts 20:21, testifying to the Jews and the Greeks. And the word testifying is *marturio*, same word, and He testified repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. That was the message, the gospel. The same term exactly. Verse 24, Paul says, "I received of the Lord Jesus to testify, or to give witness of the gospel of the grace of God." This term then is used to refer to the gospel. In Acts 22:18, again he says, "They will not receive your *marturion*concerning Me, your witness, your presentation of the gospel." Chapter 23:11, The Lord says to Paul, "You have given witness of Me or testified of Me in Jerusalem; you will also do it in Rome." Same word again. It refers to the preaching of the gospel. So, and it's used also to refer to that in II Timothy 1:8, "Don't be ashamed of the testimony," *marturion*. It's used in I John 5, "And this is the record." That word record is the word *marturion*. "This is the witness that God has given life and that life is in His Son." So the word *martuion* used here refers to the gospel. When the gospel of Christ was settled in you then that grace was made yours.

So you have in verse 4 the divine side and in verse 6 the human response. You hear about saving grace and all that it is and you believed it and it was settled in your heart. And then the benefit

became yours. Saving grace. All sin totally forgiven forever; no guilt ever yours again. What a fantastic thought. And that grace includes the pouring out of riches and more riches and more riches on your life for now and throughout eternity. That's the blessings of grace. And the grace equips you to do good deeds to men. That's the first benefit of being a saint.

Let me give you the second one. The first benefit is past tense. You received grace. Present tense, gifts. Verses 5 and 7, saving grace continues in the present and it manifests blessings through all the believer's life. Let's look at verse 5. This is so great. Just think of what you have in being a believer. "That in everything you are enriched." Did you know that you are enriched in everything? That's right. Do you know I Corinthians 4:8, this is a verse we really ought to plug into. It says, "And you are full and you are rich and you have reigned as kings." Isn't that fantastic? We have everything. You are enriched in everything by Him. And again it's the word en. It's e-n in the Greek. It's the preposition in. "You are enriched in Him in all utterance and in all knowledge."

Now hang on to this for a minute 'cause this is tremendously important. He says you are rich and you have everything. And, of course, where he says everything it's a qualified everything. It doesn't mean you have everything, literally everything everything. It means you have everything that you need. Does a Christian lack anything? No, according to II Peter 1:3you have all things that pertain to life and godliness. You have all things. Keep that in mind. In Colossians 2:10Paul says, "You are complete in Him." And that's fantastic. Ephesians 2 tells we're enriches with everything. And I like I Corinthians 3:21where he says, "You have all things, and you are Christ's and Christ is God's." You have everything. You lack nothing. And then to pull out a few of those things that you have he says this: "You have all utterance and you have all knowledge." Two general benefits. You say you mean all utterance? Yeah, but it's a qualified all. You have all the utterance you need to do the job. Obviously we can't speak everything. You can't get up and talk about things you don't know, but we have all utterance to accomplish what God wants us to accomplish.

Now the utterance is to tell forth the truth. Now this to this Christian, this is so exciting: do you know that God has given you the capability and the capacity to speak the truth? That's right, and you know I think the biggest problem that Christians have apart from just the internal holiness, the biggest problem and the manifestation of their life is the ability to speak and they invariably say, "Well I don't think I can do it." Well actually it's a case of simply reading the verse that says, "You have been enriched in all utterance." You can do it. You have the ability to speak.

Listen to Acts 1:8, "But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses." Do you see that? There's aren't any options there, those are facts. You are a witness. You can speak. You've been given utterance. Chapter 2:4, "They were filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the word." Chapter 4 of Acts, verse 31, "And they met together and they prayed and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the word with boldness." Do you have the Holy Spirit as a Christian? Can you respond to the Holy Spirit and be filled with the Spirit as a Christian? Yes! Then

can you speak the word with boldness? Absolutely! You have all utterance. You have all utterance!

Now in order to be fair it's obvious that all of us don't use the utterance we've got. There's something you've got to do to get that utterance going. Ephesians 6:19, Paul says, "And for me that utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." He says, now you Ephesians pray for me that I may open my what, my mouth. Now there's the problem with the Christian. In order for the utterance to work you've got to open your mouth. As I've said so many times, "That's the hard part." Most Christians are like the Artic River frozen over at the mouth. The hardest thing seems to be to open your mouth. We can talk ourselves out of witnessing so easily, can't we?

You know when Jesus sent out the 70 in Matthew 10, he said, "Now don't worry about what you're going to say. Just open your mouth and the Holy Spirit will give you utterance." That doesn't mean leave your mind a blank. That means trust the Holy Spirit to give you the things to say. You have been given utterance. You have a message. It's amazing. I think we under sell what we can do. You know the biggest shocker usually occurs when somebody leads someone to Christ. The biggest shock is the fact that it happened. You say you don't believe this, but I led a guy to Christ. It was amazing. It was a miracle. And you know when they're talking about the miracle they're not nearly so shocked of the miracle of the new birth as they are the miracle of their own usefulness. Right?

I remember one time when I was starting out in ministry at the school I went to first, they used to send me out to preach and they'd send me over to the bus depot and make me preach sermons in the bus depot to all the people walking around. That was hard to do. Repent and all this stuff and you'd try to give Bible verses and preach and people would go by and say, "Poor kid, it's so young." There I was an 18 year old standing in the bus depot yelling at all the people between, Bus # 42 now leaving for Charlotte." So I decided after two weeks of that it was ridiculous. So they'd drop me off and I'd go somewhere else and just get back in time for the pick up.

Well now wait a minute. I'm not finished with the story. See you're judging my character already. But anyway I'd go walking up and down the street and just witness to people as individuals 'cause it was much more fruitful. So, in fact one day I was with Dave Hocking and we were walking up the street and there were two guys coming down the street on the way to a dance, which was going on at the YMCA and so I said, "Well I take the guy on the right. You take the guy on the left." And he said, "Okay." So we walked up to them, we were much bigger than they were and we said, "We'd like to talk to you." And they said, "Whatever you say." And so I took this one fellow and I said, I walked over to him and he didn't know what was going on. I said, "I'd just like to talk to you about Jesus Christ." He said, "You would?" And I presented the gospel to him and I said, he was very attentive, and I said, "Would you like to invite Christ into your life." And he said, "I really would." And I said, "You would?" Now wait this is too easy. Is this the way it's supposed to happen, you know? Sort of scratch your head and say, "Wow, Lord, I didn't know I could do that." I'll never forget what a blessing that was. I

guess about a week ago Wednesday a guy walks up to me in the patio and says, "I'm Jewish and I want to know how to be a Christian. What do I do?" And so I thought to myself, "All of my seminary training I can't use any of it. He's ready." So we went and had about a 30-minute prayer meeting and he received Christ. Then we spent some time getting going and oriented. But I mean it's, but you say to yourself, "Wow", I did it, see." Well you have to realize that Christ knows that if there is anything accomplished He's going to have to give you the utterance and all that is necessary is that you be filled with the Spirit of God and open your mouth in the right situation and God will give you the utterance that is needed for the moment.

I tell you when I stop to think about the fact that I have all utterance, that's pretty exciting. And I think, too, that doesn't mean that I put my brain in neutral. That means that I'm going to have to really make sure I get enough information in there to really be useful to God when the times comes. "Study to show myself approved unto Him." And do what Peter said in I Peter 3:15. He said, "Make sure that I have an answer for every man that asks me a reason for the hope that is within me." And to make sure that I am faithful and diligent and patient in dealing with those who oppose me and speak the truth to them as Paul said to Timothy in II Timothy 2:24-25. But I need to have the truth and God has given it to me and here it is. And I have it hid in my heart and God will give me that momentary utterance that is needed to speak His truth.

Second thing I have that must go with it is knowledge. If I've got all the utterance and I haven't got anything to say I'm in bad shape running off at the mouth, so he gave me all knowledge. That doesn't mean that I know everything. I Corinthians 13:9says, "For now you know in part." But I do know everything I need to know, right? The word is here and God has given me enough revelation to speak the truth to the world. I know the truth. People just think about it. God's given you the truth. You know the truth. I Corinthians 2:9, "It doesn't even appear unto man what God has given those who love Him." God has revealed unto you by His Spirit this truth. Verse 14, "The natural man doesn't even have it." Matthew 11:25, he said, "I have hidden these thing from the wise and prudent and I've given them to the babes." II Corinthians 4:6says that, "He's given us the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ." We have truth. We have knowledge. The new man was given to us and it's renewed in knowledge. God has committed His truth to us. We know Him, we know the Son, we know the Spirit, we know the revelation, and I'll tell you something, we need to understand that knowledge. We need to work with that knowledge. We need to make it ours.

Paul prayed to the Lord about the Ephesians. He said, "Oh I pray that You may give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge that they have." He said the same for the Colossians in Colossians 1:9-10, "That they may have the knowledge of Your will," he said, that they may get a grip on that. God has given us all knowledge, people, all we need to do is appropriate it. He's given us all utterance. All we need to do is open our mouths. We are gifted. God's gifts to us, how beautiful. Just think of it. You have everything. You have everything. You have been made according to Colossians 1:12, "Fit for His kingdom." Can you get a grip on that? You are fit for the kingdom right now. You

have it all. Ephesians 2 says, "Oh His grace is poured on you." Peter said, "You have everything pertaining to life and godliness." Ecclesiastes 3:14says, "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be done forever. Nothing can be taken away from it; nothing can be added to it." You're complete. You have everything.

Now Paul goes from the general area of utterance and knowledge to the specific that he has given in verse 7. You have everything and since you have everything you come behind and know gift. Present tense verb here come behind. This is the present tense we're talking about. Grace in the past; gifts for the present. You know he said to these Corinthians, "You lack what?" What did they lack? Nothing. Now somebody might go to the Corinthians and say, "Oh you guys are in trouble. You're in lots, you do have all this, what you need to get is you need to go over here and get this and you need to go over here and get this, and search the Lord for this, and seek the baptism and try to get this and you need more of this. And they didn't lack anything. And yet they were the most corrupt bunch of Christians in all the New Testament. They didn't lack anything. The word gift there is *charismatah*and that makes me feel that the meaning here is in reference to spiritual gifts. They had no lack of spiritual gifts, which meant they had everything they needed to minister to each other. Watch this: I feel that verse 5 has primary reference to the ability of those believers to present the truth to the world. I feel that verse 7 has primary reference of the believers to minister to each other. They were adequate to reach the world and they were adequate to build the church. They lacked nothing. You come behind and no *charismatah.*That's where we get the word charismatic, which is a good word and it means those who have been given gracious gifts of God to minister to His church. And we reject what is known as the charismatic movement, which is a misconception of the term, but we do not reject the word. It is a biblical word. They came behind and nothing. They had everything.

Beloved you've got spiritual gifts, every single one of you Christians have gifts of the Spirit that is given to you to minister to the body and they are adequate to build this church. And that's why this church is growing because so many of you are ministering those gifts. In the past years of Grace Church for you that may not have been here, this has been the constant cry of this pulpit and the teachers of this church, that we minister the spiritual gifts. If you're still foggy on it we recommend a book that we put together called, The Church, the Body of Christ, in which all of this is explained. We won't take the time to do it today, but you need to know what your spiritual gifts are, whether you have the gifts of teaching, or preaching, or exhortation, or administration, or helps, or the gift of giving, or the gift of faith, or whatever it is that ministers to one another. This is so critical for you. You need to know those gifts.

In I Corinthians 12:1Paul says, "I would not have you ignorant brethren concerning spiritual gifts." And you need to be responsive to the Spirit's work in your life. Now mark this, people. It is extremely important to know that this is written to the Corinthians. We couldn't give you the same insight if it was written to the Thessalonians. They were good, solid, growing Christians. These people were in terribly shape spiritually, vile in many cases, vices. But notice what he said. "It isn't because you lack spiritual

resource." You have all utterance to reach the world and all knowledge and "You come behind and no gift." Listen people, you've got everything you need to be what you ought to be. You are saints and a saint is a whole thing.

When we talk about spiritual maturity you don't grow up to get something you didn't have when you were little. Take a baby, when a baby is born it isn't born with no arms and then it gets its arm at five. It's not a pollywog. It doesn't become a frog. It isn't something popping out. When that baby's born it's got all it'll every have, right? In fact, the older it get the more stuff it starts losing. It's the opposite, that's entropy. It's made whole. And when you were born in Christ you were made whole with all the parts. It's only a matter of exercising those parts until they can function in a mature way. You have everything you need. There's no lack. You are complete in Him. Get it. Colossians 2:10, "You're complete in Him." And when a Christian sins and when a Christian falls into laziness and when a Christian falls into ineffective service, and when a Christian falls into impurity it is not because he has a lack of anything. It is because he's not appropriating what he has. You do not need something else.

Listen, God has stocked your shelf. You don't need anything. You have everything for health, vitality, growth, and reproduction. You have all things pertaining to life and godliness, said Peter. The issue is your commitment to be faithful to what you have. Do you see? You have everything. Just listen to this: what is the benefit of being a saint, what is the benefit of being a Christian? One: grace, which means absolute forgiveness and guiltlessness forever. Two: gifts so that you can speak the truth to the world that desperately needs to hear and so that you can minister to the believers. You have everything you need in this life.

I'd say that's a legacy, wouldn't you? And don't you say, "Well I need this and I need that and I don't know I've failed and the Lord hasn't done this for me and He hasn't given me this. Baloney to put it mildly. You have everything. If there's a failure in your life it isn't a divine one, it's a human one. Isn't that true? God has never failed and He never will fail. You do and you will and so will I and so have I.

Third thing: God not only gave us grace in the past, and gifts for the present, but guarantees for the future. Now let's face it folks, we're eschatological, right? We have a future drag. I mean we feel like we're being pulled into the future all the time, don't we, as Christians? I mean we're always looking and watching and waiting and hoping and Jesus is coming and that's part of it. We sing about it, we sang it this morning, How Great Thou Art, when Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and you get those spiritual goose bumps, don't you, thinking about it? The Lord is coming. Every time I see a day like the last few days with those big puffy white clouds I figure that's the kind of day He's got to come in. Man so that's the second coming so every eye will see Him when he comes with the clouds, there's a rapture first. But we look forward to the Lord's coming. We're eschatological beings. Our citizenship isn't here, Philippians 3:20says, "Our citizenship is in heaven." We're constantly feeling the tug of that world. We have people who have died and gone there and we sense that we want to be with them and the pull is from there as well.

Now notice verse 7, "waiting for the *apackloupsis*the revealing, the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Listen we wait with that future tug. We're looking for Jesus to come and I believe He's coming and I believe He's coming soon. "Who shall also confirm you under the end that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." He's coming and look at the word waiting in verse 7. Waiting is interesting. The Greek word means to wait with eager anticipation and activity, not idleness. It's not like sitting on a corner waiting for a bus. It's like waiting eagerly while you're working and watching and hoping and involved. In I Thessalonians the same word is used in 1:10 to speak of the Thessalonian church, which was waiting for the Son to be revealed. We're waiting. We feel like John who says, "And Jesus is coming" and he says it over and He's coming and He's coming and He's coming and then finally he says, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." We want you. We're waiting folks.

One of the benefits of being a Christian is hope, isn't it? Hey I have hope. Do you have hope? I'm not worried. I have hope. I don't care what happens to this world ultimately from the standpoint of what I believe, because I know God's going to take care of His own. I care what happens to them from their viewpoint, but it doesn't threaten my security. It's doesn't steal my hope. I don't live in a hopeless world. I have so much hope I just trust God totally with it. I'm waiting for Jesus to come and I believe He's coming.

Now why do Christians have this hope? Let me give you some things, a little quick outline. Why do Christians hope? Why do we look for Jesus? Number one: it means the exultation of Christ and He deserves it, right? I want Him to come because He'll be exalted when He comes and He deserves it. In Revelation you see Him coming on a white horse crowned as king of kings and lord of lords. When He comes He'll be exalted and it's time for Him to be exalted. He's been humiliated too long. He came the first time in humiliation didn't he? Hebrews 9:28says, "He'll come the second time without sin." No more humiliation and sin bearing for Him the next time. He'll come in glory. Oh He'll come with honor and glory. Read it in Revelation. Listen, I want Jesus to come because He'll be exalted and He deserves it.

Secondly it means the defeat of Satan and he deserves it. When Jesus comes He's going to defeat Satan, He's going to bind him for a thousand years. At the end of the thousand years He's going to let him loose for a little while just to get the last little bit out of his system, then He's going to chain him and throw him into the lake of fire and he deserves it.

Thirdly, I'm glad He's coming because it means justice for the martyrs and they deserve it. II Thessalonians 1:5, Paul writes in Thessalonians, "I know you're suffering an awful lot, but remember this," verse 6, "seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you." Listen there's coming a day when the martyrs are going to be granted vengeance. God says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Revelation 6, you have all those martyrs under the altar and they're praying, "How long Lord until you avenge the blood of righteous people?" I'm looking for Jesus

coming because it exalts Him and He deserves it. It defeats Satan and he deserves it. It means justice for the martyrs and they deserve.

Fourth, it means the death of Christ's rejecters and they deserve it. II Thessalonians 1:7says, "Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels and flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ who should be punished with everlasting destruction." He's coming and He's going to judge those who hate Him. And they deserve it.

Lastly, I look forward to the coming of Jesus because it means heaven for me and I don't deserve it but I'll take it. So will you by grace. Isn't that exciting? It means that I'll be like Jesus. When I shall see Him I shall be like Him. I don't deserve that, but oh what grace. I look for His coming. You say, "You're kind of gloating, John." Not gloating. I feel just like John the apostle in Revelation 10. "He took the scroll that represented the title to the earth and he ate it and it was sweet in his mouth and bitter in his stomach." Do you know what that meant? That meant that his view of the coming of Christ was sweet because of what it would mean for Jesus and what it would mean for him and it was bitter because of what it would mean for the world. Yes it's sweet and yes it's bitter but we hope for His coming, we look for it.

Now want to see a marvelous promise, verse 8? When he comes He will confirm you, that is He will settle you, make you steadfast until the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." The day of the Lord. The day of Christ. This combination term here means the time of Christ's return. Listen to this: when Christ returns, he says, you will be confirmed blameless. Now get that people. That is some kind of promise. You know why you say," Why should you wait for Christ's coming? Isn't He going to come and say, "Now MacArther what have you done? Let me see you've done those, uh uh uh see," and isn't going to be when He comes at all it's going to be flashing aboard, all your crud is going to shown to the world? If that was the case I wouldn't be waiting for it. I'm waiting for it because I will be in that day held what? Blameless. Wow! I'm confirmed, I'm settled, I'm secure, blameless 'til then. Just get a grip on that promise. How many sins are going to be held up against you when Jesus comes? None! Whoo, you say that's pretty super. Yes it is. When the day of the Lord Jesus Christ comes He's going to present to the Father a chaste bride. Right? "Without spot," Ephesians 5 says, "And without blemish." He's going to say here's MacArthur, blameless. Whoo, fantastic. Now you see this is positional truth. Blameless.

No wonder I'm looking for His coming. I'm going to be declared blameless and dwell with Him forever in heaven and be just like Him. You say oh how do you know about that? Are you sure about that? Verse 9, do you know how I am sure? God is what? Faithful. In the Greek it's inverted because it's emphatic. Faithful is God by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son. Listen you got saved because He wanted you saved and that's how you're going to stay because that's how He wants you to stay. If He called you into communion with His Son, then He'll keep you. If you got in by

grace you'll be kept by grace. That's what He's saying. You know how I know when I get there I'm going to be blameless? Because God is faithful and He called me into the fellowship of His Son, and if He called me into that fellowship He wanted me in there and if He wanted me in there He's going to keep me in there. Amen! That's exciting.

You say, "Well what are the benefits of being a saint?" You got 'em? Fantastic. Listen God is faithful. Listen to I Thessalonians, here's Paul's prayer, Verse 23 of Chapter 5. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly," make you holy holy is what He's saying. Now I pray God your whole Spirit and your soul and your body would be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." You say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I pray that too." Is that where it ends? I mean do we have to say, "O Lord please preserve my body, please preserve my spirit, please preserve my soul 'til you get here?" Oh ho ho, I hope that's not how we have to end. Look at the next verse. "Faithful is He that called you who also will do it." He gets the prayer answered in the next verse.

I'm going to wind up at the judgment throne of the Lord absolutely holy and spend eternity with Him in His holy presence. Hey people, do you know now why Paul said at the beginning of verse 4, "I thank my God?" Those are the benefits of being a saint. They're offered to you. When the testimony of Christ is settled in your heart by faith, they become yours. I hope our gratitude translates into action. Let's pray.

Thank you Father this morning for what you have done, are doing, and will do all secured because faithful is God. In Jesus' blessed name, the one who saved us, Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2016 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).