

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

IN THIS WORLD, WE EXPERIENCE SUFFERINGS: BUT GLORY IS COMING

SECOND CORINTHIANS

✠ II CORINTHIANS

An overview of the Book of Second Corinthians, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson # 18

COMMENTARY ON: 4:13-15

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

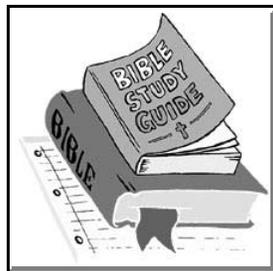
"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

Because faith is alive and animating, we now read of "the spirit of faith" – something that constrains faith's possessor to **do** and **say** something. No merely human virtue or worldly experience has the powerful effects of faith. It is therefore a sin of great magnitude to attempt to elicit valid spiritual responses apart from faith. There is nothing in the world that can so this. There is no academic exercise of a human regimen that can accomplish "the work of faith with power." This lesson will confirm it will require more than an intellectual acknowledgment of this fact to realize its power.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-2

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"



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The Epistle of Second Corinthians

Lesson Number 19



TRANSLATION LEGEND: AMPLIFIED or AMP = Amplified Bible, ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), IE = International English, ISV = International Standard Version, KJV=King James Version (1611), LIVING = Living Bible, MONTGOMERY = Montgomery's New Testament, NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible 1833, YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament, WILLIAMS = William's New Testament, PHILLIPS = J B Phillips New Testament
LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG=Friberg Lexicon, UBS=UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA=Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT=Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER=Thayer's Greek Lexicon

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

“ 4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; ¹⁴ Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. ¹⁵ For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.” (2 Cor 4:13-15)

INTRODUCTION

There are certain priorities in the Kingdom of God – matters that are preeminent in both heaven and earth. These are reflected in all inspired writings, and are to be embraced by those professing identity with the Lord. All of these involve personalities and glory – individuals and appropriate honor. The order of their precedence cannot become confused, for as soon as it does, the ministry and benefit of them all falls to the ground. The focus of our lives must reflect these priorities, else life becomes vain and pointless.

GOD THE FATHER

God the Father is the preeminent One, **“greater than all”** (John 10:29) . He is the Architect of salvation (Eph 3:11), the One who sent His Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14), and the One to whom Jesus will ultimately return the Kingdom (1 Cor 15:24-28). The Father is the One to whom we are reconciled (Rom 5:10), and we are His children (Gal 3:26). This is the One to whom Jesus is bringing us (1 Pet 3:18). He is also the One with whom the Lord Jesus is acquainting us, bringing to us the

knowledge of God, which, together with knowing the Son, is eternal life (Matt 11:27; 1 John 5:20).

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Lord Jesus is the One through whom God made **“the worlds”** (Heb 1:3), the One who wrought what was necessary to deliver men from darkness (Col 1:13), and is the exclusive means by which men gain acceptance with God (Eph 1:6), are kept (Jude 24-25), and will eventually be glorified (Col 3:4). He alone is the One who reconciled us to God (2 Cor 5:18),

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made peace (Col 1:20), and cleared the way for us to come to God (Heb 10:20). He alone destroyed the devil (Heb 2:14), plundered principalities and powers (Col 2:15), blotted out the handwriting or ordinances that was against us (Col 2:14), and redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal 3:13). Jesus is the One into whose hands the Father has given all things (John 13:3; 1 Pet 3:22). His charge is to bring the Sons to glory (Heb 2:10), and through Him God will judge the world (Acts 17:31).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the One who empowers both the Gospel and those who believe and obey it (1 Cor 2:4; Eph 6:17; 1 Pet 1:12). He is the One who leads the saints in subduing the flesh and obtaining the promises of God (Rom 8:13; 1 Pet 1:22). **The Spirit is the Distributor and Administrator of the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:3-11), and is the One who is changing us from one increasing stage of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18). We “abound in hope” through Him (Rom 15:13).**

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

The Gospel of Christ is the purpose of God revealed in words (Eph 3:5-6). It is the means by which men are saved (1 Cor 15:1), and is “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom 1:16). The message must never be sullied or demeaned by human conduct or speech (1 Tim 6:1; Tit 2:10). This is the message that conveys the knowledge of Christ, whose glory, when beheld, transforms the individual (2 John 1:9). It is the Word that has been delivered to the church, to be kept and faithfully proclaimed (1 Tim 3:15).

THE BRETHERN

The brethren are those in whom Christ dwells (Col 1:27), and, through the Spirit they are being conformed to His image (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18). They have been “*begotten*” or “*born of God*” (1 John 5:1,4,18), and are reconciled to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ (Col 1:21). These are “*the church*,” “*the body of Christ*” (Eph 1:23), and “*the pillar and ground of the truth*” (1 Tim 3:15). These are the ones for whom Jesus intercedes (Heb 7:25). They are the ones for whom the Holy Spirit also makes intercession from within them (Rom 8:26-27). Their names are written in heaven (Heb 12:23), and an eternal inheritance has been reserved for them (Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4). They are also kept by the power of God through faith (1 Pet 1:5), and He works within them, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure (Phil 2:13; Heb 13:20-21).

THE REDEEMED INDIVIDUAL

Self is the redeemed individual – the one who has been reconciled to God. This is the one through whom Jesus is living, and in whom the Holy Spirit is working. The objective for the individual is to walk in the light (1 John 1:7), walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:25), and live by faith (Rom 1:17). Obtaining the promises (Heb 6:12), and participating in the Divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) are fundamental. In the individual both the “*dying of the Lord Jesus*” (2 Cor 4:10), and His “*life*” (2 Cor 4:11) are being expressed.

THE CRITICALITY OF THESE PRIORITIES

The maintenance of these precedencies is imperative. Lower priorities must not be allowed to

overshadow, of even supplant, greater ones. If, for example, the Holy Spirit becomes the focus of our attention, and the heart of the message that we preach, we have departed from the highway that leads through the desert of this present evil world. Again, if the Lord Jesus is no longer seen as the appointed Means by which we come to God - “*the Way, the Truth, and the Life*” – He no longer has any redemptive significance to the individual. Even further down the ladder of erroneous emphasis, if the church becomes the focus of our attention, and the subject of our preaching, we do so at the expense of obtaining the blessing. Worst still, if the individual becomes the main thing, the glory of God, the salvation wrought by Christ, and the working of the Holy Spirit are all forfeited.

You can begin with Jesus and end up with God the Father because He and the Father are “*One*,” and He has been given to us for that purpose. However, if you view Jesus “*according to the flesh*,” or merely as a Man, or as someone who has been appointed to resolve your difficulties, He ceases to yield personal benefit. If He is the one into whose image God is conforming us, and if He is the One who has been appointed to “*bring us to God*,” woe to that person who thinks to use Him as a mere doctor or escape from

KINGDOM PRIORITIES



GOD THE FATHER
 JESUS CHRIST
 THE HOLY SPIRIT
 THE GOSPEL
 THE BRETHERN
 THE INDIVIDUAL



Faith is the motivating and animating principle or law of the Kingdom – by Given O. Blakely

temporary problems. No person should discourage another about seeking mercy and finding grace to help “in the time of need” (Heb 4:16), and that is not what these words are intended to do. **Rather, for those who are in Christ Jesus, all such requests are to be made within the context of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Gospel of Christ, and the people of God.** If we ask for health, it is that we might give it to the Lord. If we seek deliverance, favor with men, or relief from trouble, it is in order that we might serve Him.

All of this is wrapped up in a

- Working out of a sense of legal obligation, motivated by fear.
- A desire to be one of the group, and working without heartfelt involvement.
- Seeking one’s personal interests, without regard to Christ or His body, which is the church.

It will be apparent in this passage that Paul was driven by something greater than himself. He had adopted the agenda of Another, and sought the ultimate glory of Another. **While it is**

*ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, **They have their reward***” (Mat 6:2,5,16).

WHY PAUL CONTINUED TO SPEAK

Paul will now declare what motivated him to speak – to speak candidly, faithfully, and in strict comportment with the nature and will of God. **He delivered a message with which the Holy Spirit could work.** He was not moved by a harsh mandate or heartless commandment, but by his “own will,”^{NRSV} “willingly,”^{KJV} or “voluntarily”^{NASB} (1 Cor 9:17). Even though he was “troubled on every side,” “perplexed,” “persecuted,” and “cast down” – **he spoke anyway** (2 Cor 4:8-9). Even though he was hounded and assaulted on every hand – beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, in constant peril, wearied, in pain, without food and water, and cold and naked – **he spoke anyway** (2 Cor 11:23-27). When every one “forsook” him, **he continued to speak** (2 Tim 4:16). When he was among people, **he lifted up his voice and spoke**. When he was bound with a chain and thrown into prison, **he continued to speak with his pen.**

What can move a man to speak so powerfully, so consistently, so faithfully? You may rest assured, self-motivation cannot accomplish such a thing.

My Own Experience

I well remember my time in the business world. We managers were often subjected to various motivational programs. They were quite similar to a high school pep-rally. We would be given notebooks, and a speaker would tell us the secrets of the routine that he was peddling. Eventually, we would all break up into smaller groups, and use the secret routine on each other. In that environment, everything seemed to work very well. People seemed to be able to do what they were otherwise incapable of doing. At the end of the session, often lasting several days, we would all return to our regular work, armed with our notebooks and the knowledge that was imparted to us.

This time, however, the routine was not as exciting as it was before. It soon broke down, the notebooks were

While it is true that the Lord will eventually receive all the glory, it will only advantage those who have diligently sought His glory in this world.

single expression of Scripture: “*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s*” (Rom 14:7-8).

WHY SAY THESE THINGS?

Why is it necessary to say such things. From one point of view, they should be so obvious they require no further affirmation. However, such lofty views are not as obvious as one might suppose. **There is a phenomenal amount of religious activity in which men engage that takes no account of these things at all.** Further, if we are not alert, we will find ourselves swept up in the contaminating tide of mere human motivation. The following is an example of ignoble motives that can drive religious activity.

- The promotion of a religious institution, church, or movement.
- Seeking recognition from men.
- Focusing on the fulfillment of personal objectives and desires.

true that the Lord will eventually receive all the glory, it will only advantage those who have diligently sought His glory in this world. As it is written, “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Cor 10:31). And again, “*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s*” (1 Cor 6:20).

In the work of the Lord, motivation is fundamental. If the work is done for the wrong reason, the work is voided, and only the honor that comes from men will be realized. Our blessed Lord spoke of this matter in at least three of His poignant sayings. “*Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, **They have their reward** . . . And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, **They have their reward** . . . Moreover when*

stored in one of our cabinets, and we had to wait for the next motivational workshop. **The difference was that now we were in a very real work-environment.** We were not in a philosophical environment where we faced no real threats. Besides that, everyone was amiable in the made-up environment.

The Worldly Manner Duplicated in the Church

I have found exactly the same kind of environment in the religious world. Especially in our day, all manner of motivational speakers and routines are being hawked among the people of God. There are workshops, clinics, symposiums, retreats, and the likes – all designed to motivate preachers and leaders to do their work. Of course, this whole approach was borrowed from the world. That is why it bears such a remarkable resemblance to the experiences some of us had in the world. Leaving these times of motivation, the individual finds a certain freshness in his work. Hope seems to be rekindled, and what appears to be a very real desire to please the Lord is experienced. But it is not long, until everything is “normal” once again. **The routine cannot hold up in challenging surroundings, where the people are not cooperative, enemies surface, and personal weaknesses leap out at us with intimidating reality.**

If you are not able to attend these motivational gatherings, there are plenty of materials in the religious book stores to get you started. However, you will find

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they will not be able to produce faithfulness, consistence, and constancy. They cannot compensate for the effects of being rejected, opposed, and even thrown out of certain environments. That is precisely why countless men who once determined to preach the Gospel have closed their mouths and are no longer involved in speaking the truth. The religious landscape is cluttered with the carcasses of quitters who were “*wearied*” when running with mere “*footmen*,” and could not “*contend with horses*” (Jer 12:5). Like Demas of old, they have forsaken the more noble work, having “*loved more this present world*” (2 Tim 4:10). Like the fickle multitude that once followed Jesus, they “*went back and walked with Him no more*” (John 6:66). Inferior motivation always produces inferior results.

The Manner of the Kingdom

Even though these conditions are found within the “church” environment, and among those professing to be “*laborers together with God*,” they do not represent the manner of the Kingdom. These are **NOT** the results that are found

where Jesus is at work! These are **NOT** the effects of knowing the truth, which makes men free – free from a defeated spirit, as well as all other forms of bondage (John 8:32). In Christ Jesus a new and consistent principle of life comes into play. He not only makes men “*free*,” but “*free indeed*” – “*really and unquestionably free*”^{AMPLIFIED} (John 8:36). By faith, they are lifted in an environment that stifles discouragement and suffocates the quitting spirit. Those who live by faith become superior to circumstance – even though it looks as though they are in the very midst of its overwhelming presence.

This is precisely what Paul will now explain. He will tell us **why** he was able to continue speaking, even though he was often surrounded by trouble, bewildered, painfully persecuted, and thrown down to the ground. There was a **higher** motivation at work in him that cannot be duplicated, or even feigned, by the world. It was a principle that Satan himself, together with his hosts of wickedness, could not negate or diminish. As those who are acquainted with the kingdom know, this has to do with faith.

THE SAME SPIRIT OF FAITH

^{4:13a} ***We having the same spirit of faith . . .***

One of the unique distinctions of the New Covenant is its association with life. One of the very first things John affirms of Jesus relates to the giving of life. “*In Him was life; and the life was the light of men*” (John 1:4). Jesus Himself said that His coming into the world was related to the obtainment of “*eternal life*” (John 3:15,16,36). He said

He would give men “*living water*” (John 4:10) that would spring up within, issuing in “*everlasting life*” (John 4:14). He said that those who heard His voice would “*live*” (John 5:29). He came that men might “*have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10). He said He came to give His sheep “*eternal life*” (John 10:28).

• Jesus is “*the Prince of life*” (Acts 3:15).

• The Gospel is referred to as “*the words of this life*” (Acts 5:20), and “*the word of life*” (Phil 2:16).

• Repentance is said to be “*unto [in order to] life*” (Acts 11:18).

• The life of faith is described as a “*reign in life*” (Rom 5:17).

• Rising from the waters of baptism, we “*walk in newness of life*” (Rom 6:4).

Faith is the motivating and animating principle or law of the Kingdom – by Given O. Blakely

- The “law” which we now enjoy is “*the law of the Spirit of life*” (Rom 8:2).
- The Spirit, with which the New Covenant is associated, is declared to be “*life*” (2 Cor 3:6).
- The “*life of Jesus*” is manifested in our bodies (2 Cor 4:10,11).
- True living is said to be Christ **living** in us (Gal 2:20).
- The “way” in which Jesus is leading us is a “*living way*” (Heb 10:20).
- Those in Christ Jesus are described as “*living stones*” (1 Pet 2:4).
- Those in Christ have been

New Covenant life must never be associated with lifeless routines, empty procedures, and fruitless disciplines of life.

It was not long until the church drifted into mere religious routine. Early on, the Apostles began to deal with this dreadful tendency. Paul spoke to the Colossians about routines that looked very good, having the appearance of wisdom, yet which were profitless and useless in spiritual life. “. . . *human precepts and doctrines. Such [practices] have indeed the outward appearance [that popularly passes] for wisdom, in promoting self-imposed rigor of devotion and delight in self-humiliation and severity of discipline of the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence*

workout and being godly. That certainly ought to be apparent. **Paul is rather speaking of a regimented approach to being religious versus actually becoming God-like.** The “*inward man*” cannot be improved or matured by means of a bodily, or external, procedure. It simply is not possible. **If such a thing was, indeed, attainable, it would have been realized under the Law, or First Covenant, which was the ultimate routine.** It was a covenant that was “*concerned with food and drink, various washings and rules for bodily conduct, and were only intended to be valid until the time when Christ should establish the truth*”^{PHILLIPS} (Heb 9:10).

Let us now behold the manner of the New Covenant, and how the redeemed are motivated. This text will address the matter of speaking, but also pertains to every aspect of spiritual life.

WE HAVING

“*We having . . .*” Other versions read, “*And since we have,*”^{NKJV} “*But having,*”^{NASB} “*with,*”^{NIV} “*But just as we have,*”^{NRSV} “*And because we have,*”^{GENEVA} “*Since, then, we have,*”^{NAB} “*But as we have,*”^{NJB} “*because we have,*”^{NLT} “*But possessing,*”^{WEYMOUTH} and “*Yet we have.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

For those with any measurable degree of spiritual perception, it is apparent that much of the Christian community is noticeably deficient in Divine provisions. In an inordinate number of professed believers, there appears to be an overwhelming sense of spiritual lack or need. **While there is certainly a sense in which we are keenly aware of much that remains to be appropriated, no person in Christ is totally lacking in matters pertaining to life and godliness.**

One of the unique conditions of life in Christ Jesus is that of **possessing** – of actually having something from God. Notice how strongly our text speaks of this circumstance: “*having*” – that is, we possess, or own, something. The Greek word from which “*having*” is translated is *ἔχοντες* (ex-on-tes). As used here, the word speaks of something that is really and consciously perceived at the moment. Lexically, the word means “to hold, to have hold in the hand . . . to hold fast, keep . . . to own,

Where people are not duly motivated to live for Christ, there is a tendency within men to induce godly living by routine, habit, or some other form of fleshly discipline.

“*quicken*ed,” or made alive (Eph 2:1,5; Col 2:13).

Being alive has to do with response, accord, unanimity, fellowship, and alertness. That is why the life of faith is depicted as walking (2 John 1:4), running (Heb 12:1), fighting (1 Tim 6:10), looking (2 Pet 3:12), and wrestling (Eph 6:12). It is associated with “*calling*” upon the name of the Lord (1 Cor 1:2), “*seeking*” (Col 3:1), “*watching*” (Eph 6:18), and “*desiring*” (2 Cor 5:2).

For this reason, holy men had much to say about the “spirit” of this or that. All of this pertains to the LIVING aspect of life in Christ Jesus. There is “*the spirit of meekness*” (1 Cor 4:21), “*the spirit of wisdom and revelation*” (Eph 1:17), and “*the spirit of your mind*” (Eph 4:23). These all have to do with **LIFE!** This text will address “*the spirit of faith*” – something that is living, animating, and motivating.

of the flesh (the lower nature). [Instead, they do not honor God but serve only to indulge the flesh]” (Col 2:22-23).^{AMPLIFIED}

Where people are not duly motivated to live for Christ, there is a tendency within men to induce godly living by routine, habit, or some other form of fleshly discipline. There are occasions, such as during the period of youth or spiritual novicehood, when some measure of value can be seen in this approach. Paul alluded to this when he wrote to Timothy, “*discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but ^{godliness} is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance*”^{NASB} (1 Tim 4:7-9). Paul was not comparing a physical exercise program with godliness. Such a comparison would have declared “*bodily exercise*” to be totally profitless. There is no real comparison between a physical

possess," THAYER "to have something within oneself," FRIEBERG "have, hold, possess, keep," UBS and "to have, to possess, to belong to." LOUW-NIDA

Here, the word "having" does not speak of a mere legal right or opportunity. This is speaking of something that is possessed, and knowingly so. **It is not only possessed, it is also being employed.** Ponder some of the remarkable possessions that fall into this category: things that we "have."

- ☛ **PEACE WITH GOD.** "Therefore being justified by faith, **we HAVE peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1).
- ☛ **ACCESS INTO GRACE.** "By whom also **we HAVE access** by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom 5:2).
- ☛ **THE ATONEMENT.** "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom **we HAVE NOW received the atonement**" (Rom 5:11).
- ☛ **THE SPIRIT.** "Now **we HAVE received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God**" (1 Cor 2:12).
- ☛ **THE MIND OF CHRIST.** "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? **But we HAVE the mind of Christ**" (1 Cor 2:16).
- ☛ **A HEAVENLY TREASURE.** "But **we HAVE this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us**" (2 Cor 4:7).
- ☛ **LIBERTY.** "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which **we HAVE in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage**" (Gal 2:4).
- ☛ **REDEMPTION.** "In whom **we HAVE redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace**"

(Eph 1:7).

- ☛ **AN INHERITANCE.** "In whom also **we HAVE obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will**" (Eph 1:11).
- ☛ **A GREAT HIGH PRIEST.** "Seeing then that **we HAVE a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us**

possessed. This was even possessed by holy men prior to Jesus. However, the measure to which it may now be owned far exceeds that which was available in past ages.

THE SAME SPIRIT OF FAITH

"... the same spirit of faith . . ." Nearly all versions read the same: "spirit of faith." The following are among the only exceptions I found to this rule. Other versions read, "same kind of faith," NLT

There is a "spirit" to faith – that is, it is alive. Faith is not mere intellectual acquiescence to some proposition. It is not the mental embrace of a creedal statement. What is even more, "faith" is not a set of doctrinal points, as many have concluded.

hold fast our profession" (Heb 4:14).

- ☛ **AN ANCHORING HOPE.** "Which hope **we HAVE as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil**" (Heb 6:19).
- ☛ **AN ALTAR.** "We **HAVE an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle**" (Heb 13:10).
- ☛ **AN ADVOCATE.** "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, **we HAVE an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**" (1 John 2:1).

We must do everything we can to steer away from a merely philosophical view of religion – one that speculates about what could be, or might have been. The fact of the matter is that in Christ Jesus we have "obtained" (1 Tim 1:13; 1 Pet 2:10; 2 Pet 1:1) or "received" (Rom 1:5; 8:15; Gal; 3:2) a plethora of "spiritual blessings." **It is only to the degree that this is perceived that we can labor for the Lord acceptably and confidently.**

Paul will now speak of an exceedingly precious thing that can be

"trusting God to care for us," LIVING and "Our faith is like that mentioned." PHILLIPS

This Is Not A Creedal Faith

There is a "spirit" to faith – that is, it is alive. **Faith is not mere intellectual acquiescence to some proposition. It is not the mental embrace of a creedal statement.** What is even more, "faith" is not a set of doctrinal points, as many have concluded.

When some read of "the faith," they conceive of the Spirit speaking of the teachings that are found in Christ. The following statements have been made by significant Scriptural commentators on the statement of Jude 1:3 – "the faith which was once delivered." They are not right in these particular assessments.

- ☛ "The system of religion revealed in the gospel. It is called "faith," because that is the cardinal virtue in the system, and because all depends on that. The rule here will require that we should contend in this manner for all 'truth.'" BARNES
- ☛ "... to hold fast the truth as it is in Jesus, revealed in the Bible, and preach it to all the world." GODBY
- ☛ "'Faith' here is to be taken in the sense of that body of Christian doctrine which forms the substance of the truth concerning 'our common

salvation.' It is used synonymously with Gospel." GRAY

The particular Greek word used in Jude 1:3 is πιστει (pis-tei). This word is used fifty-eight times in Scripture (Acts 3:16; 6:7; 14:22; 15:9; 16:5; 26:18; Rom 3:28; 4:19,20; 5:2; 11:20; 14:1; 1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 1:24; 8:7; 13:5; Gal 2:20; Phil 1:27; 3:9; Col 1:23; 2:7; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 1:2,4,7,15; 3:13; 4:12; 2 Tim 1:13; 3:10; Tit 1:13; 2:2; 3:15; Heb 4:2; 11:3,4,5, 7,8,9,11,17,20,21,22,23,24,27,28,29,30,31; James 1:6; 2:5; 1 Pet 5:9; 2 Pet 1:5; Jude 1:3,20).

If you will examine these texts,

things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). When this word is used in the objective sense – accenting the Object of faith – that Object is **not** the Word of God, or the Gospel of Christ. **While faith does, indeed, come "by hearing" [the Gospel in particular] (Rom 10:17), faith is not placed in the Gospel, but in the Christ that it proclaims.** Faith is in the living God and the living Christ. We believe the Gospel, but we do not believe IN the Gospel – and there is a vast difference. Men are always said to "believe in" the Lord (Gen 15:6; 2 Chron 20:20; Dan 6:23; Matt 18:6; John 2:23; 3:18; 7:5;

Ideas and beliefs were now tested by the wisdom of men, and where there was a conflict, the beliefs were discarded. The wisdom and reasoning of the Greeks and Romans were exalted above the Scriptures themselves. Thus human reason toppled faith from the throne, and religion was largely driven from their civilization. Some who were involved in this professed "Age of Enlightenment" felt they had "found an alternative to Christian faith in the form of a neo-paganism. The morality was based on reason; the literature, art, and architecture were already supplying rules and standards for educated taste." BRITANNICA

This new way of thinking (which was only the old unregenerate way garbed in a new dress) crept into the Christian world. It is the mother of all "higher criticism." Here, the Scriptural text is weighed by criteria that are themselves external to the Scriptures. It may be language, history, culture, or some later manuscripts supposed to be superior. This is what has given rise to the multitudinous footnotes in contemporary versions of Scripture. Reference is made to "later and more reliable manuscripts," or some similar thing. **However, it all rises from dragging the Word of God into the academic arena, then attempting to confirm its truth and validity by sifting it through human understanding.**

One of the children of higher criticism is hermeneutics, highly touted in some conservative Christian circles. Like all forms of "higher criticism," none of these approaches require faith. None of them can produce life. None of them can bring one into the presence of God, or enable one to obtain "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph 1:17). There is no "spirit" in them, and thus they cannot motivate the child of God to live in concert with the God of heaven.

Paul's Manner

Paul did not speak because he had reasoned things out, but rather because he believed – and there is a difference. **While flesh imagines that faith can come from understanding Paul's understanding came from his faith.** This is in strict accord with revelation: "Through **faith** we understand" (Heb 11:3). In the text just quoted, the creation of "the worlds" is under consideration.

We are living in a day when human intellect has been emphasized above faith. It has produced a sort of sterile spiritual environment in which little is known of God, and less

you will not find so much as a hint of mere intellectual assent. All of them have the quality of life – spiritual life – about them. There is **faith** "in the name" of Jesus (Acts 3:16), continuing in the **faith** (Acts 14:22), and hearts being purified by **faith** (Acts 15:9). This use of the word "faith" is associated with sanctification (Acts 26:18), being justified (Rom 3:28), and being strong (Rom 4:20). There is also the matters of having access to God (Rom 5:2), standing (Rom 11:20), and self examination (2 Cor 13:5). In addition, this faith is connected with living (Gal 2:20), continuing (Col 1:23), and being established (Col 2:7). There are also the associations of boldness (1 Tim 3:13), love (Tit 3:15), and the hearing of the Word (Heb 4:2). "Faith," as used in Jude 1:3, is also connected with understanding (Heb 1:3). Additionally, this is the very word used to describe the effectiveness of patriarchs of old, all of whom lived before the Gospel was written, and some of whom had not so much as a single word of Scripture in their hand (Heb 11:4,5,7,8,9, 11,17,20,21,22,23,24,27,28,29,30,31).

In other words, Jude used "faith" precisely as it is used throughout Scripture – as being "the substance of

14:1; Acts 9:12; Rom 10:14; Gal 2:16; Tit 3:8; 1 Pet 1:21).

All of this may appear to be a needless diversion from the text, but it is not. **We are living in a day when human intellect has been emphasized above faith.** It has produced a sort of sterile spiritual environment in which little is known of God, and less still is being accomplished for Him.

The Age of Reason

Between the English Revolution of 1688, and the French Revolution of 1789, the "Age of Reason" came into being. During this time "the power of the mind to liberate and improve" was exalted above revelation or illumination. This age was seen as a liberation from superstition and ignorance, most of which they associated with religion – particularly the Christian religion. The roots of this "age" are found in "the humanism of the Renaissance, which encouraged scholarly interests in texts and values." BRITANNICA The rational and empirical were extolled **above** believing a word from God and trusting in the One who gave it – as compared with depending upon the **human diagnosis** of that word.

Here we are, in the massive and marvelously complex world which is said to have been created by the God in whom we trust. How is it that this can be confirmed to our heart and mind? Are we to spend time diagnosing and studying the creation in quest of this knowledge? Will our hearts finally be settled about the origin of the world when we have studied it thoroughly? Is that really the way to obtain enough confidence in the Lord to trust in Him, taking Him at His word?

Indeed, such an approach is pure and unadulterated folly. It will only push the soul further from the Lord of glory. That is not the way to arrive at faith. You cannot study rocks and lower forms of life and end up with living faith – “*the spirit of faith*,” or a faith that motivates and animates the one possessing it.

When accounting for his prodigious and faithful labors, Paul did not cite his research, but his faith! He said he had in possession “*the spirit of faith*.” His was not a pretended faith, like that to which James refers: “*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*” (James 2:26). Such a “*faith*” is no more real than a carcass is a real person. **A body without a spirit cannot do anything.** You cannot hold conversation with it. You cannot delegate responsibility to it. It cannot speak to you, or have it hold your hand, or minister comfort to you. If you are in a dangerous situation, a “*body without the spirit*” cannot warn you. If the eyes of that lifeless body are open, they cannot see anything. If you throw the body into the water, it will not struggle to get to the top. If you throw it into the fire, it will not scream with pain. **It is not as person, and the attributes of a person cannot be found in it – no matter how much you look for them.**

So it is with a person without real faith. You cannot make such an one talk like he is spiritual. He cannot venture into the work of the Lord as though he was alive. He cannot handle the Scripture with in any acceptable way. Such an one cannot draw near to God or resist the devil. He cannot walk in the Spirit, perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, or be filled with the knowledge of God’s will. **Those are all qualities reserved for**

those with faith. They all have to do with being alive. That is why Paul speaks of “*the SPIRIT of faith*.”

Faith’s Origin

The term “*spirit of faith*” accents the **origin** of faith. Nothing that is preceded by the word “*spirit*” – whether good or evil – has its genesis with man. Man has no power to confer what is said to be “*spirit*.”

There are things originated by the devil, such as “*the spirit of whoredoms*” (Hos 4:12), “*the spirit of bondage*” (Rom 8:15), “*the spirit of the world*” (1 Cor 2:12), and “*the spirit of fear*” (2 Tim 1:7). In all of these, “*the spirit*” is what gives vitality to the thing dominating the individual – “*whoredoms*,” “*bondage*,” “*the world*,” or “*fear*.”

In this text, “*the spirit of faith*” sets faith before us as something that is **effective** for God. Just as surely as God breathed into Adam’s nostrils (Gen 2:7), thereby causing him to be alive, sensitive, and productive, **so God has brought faith to us.** That faith, because of its Source, can be described as “*the spirit of faith*.”

During my early years I was subjected to some teaching that derided the very thought that faith comes from God. This was a doctrinal point about which those among whom I had fellowship had much to say. They would often quote Ephesians 2:8, emphasizing that it was not talking about faith, but about salvation: “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*” (Eph 2:8). With intellectually furrowed brows, they would say the antecedent of “*that*” was “*saved*,” not “*faith*.” Somehow they had concluded that the appointed means of obtaining salvation was actually separate from the salvation itself. Of course, this is completely erroneous reasoning, for faith is within the circumference of salvation, not outside of it. It is also within the perimeter of “*grace*,” and not external to it.

However, we are by no means confined to Ephesians 2:8 when considering the origin of faith.

• **FAITH COMES.** “*So then faith*

cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). “*But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster*” (Gal 3:25).

• **GIVEN TO BELIEVE.** “*For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake*” (Phil 1:29).

• **FAITH IS OBTAINED.** “*Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet 1:1).

• **GRACE IS ABUNDANT WITH FAITH.** “*And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*” (1 Tim 1:14).

• **BELIEVING THROUGH GRACE.** “*And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace*” (Acts 18:27).

• **FAITH FROM GOD AND CHRIST.** “*Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Eph 6:23).

It is this fact – **faith coming**



from God and through grace – that allows for the expression “*the spirit of faith*.” Were it not for faith’s Divine origin, there could be no spirit or life in faith at all. Faith would, in such a case, be nothing more than mental acquiescence to the truth. However, this kind of response has no moral compulsion or spiritual power. A mere assent to the truth cannot compel a person to speak the truth of God – particularly under great duress and opposition. If this is not the case, then all life does not really come from God. That possibility, however, is violently thrown to the ground by both the content and the nature of Scripture. In every sense of the word “*the Spirit of life*” is “**from God**” (Rev 11:11). It is, after all, the Spirit that “*giveth life*” (2 Cor 3:6).

This circumstance – being compelled by “*the spirit of faith*” – accounts for much of the sterility that exists in the modern church. The condition is so common that people have grown accustomed to it and think it is

part and parcel of life in Christ Jesus. **The truth of the matter is that both life and faith are glaringly absent in much of the religion of our day.** Meager and insipid speeches ooze from the pulpits of the land that offer no challenge to the lethargic. Those who are content to maintain a worldly mind-set are by no means intimidated when they “go to church.” It is quite easy to keep ones preferences for the fashions and fads of the world and still be readily received by the “church” folk.

Faced with such circumstances, **the man of God** would be speaking up, pointing out the essentiality of putting off the old man, putting on the new man, and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. A trumpet sound would be emitting from the pulpits and classrooms of the land, warning people of the wrath to come, and that “*the unrighteousness shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Cor 6:9).

When this does not happen, it

betrays the **absence** of “*the spirit of faith*.” It simply is not present, as our text will confirm. It is time for the saints of God to cease any attempt to explain the presence of non-preaching preachers and non-teaching teachers.

We will now see that faith has always had the same origin and quality, whether found in Abel or Paul, David or Timothy, Abraham or Peter. There is, after all, only “*one faith*” (Eph 4:5). In some ages, it was less matured than it can be now, since Jesus is enthroned in, and ministering from, heaven. Yet, it is the “*same*” faith – the same animating principle. **It is still the solitary means of receiving from God participating in His good work.**

The phrase “*the spirit of faith*,” refers to faith itself. **This is faith in its working stance.** It is faith moving and motivating the one possessing it to engage in the work of the Lord, and to do so fervently and confidently.

ACCORDING AS IT IS WRITTEN

“^{13b} . . . **according as it is written . . .**” Other versions read, “*according to what is written*,”^{NKJV} “*It is written*,”^{NIV} “*that is in accordance with Scripture*,”^{NRSV} “*as he who wrote*,”^{RSV} “*as it is said in the writings*,”^{BBE} “*as is*

appealing to the one thing that can make us “wise unto salvation” – the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15). That wisdom is not to be confined to initial salvation, when we are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the

2:15). We are told that “*our salvation is nearer than when we first believed*” (Rom 13:11). This is a salvation that no one can afford to “*neglect*” – **which means we are still actively involved in it** (Heb 2:3).

The Scriptures clarify every aspect of salvation, from its appropriation to its culmination. Therefore, in order to clear up what he has said about “the spirit of faith,” Paul will now appeal to the Scriptures.

described in Scripture,” and “*like that mentioned in Scripture.*”^{PHILLIPS}

The apostle will now explain more fully what he has said. **He will bring his words within our heart’s grasp by**

kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col 1:13). We are not finished with the appropriation of salvation at that time. There remains a salvation to be “*revealed*” at the coming of Christ Jesus (1 Pet 1:5). We are also in the process of working out our own salvation “*with fear and trembling*” (Phil

The Scriptures clarify every aspect of salvation, from its appropriation to its culmination. Therefore, in order to clear up what he has said about “*the spirit of faith*,” Paul will now appeal to the Scriptures.

THE SUPERIORITY OF SCRIPTURAL EXPRESSIONS

Enough cannot said concerning the superiority of Scriptural expression. Sectarian men have a tendency to speak of religious experiences in a way that is **not** expressed in Scripture. **Corrupted religion requires a corrupted vocabulary.** Also, to promote an agenda that in not revealed in Scripture, a special religious nomenclature must be developed. Therefore men attempt to explain sin with expressions like “original

sin,” mortal sin,” “venial sin,” and “inherited sin.” There are also expressions that are offered to explain, what is purported to be, profound spiritual experiences. “The baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking on tongues,” “falling under the power,” “slain in the Spirit,” and “the second blessing.” Others, who tend to be more cerebral in their religion, speak of a “law of silence,” “Scriptural precedence,” New Testament Law,” and “the law of exclusion.” Others choose to speak of “the plan of salvation,” “new testament church,” “the great commission,” and “the authority of the elders.” Still others, seeking to delineate between dead and lifeless religion use terms like “cheap grace,” “dead faith,” and “saving faith.”

Even though not a single one of these terms are expressed in any version of Scripture, yet they are used to divide brethren, promote specific religious groups, and even become the basis for the writing of theological books. Perhaps you have

been faced with the look of religious consternation when you have refused to receive such expressions as valid.

Thus, Paul does not speak in terms of religious tradition. He chooses to use words “*words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the [Holy] Spirit, combining and interpreting spiritual truths with spiritual language [to those who possess the Holy Spirit]*”^{AMPLIFIED} (1 Cor 2:13).

When Peter expounded the events of Pentecost, he appealed to what was written: “*This is that spoken by the prophet Joel . . .*” (Acts 2:16-21; Joel 2:28-32). He followed the same procedure in declaring Jesus: “*For David speaketh concerning Him . . .*” (Acts 2:25-28; Psa 16:8-11). And again, “*Therefore being a prophet . . . spake of the resurrection of Christ*” (Acts 2:30-31; 2 Sam 7:11-16; Psa 16:10). When Paul taught concerning the support of those laboring in the Gospel, he appealed to what had been written. “*Do ye not know that they which minister*

about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Cor 9:14; Lev 6:16-18,26; Num 5:9-10; 18:8-20). When he taught on giving, establishing that God provides for those who give to His work, Paul again appealed to what was written. “*But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack*” (2 Cor 8:14-15).

If we are not explaining our experiences or persuasions in terms of Scripture, we should zealously seek to confirm this **can** be done – then be up and doing it. If we cannot speak in this manner, or if the Scriptures do not speak of our experience, it is best to listen. Institutional jargon is never in order.

BELIEVING AND SPEAKING

“^{13c} . . . *I believed, and therefore have I spoken.*”

Mentioning the Hebrew Scriptures to a Gentile Church

The Corinthian assembly was comprised mostly of Greeks, or Gentiles. Although some Jews were among them, this was not a converted Jewish synagogue. Yet Paul is going to speak to them concerning the Hebrew Scriptures – the Psalms in particular. Writing to a Greek church in terms of the Psalms would probably not be acceptable in many churches of our day. It would, in the judgment of some, be more fashionable to use denominational clichés – particularly since men tend to be more acquainted with them than with the Scriptures themselves.

However, there is an underlying supposition that is evident in Scripture. It is that those in Christ Jesus are exposing their minds to Scripture. The saints of God

are never exhorted to personally read the Scriptures, even though the public reading of them is urged (1 Tim 4:13). Moses declared, and Jesus confirmed in His wilderness temptation that “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*” (Matt 4:4; Deut 8:3). Paul reminded Timothy that he had, in fact, known the Scriptures from a youth, and that they are able to “*make thee wise unto salvation*” (2 Tim 3:15). He also affirmed they were given by the inspiration of God, and have been given to us “*that the man of God may be perfect,*

thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16-17). They are further “*written for our admonition*” (1 Cor 10:11), and “*our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*” (Rom 15:4).

Peter admonishes us, “*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious*” (1 Pet 2:2-3). **But never are the saints admonished to “read the Scriptures.”** Paul referred to “*when*” the Ephesians read his Epistle (Eph 3:4),

However, there is an underlying supposition that is evident in Scripture. It is that those in Christ Jesus are exposing their minds to Scripture.

and admonished the Colossians to “*read the epistle from Laodicea*” (Col 4:16) – both being newly written. The Thessalonians were also charged with reading Paul’s epistle “*unto all the holy brethren*” (1 Thess 5:27). **Still, believers are never exhorted to read the established Scriptures.**

There is a reason for this circumstance. **It is assumed believers are ingesting the Word of God regularly.** We already know that “*newness of life*” cannot be sustained independently of the Word of God, for man lives “*by every word of God*” (Lk 4:4). **Apostolic doctrine was delivered in such a manner as provoked recourse to the Scriptures.** That is why it is said of the Bereans, “*they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so*” (Acts 17:11).

What a different scenario we have today! The modern church is presenting Bible-reading plans to its constituency to get them into the Word. Rarely will you come across a professing Christian who has actually read the Bible in its entirety. There is a pervading ignorance of

Paul, on the other hand, depends upon the Scriptures to confirm what he is teaching. He also expresses what He is doing in terms of Scripture. He assumes the people are acquainted with the Word of God. If they are not, his words will have little meaning to them. This manner of speaking differs significantly from what is being billed as Christian preaching and teaching in these days. Too often preachers and teachers appeal to movies, sports, and other contemporary fads and involvements to explain what they are saying. Paul appealed more to the Scriptures. The exceptions to this rule are phenomenally few (i.e. 1 Cor 9:14-26).

God never suggests anyone is accepted by, or alive to, Him who does not know His Word. If spiritual life could be sustained independently of the Word of God, we would have to cut the words of Moses and of Jesus, (pertaining to living by every word of God), out of Scripture, for there would be no truth to them.

We will now see a superb example of knowing how to “*rightly divide,*” KJV or “*handling accurately,*” “*the word of truth*” (2 Tim 2:15). The text to which

pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow,”³ “*I was brought low.*”⁶

Yet, in all of his trouble, David maintained his faith – he believed: “*I love the Lord,*”¹ “*I will call upon Him as long as I live,*”² “*Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful,*”⁵ “*The Lord preserveth the simple,*”⁶ “*Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee,*”⁷ “*I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.*”⁹

These are all expressions of faith. They represent the manner in which faith reasons or thinks. Faith settles in upon the Lord, focusing upon Him rather than upon trouble. **If anything is going to be diagnosed, it will be the Lord, not the trouble!** David reasoned that the Lord was gracious and merciful. He preserves the simple, and deals bountifully with those who seek Him. Those were not the mere statements of a creed, or the recitation of the tenets of a theological position. These are what David saw in the Lord – what He comprehended the Lord to be. His solid persuasion is wrapped up in the words, “*I believed!*”

Men have a tendency to use “*believe*” in a different sense – one that is foreign to Scripture. Often you will hear the question, “*What do you believe?*” or “*What does your church believe?*” The response is generally a list of fundamentals that have been embraced. However, such a view of believing is nearly worthless when one is in the fiery furnace of trial.

The words “*I believed*” reflect a reasoning process, and a conclusion that provoke action. There is deliberation in believing, as well as perception and resolve. When Abraham “*believed God*” concerning Sarah having a son, he reasoned in a certain way. “*And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb*” (Rom 4:19). Again, when the Lord commanded Abraham to offer Isaac, his only begotten son, as a burnt offering, Abraham’s faith dictated how he thought. “*By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up*

These are all expressions of faith. They represent the manner in which faith reasons or thinks. Faith settles in upon the Lord, focusing upon Him rather than upon trouble. If anything is going to be diagnosed, it will be the Lord, not the trouble!

Scripture throughout the professed church, and everyone knows it. **Whatever is being preached, generally speaking, the people have not made a connection with that preaching and “*the Scriptures.*”**

Greatly compounding the problem, the adoption of sectarian expressions and psychological jargon discourages the reading of the Scriptures, because those expressions are not found in the Scriptures, and this they appear to be irrelevant to life.

Paul refers to Psalm 116:10: “*I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted.*” He will extract a single phrase from this brief verse, affirming that it precisely describes his own circumstance.

I BELIEVED

“ . . . *I believed . . .* ” Other versions read, “*I have believed,*”^{DARBY} and “*I believed in God.*”^{NLT}

In the 116th Psalm, David has spoken of his affliction and sorrow: “*The sorrows of death compassed me, and the*

Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: **accounting that God was able to raise him up**, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb 11:17-19).

As our text will confirm, faith has a certain compelling power in it. It alters the way a person thinks and how he speaks. Whether we are speaking of an individual or a collective body, spiritual deficiency can always be traced to an inadequate faith. Contrariwise, spiritual sufficiency always springs from a robust faith. True adequacy and faith are always joined.

THEREFORE HAVE I SPOKEN

“... and therefore have I spoken”

Other versions read, “and therefore I spoke,”^{NKJV} “and so I spoke,”^{NRSV} “therefore did I speak,”^{ASV} “the words from my mouth came from the faith in my heart,”^{BBE} “therefore I did speak,”^{YLT} and “so I spoke.”^{IE}

As our text will confirm, faith has a certain compelling power in it. It alters the way a person thinks and how he speaks. Whether we are speaking of an individual or a collective body, spiritual deficiency can always be traced to an inadequate faith.

In his adversity, David cried out to God: “Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.”⁴ In faithfulness, the Lord delivered him: “He hath heard the voice of my supplications,”¹ “I was brought low and He helped me,”⁶ “For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.”⁸

In David’s assessment of God, he said He was gracious, righteous, and merciful. Why did David say those things? **It was because he “believed.”** He saw the Lord as having an inclination

toward himself in, or during, his affliction. He confessed the Lord had “helped” him, “dealt bountifully” with him, “delivered” his soul from death, his “eyes from tears,” and his “feet from falling.” Why did David say those things? **It was because he “believed.”** He was persuaded of the reality of those things.

In the 116th Psalm David also confessed to speaking “in haste,” saying “All men are liars” (verse 11). This part of the Psalm, however, is not being considered by Paul. He has extracted David’s statement on believing.

MOVED BY BELIEVING

“^{13d} ... we also believe, and therefore speak”

Paul found a Scriptural expression that precisely described his personal motivation. This is **not** owing to fleshly commonality between himself and David – i.e. their Jewish heritage or their outward circumstances. It is **not** that both of them had the same emotional make-up, and therefore tended to express themselves similarly. Rather, both of them were sensitive to the Lord, and had abandoned competing pursuits in order to serve Him. David excelled under the Old Covenant, and Paul excelled under the New. **Because of this, the Lord Himself taught them how to speak.**

Paul is going to use David’s words in a different sense. David’s words had nothing whatsoever to do with preaching. His words were spoken to God, not to men. They were also words spoken to his own soul in a sort of self-admonition: “Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the

LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee” (Psa 116:7). Those with an inordinate affection for “context” will find it difficult to justify the manner in which Paul uses these words. It simply does not comport with the Psalmic context.

However, the words of Scripture have a spirit also. That is, because they are living words, they can be used to express differing, but legitimate, spiritual experiences. For example, Hosea spoke of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt when he wrote, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt” (Hosea 11:1). However, that language proved to be perfectly suitable when describing the infant Jesus being brought back from Egypt following Herod’s death. Thus Matthew wrote, “When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: **that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I**

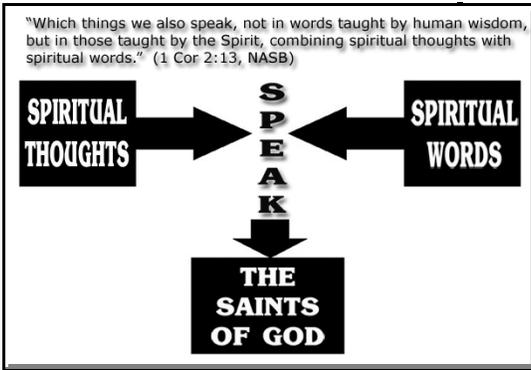
called my Son” (Mat 2:14-15).

Proper Words

The text before us is an example of speaking in words that are taught by the Holy Spirit: “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor 2:13). Other versions read, “combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words,”^{NASB} “expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words,”^{NIV} “interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual,”^{NRSV} and “combining and interpreting spiritual truths with spiritual language [to those who possess the Holy Spirit].”^{AMPLIFIED} **The point is that spiritual thoughts are to come in the container of spiritual words.** That is what makes them discernible to spiritual people.

One of the great weaknesses of contemporary Christianity is its vocabulary. Too often the language and

Faith is the motivating and animating principle or law of the Kingdom – by Given O. Blakely



WE ALSO BELIEVE

"... we also believe..."
 Other versions read, "we too believe,"^{RSV} "faith in my heart,"^{BBE} "I believed in God,"^{NLT} and "I believed."^{PHILLIPS}

The word "believe" has particular significance here, else it would not have been used. This word is to be perceived in light how it was used in the Scriptures. First, this is not a common word in Moses and the

Prophets. From Genesis through Malachi, the KJV uses this word only twenty-two times (Gen 15:6; 45:26; Ex 4:31; 14:31; Num 20:12; Deut 9:23; 1 Sam 27:12; 1 Kgs 10:7; 2 Chron 9:6; Job 29:24; Psa 27:13; 78:22,32; 106:12,24; 116:10; 119:66; Isa 53:1; Jer 40:14; Lam 4:12; Dan 6:23; Jon 3:5). Five of those times "believed not" is the expression (1 Kgs 10:7; 2 Chron 9:6; Psa 78:22,32; 106:24). It is used in the NKJV and NASB only eleven times, and in the NIV only seven times.

As used in the Old Covenant Scriptures, the word "believe" means to trust in, and be assured of. **The note of confidence is also found in the word.** It depicts a person being totally reliant upon the Lord, not doubting His word, and persuaded that His promises would come to pass. This perfectly parallels the meaning of the word as used by the Apostles. Doctrinally, the Spirit defined believing (which is "faith" in the active mode) in the book of Hebrews. "Now faith is the **substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen**" (Heb 11:1). That is, faith is the faculty by which men are assured of the realities of God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, and what they have said about Themselves, Their accomplishments, and Their commitments. **The things of God are made substantiative to the soul through faith, so that there is question about their reality.** Faith brings the evidence of kingdom realities to the individual, so that they do not have to be seen or touched to verify their existence.

Faith lifts us above the domain of sense and time. It accesses what is beyond the reach of natural senses and abilities. It confirms to the mind the presence of

realities that cannot be seen, persuading the heart of their reality and benefit.

Believing is the practical employment of faith. It is not "believing" after the manner of the world. In this world, in the fleshly sense of the word, men can believe something that has absolutely no relevance to them. They may not shape their lives around what they say they "believe," but only give mental assent to this or that. Thus people say they believe in God, but they do not serve Him. They believe in heaven, but they do not prepare to go there. They believe in the Bible, but they do not read it, or attempt to understand it.

The "believing" of Scripture is quite different. It is not done with the mind, but with the heart. As it is written, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom 10:10). This means the person himself is involved in the believing.

When Paul confesses, "we also believe," he is not saying he merely consented to the truth of the Gospel. The reality of the Gospel has rather burst upon his heart. **He sees its truth, is convinced of it, and is conforming his whole life to it.** No person who fails to conform his life to the Lord Jesus has believed on Him. No person who does not shape his life by the Gospel has believed it. Paul will even go so far as to suggest the person who remains silent about the Gospel has not believed it – at least not in an acceptable way.

AND THEREFORE SPEAK

"... and therefore speak" Other versions read, "therefore also we speak,"^{NASB} "and so we speak,"^{NRSV} "our words are the outcome of our faith,"^{BBE} "For which cause we also speak,"^{DOUAY} "and therefore we, too, speak,"^{NJB} "and so I speak,"^{NLT} and "and that is why we speak."^{IE}

Paul did not speak because he was compelled by a law to do so. He was rather moved by believing – by his personal faith. Similarly, it is "WHEN they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ," that the people "were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). **Faith does have a constraining power.** If people can ever

expressions of the world are employed to communicate spiritual realities. Often terms are used that are unique to the younger generation, or to the music and entertainment world. It is not unusual to find church marques posting the names of current movies, together with, what they conceive to be, a spiritual point. The practice of couching spiritual concepts in contemporary phraseology is a questionable one, to say the least. A brief word about this will further set the stage for our comments on this text.

The writings of Moses and the Prophets provide several things that are essential to the development of spiritual maturity. Among them is the history of all relevant beginnings. There is also the dealings of God with various people, which provide an index to His character. The Law was given to define sin, and the promises of a Messiah were given to teach us what to expect in a Savior.

In addition to these things, Moses and the Prophets provide a vocabulary through which the truth can be communicated to us. The development of words like "sacrifice," "altar," "tabernacle," "offering," "priest," "high priest," and "covenant" are cases in point. There are also words like "lamb," "wilderness," "blood," "darkness," "light," and "life." **Each of these are like containers in which Divine thoughts can be deposited.** They make it possible for accurate and profitable communication to take place among men.

When language is diluted with worldly terms, the edge of truth is dulled, and spiritual understanding becomes more difficult. This is one of the reasons for Christ and the Apostles constant reference to what was "written."

be brought to believe, they will act upon that faith.

Notice how Paul makes this statement: *“we also believe, and therefore speak.”* The word *“therefore”* means “consequently,” or “for which cause,” STRONG’S and “on which account.” THAYER The idea is this: *“because we have believed, we have spoken.”* His faith compelled him to

speak, also dictating what he said, and how he said it – with assurance.

This aspect of faith must be seen. **Faith is compelling.** That, of course, is the clear message that comes through in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, in which we read the word *“BY faith”* sixteen times. **That is, faith produced the action described.**

It was *“out of the abundance of the heart”* that Paul spoke (Matt 12:34). The truth had become a part of himself. He was not parroting the *“tradition of the elders,”* as the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 15:2). He was rather speaking what he believed – what he had perceived, ingested, and by which he lived. That, of course, is the **only** posture to be maintained when preaching or teaching.

KNOWING WHAT GOD HAS DONE



“ 14a Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus . . . ”

There are key facts that, when known by faith, produce **certainty** in the heart. Because faith is *“in”* God and Christ, the following facts pertain to Deity.

KNOWING

“Knowing . . . ” Other versions read, *“Because we know,”* NIV *“Because we are certain,”* BBE *“realizing,”* NJB *“Assured,”* AMPLIFIED and *“we know for certain.”* PHILLIPS

Faith ushers us into the realm of spiritual knowledge – that is, into the placed where we come to perceive and understand things that are beyond the reach of the human senses. Faith is the great verifier of truth – it confirms, substantiates, and establishes the truth to the heart. This kind of knowledge cannot be satisfactorily explained to those who are dominated by

“the carnal mind,” or the *“mind of the flesh.”* The one who is confined to the domain of nature *“receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (1 Cor 2:14).

However, the one who believes boldly speaks forth the truth with a knowledge and confidence that defies explanation. Such a one is not intimidated by the world’s rejection, or even by those who inflict pain and threaten to kill. The person who believes and knows the things of God is more sure of the Lord than of men, and of eternity than of the present.

Academic knowledge, or the knowledge based on formal study, is inferior to the knowledge that comes from faith. **Although a knowledge of the Scriptures themselves is imperative, unless the person believes, the knowledge of this text will not be experienced.**

What now follows will appear to be rudimentary, but it is not. The knowledge that comes from believing takes hold of these facts, sees their implications, and is able to associate them with the experience of life in Christ Jesus. Knowing these facts while living in the world is something like a person being in deep water who is a good swimmer and knows it. A person who has read books on swimming may be able to recite with perfection the theory of swimming, but

until he *“knows”* how to swim, he will thrash around waters, and possibly drown, rather than swim upon them.

HE WHICH RAISED UP THE LORD JESUS

“. . . that He which raised up the Lord Jesus . . . ” Other versions read, *“He who made the Lord Jesus come back from the dead,”* BBE *“brought the Lord Jesus back from death,”* LIVING and *“raised the Lord Jesus from death.”* PHILLIPS

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to *“sound doctrine.”* In the Apostolic doctrine (Acts through Jude), there are at least seventy one references to Christ’s resurrection. It was a main theme of exposition. **When preaching and teaching fails to make much of the resurrection of Christ, it is skewed in the wrong direction – even though much of what is said may be technically right.** A brief review of the associations made with Christ’s resurrection will suffice to buttress this point. Its doctrinal preeminence will be very apparent.

- ☛ Christ’s resurrection is related to Him **sitting on the throne of David** (Acts 2:30-32).
- ☛ It is related to the revelation of **Christ’s miraculous power** (Acts 4:10).
- ☛ Testifying of the resurrection of Christ resulted in **“great grace”** being upon them all (Acts 4:33).
- ☛ It was the reversal of the judgment of men against Jesus (Acts 5:30).

- ☛ The resurrection of Christ is tied to **repentance and forgiveness** (Acts 5:31).
- ☛ Many **promises** made to the Jews were fulfilled by Christ being raised (Acts 13:32-33).
- ☛ The assurance that Christ will **judge the world** is found in His resurrection (Acts 17:31).
- ☛ Paul preached that it was **necessary** for Christ to be the **first** to rise from the dead (Acts 26:23).
- ☛ Jesus was declared to be the Son of God **with power** “*by the resurrection from the dead*” (Rom 1:4).
- ☛ **Righteousness is imputed** to those who believe God has raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 4:24).
- ☛ Jesus was raised **for our justification** (Rom 4:25).
- ☛ We are **saved** by Christ’s resurrection life (Rom 5:10).
- ☛ Christ’s resurrection **validates our baptism** (Rom 6:3-4; 1 Pet 3:21).
- ☛ The **sanctified life** is possible because Jesus is raised from the dead (Rom 8:11).
- ☛ **Our resurrection** from the dead is linked with Christ’s resurrection (1 Cor 6:14).
- ☛ The **effectiveness of preaching** is traced to the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 15:14-15).
- ☛ **The power of faith and the reality of forgiveness** are owing to Christ’s resurrection (1 Cor 15:15).
- ☛ The **experience** of “*the power of God*” is related to Christ’s resurrection (2 Cor 13:4).
- ☛ **The power** that is devoted to the saints is the power exerted when Jesus was raised from the dead (Eph 1:19-20).
- ☛ The “*power of His resurrection*” is something to be **experienced** (Phil

In Christ’s death, His enemies did the worst they could do. It represented the best success they could possible have, whether it was the Jewish leaders and the people, or the Satan’s powers of darkness.

3:10).

- ☛ The **present preeminence of Christ** is related to His resurrection (Col 1:18).
- ☛ **Waiting for Christ to return**, and being **delivered from the wrath** to come are associated with His resurrection (1 Thess 1:10).
- ☛ The resurrection related to Christ being “*the great Shepherd of the sheep*” (Heb 13:20).
- ☛ **The new birth** is related to Christ’s resurrection (1 Pet 1:3).
- ☛ **Believing in God** is associated with the resurrection of Christ (1 Pet 1:21).
- ☛ The resurrection of Christ is related to Him **bringing us to God** (1 Pet 3:18).

When, therefore, Paul says he speaks “*knowing He which raised up the Lord Jesus,*” he is not merely reciting a point of doctrine. He has seen the necessity and implications of that resurrection, and it has fortified Him to “*speak the truth in love.*”

Death is referred to as “*the last enemy*” (1 Cor 15:26). By saying “*last,*” the Spirit is not referring to mere sequence. **Death is the most successful enemy – the last bastion of darkness.** It represents the **last** battle – the devil’s **last** effort to pull us into his domain. If Jesus was “*raised from the dead,*” He was brought back from the **final** and **most formidable** of all confines. There is no greater obstacle than death. **If it has been defeated, everything else has been reduced to**

nothing more than “footmen” (Jer 12:5). In Christ’s death, His enemies did the **worst** they could do. It represented the **best** success they could possible have, whether it was the Jewish leaders and the people, or the Satan’s powers of darkness.

Yet, after the people and “*the power of darkness*” who manipulated them had issued their edict, and carried it out, God nullified their judgment. In one grand reversal He undid everything they did. He “*raised up the Lord Jesus.*” **From that day until this very day, Jesus has never faced another enemy in combat!** Everything – even His enemies – are under His feet, and He is, in every sense “*Lord of all*” (Acts 10:36). His resurrection not only put Jesus out His enemies’ reach, it put all of them under His feet. They all are subject to Him, and obey Him.

When a person “*knows*” this – that God raised Jesus from the dead – all enemies are reduced to ashes. The Gospel is seen as something to be proclaimed, and that without fear. **There is no experience or adversity that is powerful enough to turn the person who lives in the vibrant knowledge and understanding that God has raised Jesus from the dead.**

I have often pondered the glaring absence of Christ’s resurrection in much of the preaching of our day. It is undeniable evidence of the lack of faith, and the consequent lack of power that pervades the modern Christendom. It is one of the great tragedies of our time. There is no satisfactory explanation for this condition. Nothing – absolutely nothing – about salvation has contributed to this situation. It is the result of unbelief, and the consequent unlawful attachment to this present evil world.

KNOWING WHAT GOD WILL DO

^{14b} *... shall raise up us also by Jesus ...* "Other versions read, *"will also raise us with Jesus,"* NIV *"will do the same for us,"* BBE *"shall raise us up also by Jesus,"* GENEVA *"will raise us up with Jesus in our turn,"* NJB *"us also through Jesus shall raise up,"* YLT *"will also bring us back to life with Jesus,"* LIVING *"He will also raise us with Jesus,"* IE *"will raise us also to be with Jesus,"* WEYMOUTH and *"shall also by Him raise us."* PHILLIPS

Faith moves us to look forward to the coming of the Lord

keep under our body, and *"bring it into subjection"* to the will of God (1 Cor 9:27). We are charged with the work of glorifying God in our *"body"* (1 Cor 6:20). In order to do this, we must perceive the temporality of our present condition. Until, in our hearts, we understand the purpose of God for our bodies, we will not be able to successfully subdue them.

OUR BODIES TO BE REDEEMED

The salvation of God includes the redemption of our bodies – and it will not be fully experienced until that occurs.

until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph 1:14). The *"purchased possession"* is our body. It has been *"bought with a price,"* as affirmed in First Corinthians 6:19-20.

In the next chapter Paul will deal extensively with the matter of our longing for the resurrection body (2 Cor 5:1-5).

The anticipation of the resurrection is a fundamental longing in the life of faith. Speaking of the will of His Father, Jesus concluded His remarks by saying no less than three times, *"and I will raise him up at the last day"* (John 6:40,44,54). He preceded those remarks by saying, *"And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day"* (John 6:39).

During his prodigious ministry, Paul referred to this as *"the hope and resurrection of the dead"* (Acts 23:6). He testified that one of his personal objectives was to *"attain unto the resurrection of the dead"* (Phil 3:11). In his first letter to the Corinthians he testified, *"And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power"* (1 Cor 6:14). In his teaching to the Thessalonians, Paul also made much of the resurrection. *"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (1 Th 4:14-17).

Knowing that God is going to raise the dead impacts upon the way we preach and teach. Some men speak

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and the attending resurrection from the dead. Presently we have *"this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us"* (2 Cor 4:7). These *"vessels"* – our bodies – are a point of weakness. They are in sharp contrast to the *"treasure"* that is contained in them. They are appropriately referred to as *"vile bodies"* (Phil 3:21), and *"the body of this death"* (Rom 7:24). The *"deeds of the body"* are to be *"mortified"* *"through the Spirit"* (Rom 8:13). For those in Christ Jesus, in whom Christ abides, it is said of the body, *"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin"* (Rom 8:10). For these reasons, as long as we are *"at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord"* (2 Cor 5:6).

This circumstance is a humiliating one, removing any reason for boasting in the flesh. Further, while, from one point of view, *"the body is dead,"* we must still contend with it. It is *"dead"* in the sense of having no living relationship with God. Yet, because it is connected with us, we must

Those in Christ are depicted as groaning under the burden of mortality, longing for their appointed donning of immortality. As it is written, *"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"* (Rom 8:22-23). To have an eternal treasure in a deteriorating vessel is the cause for groaning. However, that groaning will not be forever. There is a facet of *"redemption"* yet to be experienced – and it is glorious: *"the redemption of our body."*

This *"redemption"* is equated with *"the adoption,"* when our salvation will be complete – spirit, soul, and body. Elsewhere this is referred to in the following words: *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance"*

with life in this world being the primary reference point. Thus they seek to resolve all manner of temporal problems, speaking as though this world was the primary one. Others, convinced in their hearts of the reality of the resurrection, preach and teach with a primary regard to the resurrection of the dead. It is at that

point that the saying will come to pass, *“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still”* (Rev 22:11).

Those who are not ready to

stand before the Lord at that time will never be ready, and those who are adequately prepared will be ushered into His presence for evermore. Paul preached with this in mind, and it effected what he said, and how and when he said it. The shadow of eternity was on his preaching.

KNOWING THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME

^{14c} **... and shall present us with you.** Other versions read, *“and will present us with you in His presence,”*^{NIV} *“and will bring us with you into His presence,”*^{NRSV} *“and will give us a place in His glory with you,”*^{BBE} *“and place us with you,”*^{DOUAY} *“and shall set us with you,”*^{GENEVA} *“and place us with you in His presence,”*^{NAB} *“and bring us to Himself – and you as well,”*^{NJB} *“and present us to Him along with you,”*^{LIVING} *“and cause both us and you to stand in His own presence,”*^{WEYMOUTH} *“and raise me too in fellowship with you,”*^{WILLIAMS} *“and set me at your side in His presence,”*^{MONTGOMERY} *“and bring us [along] with you into His presence,”*^{AMPLIFIED} *“We shall stand together before Him.”*^{PHILLIPS}

What is the ultimate objective toward which kingdom labors are pointed? What is the aim of it all? For some, it is to simply have a prosperous and relatively trouble-free life in this world. Notice the progression of this text – how different it is from a worldly assessment of Divine objective. First, God raised Jesus from the dead. As a direct result of that, He will raise us from the dead. As a result of that, He will **“present”** all of us together to Himself – *“a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”* (Eph 5:27).

This presentation is a formal one, like the presentation of a bride to the bridegroom. It will take place before an assembled universe as the redeemed are separated from the ungodly as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats (Matt 25:32). This is one of the reasons for our reconciliation to God – that Christ might **“present you holy**

and unblameable and unproveable in His sight” (Col 1:22). Jude confirms the possibility of such a marvelous presentation: *“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy”* (Jude 1:24).

With this ultimate presentation in mind, Paul sought to so preach and teach that he could present a pure people to Christ. *“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”* (2 Cor 11:2). And again, *“Whom we preach, warning every man,*

and “without spot or wrinkle.” Any other kind of appearance is unacceptable.

I have observed over the years that an improper agenda does not allow for these considerations. One of the traits of *“another Jesus”* (2 Cor 11:4) and *“another Gospel”* (Gal 1:6) is that eternity is of little consequence. Jesus being raised from the dead may be acknowledged, but it is not given a place of preeminence. The raising of all the dead may be admitted in a creedal way, but it will not be viewed with a keen and lasting interest. The presentation of the people of God to the Lord of glory may be part of the official tenets of the

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and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col 1:28).

It is true that *“we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ”* (Rom 14:10). And again, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”* (2 Cor 5:10). **The critical issue is how we will appear at that time.** The aim of redemption is to provide for an appearance that will be *“without fault,”*

organization, but it is not important enough to emphasize.

All of this betrays an emphasis that is wrong – an emphasis that cannot possibly yield acceptable results. **If preaching and teaching does not make much of Jesus being raised from the dead, ourselves being raised from the dead, and the presentation of the bride to Christ, what is being said cannot be acceptable, and is thus powerless.** There is no room for conjecture on this point. This is simply the way it is.

FOR OUR SAKES

^{15a} *For all things are for your sakes . . .*”

Spiritual life is not an adjunct, or accessory, to living. It pervades and influence the whole of life. This is not only true of one’s personal life, but of the effects of that life upon the rest of the body of Christ. In every sense of the word, *“For none of us liveth unto himself,”* or *“lives to himself alone”*^{NIV} (Rom 14:8). It is this circumstance that mandated the following observation.

Paul sees himself within a vast

being distressed, **not** being in despair, **not** being forsaken, and **not** being destroyed. **He has walked in the very midst of the power of the enemy, and at the same time has participated in a power greater than that of the enemy.**

Conflict is an aspect of spiritual life that causes the weak and feeble to stumble. Because they have **not** died with Jesus to a significant degree, they have attached too great of a value to their own lives. Consequently trouble is disconcerting to them. They can be heard

purpose.

Already the Apostle has interpreted *“all things”* through the Person of Christ. **He has depicted the whole of life as “the death of Jesus” and “the life also of Jesus” being at work in us** (4:10-12). From this lofty view, life is not merely the child of God being battered by the devil, then being comforted by the Lord. There is more to the hard experiences of life than that. Death and life are engaged in a struggle within our very persons, and we ought to expect pain and sorrow, as well as comfort and joy, to issue from the battle.

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Now, however, the Apostle adds another marvelous facet to the already-complex jewel of life. **Everything that happens to the individual is not necessarily for that individual’s sake.** Keep in mind, the *“all things”* of reference have to do with the complex personal experiences Paul has acknowledged. Thus the NIV reads, *“All this is for your benefit.”*

ARE FOR YOUR SAKES

“ . . . are for your sakes . . . ” Other versions read, *“for your benefit,”*^{NIV} *“on account of you,”*^{BBE} *“is for you,”*^{NAB} *“are because of you,”*^{YLT} and *“are working out for your benefit.”*^{PHILLIPS}

This is Paul’s commentary on the words, *“So then, death worketh in us, but life in you”* (v 12). In order for the Corinthians to receive extraordinary things from God, they were filtered through the extraordinary experiences of the Apostle Paul. **That is, in order to bring the truth to them, Paul was led through troubled waters so that he might drink more deeply of the water of life.**

The Corinthians were in the citadel of Grecian culture, where human wisdom had been exalted, and culture was held in high veneration. **This was not an environment in which haphazard kingdom labors would be honored.** A person who was easily discouraged would soon quit after laboring in this kind of surrounding. Paul’s character would be

spiritual arena in which more is at stake than his own personal interests. It is a perception of enormous consequence when we are able to see that the world does not revolve around us personally. The things that happen to us are not confined to our own lives. **There are, as this text will affirm, experiences of life that are intended for the benefit of others.** There is a level of intra-involvement in the body of Christ that is most beautiful to behold.

FOR ALL THINGS

“For all things . . . ” Other versions read, *“All this,”*^{NIV} *“Yes, everything,”*^{NRSV} *“For it is all,”*^{RSV} *“Everything indeed,”*^{NAB} *“These sufferings of ours,”*^{LIVING} *“Everything happens,”*^{IE} and *“All this.”*^{WEYMOUTH}

Paul has already enumerated some remarkable experiences that have come to him: trouble on every side, perplexity, persecution, and being cast down. In the very midst of these hard encounters, he has also realized offsetting things: **not**

to say, *“Why did this happen to me?”*, or some similar query. There remains in *“the natural man”* this propensity to think that a quiet and peaceful life confirms Divine favor, and a troubled one is a sign of Divine disapproval. This tendency is helped along by much of the preaching and teaching of the day. Also, some of the reasoning foundations of the counseling fad that is upon us presumes precisely the same thing. Psychiatry attempts to explain trouble and disruption by searching for some fundamental weakness, debility, or abuse. There are also some who account for trouble by adopting a sort of fatalistic view – that this is just part of life, and therefore no real purpose is being served by it.

Books have been written about the reason for trouble, opposition, conflict, and the likes. Philosophers have struggled with these realities throughout many centuries. This text, however, will address the subject in refreshing way that perfectly comports with God’s eternal

maligned. His apostleship would be questioned. Some of his teaching would be summarily rejected. How would the Lord prepare him for such confrontations?

When Ezekiel faced an obstinate people, the Lord made his forehead hard, so the opposition would not effect him. Thus the Lord said to him, *“As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house”* (Ezek 3:9). But this is **not** how he prepared Paul to minister to the Corinthians.

In his fellowship in Christ’s sufferings (Phil 3:10), Paul gained a **more firm grasp on the realities of the Gospel**. The more trouble came to him, the more dependent he became on the Lord. In that posture of total dependence, the Lord shared more of His secret, and revealed more of His covenant. Paul experienced what David declared, *“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant”* (Psa 25:14). Thus the message of the Gospel was seen more fully. The need for Christ’s sufferings was perceived as well as the **benefits** that flowed from them. **The death of Christ was seen as the necessary prelude to His resurrection and exaltation.**

As Paul comprehended the purpose of God more fully, the roots of Divine life grew deeper into his soul. Now they were so much a part of him that they could not be easily removed – **not** by

trouble, **not** by perplexity, **not** by persecution, and **not** by being cast down. **The truth of the matter is that life-giving truth cannot flow out from a person in whose heart the truth has**

Thus we are introduced to one of the characteristics of the heavenly kingdom. **Sometimes grievous experiences happen to saints in order that great spiritual benefits**

The truth of the matter is that life-giving truth cannot flow out from a person in whose heart the truth has not become deeply rooted. Those who do not have a real grasp of the truth cannot stabilize other souls with their teaching. They will have too much froth in their teaching, and too little substance.

not become deeply rooted. Those who do not have a real grasp of the truth cannot stabilize other souls with their teaching. They will have too much froth in their teaching, and too little substance.

Thus Paul declares that the things that happened to him were actually for the sake of the Corinthians. They were designed to bring them a pure message that was capable of lifting them from the morass of Grecian culture. When Paul preached and taught, he did so as one who himself had passed through the fire. His persuasions were formed in the fire of trial. Thus, his message came from his *“belly,”* out of which flowed *“rivers of living water,”* just as Jesus said (John 7:38).

may be brought to others. This should not surprise us, for it is precisely what is seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed”* (Isa 53:5). In another statement of the case Paul said, *“For even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me”* (Rom 15:3; Psa 69:9).

Although it was not to the same degree, this very principle was worked in Paul as well. **The reason for his afflictions was in order to the blessing of others.** Joseph had a similar experience (Gen 50:20).

ABUNDANT GRACE

^{15b} . . . **that the abundant grace . . .**”

The salvation of God is exceeding broad. It is not provincial or regional, but encompasses *“the world”* (John 3:16). Its effects extend as far as the transgression – to *“all men”* (Rom 5:18). **The investment of the Lord Jesus was too large to be confined to a mere group of people like Israel, to whom the promise was given.** Thus it is written, *“Indeed He says, ‘It is too small*

a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”^{NKJV} (Isa 49:6). It is this aspect of salvation to which Paul now alludes.

In His promise to Abraham, the Lord spoke of *“all families of the earth”* being blessed (Gen 12:3). The Psalmist was given to see that God’s

“saving health” would be realized **“among all nations”** (Psa 67:2). The Messiah is said to *“inherit all nations”* (Psa 82:8). Isaiah prophesied that **“all nations”** would flow into *“the mountain of the Lord’s house”* (Isa 2:2). Haggai said the coming Savior would be *“the Desire of all nations”* (Hag 2:7). Jesus told His disciples to *“teach all nations”* (Matt 28:18), and *“preach the Gospel to every creature”* (Mk 16:15). He declared that *“repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all*

nations” (Lk 24:47). Paul said that the formerly hidden Gospel, “*now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith*” (Rom 16:26). His objective was to “*to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ*” (Eph 3:9).

What is declared by the “*glorious Gospel of the blessed God*” (1 Tim 1:11) is no small thing. We should expect words like “*abundant*” (Phil 1:26; 1 Tim, 1:14; 1 Pet 1:3), “*abundance*” (Rom 5:17; 2 Cor

through the many” ^{NKJV} “*which is spreading to more and more people,*” ^{NASB} “*the grace that is reaching more and more people,*” ^{NIV} “*as it extends to more and more people,*” ^{NRSV} “*multiplied through the many,*” ^{ASV} “*the greater the number,*” ^{BEBE} “*abounding through the many,*” ^{DARBY} “*that the most plenteous ,*” ^{GENEVA} “*bestowed in abundance on more and more,*” ^{NAB} “*spreads,*” ^{NJB} “*brings more and more people to Christ,*” ^{NLT} “*having been multiplied,*” ^{YLT} “*will touch many more lives,*” ^{IE} “*being more richly bestowed,*” ^{WEYMOUTH} “*extends to more and more people,*” ^{AMPLIFIED} “*how the more.*” ^{PHILLIPS}

The copiousness of salvation cannot be perceived by the fleshly mind. It

real life does not consist of such things.

What About Christ’s Promise?

Some will object, pointing us to the words of Jesus: “*Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life*” (Mark 10:30). Luke’s Gospel reads, “*Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting*” (Luke 18:30).

Christ’s meaning is **not** that if we forsake our house or land for His sake and the Gospel’s that we will receive one hundred houses, and one hundred times more land. **He is speaking more of satisfaction that of actual possessions**, for His warning is against “*covetousness*” (Luke 12:15). Jesus does not tell us to avoid covetousness, then promise to give us an abundance of what men covet. **His point is that what He gives to us richly compensates for everything we have forsaken for Him.** His abundance is of another order, and also transfers into the world to come.

The “*lands*” and “*houses*” are to be compared with brothers, sisters, mothers, and children. They are not actually ours – like having a lot of fleshly mothers, sisters, brothers, and children. This rather speaks of the very real benefits of the belonging to the “*household of faith.*” There are, for example, times when believers have the advantage of being sheltered, fed, and cared for in the houses of their brethren.

The “Abundant” of Our Text

This is an abundance that **overflows from one believer to another.** It is an abundance that is brought about through the faithfulness of those to whom “*much*” has been given. This is the increase which Jesus elsewhere referred to as “*fruit.*” “*But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold*” (Matt 13:8).

This kind of increase was also

I have observed over the years that a propensity to Law is always attended by a minuscule view of God’s “great salvation.” It is no wonder that Satan is so aggressive in his promotion of such an approach.

8:2), “*exceeding*” (2 Cor 4:17; Eph 1:19; 2:7; 3:20; 2 Pet 1:4), and “*rich*” (Rom 10:12; Eph 2:4) to be common in the preaching of this Gospel. It will be filled with words like “*manifold*” (Eph 3:10; 1 Pet 4:10), “*great*” (Eph 2:4; 1 Tim 6:6; Tit 2:13; Heb 2:3), and “*much*” (Rom 5:9,10,15,17,20; 1 Thess 1:5; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:7).

I have observed over the years that a propensity to Law is always attended by a minuscule view of God’s “great salvation.” It is no wonder that Satan is so aggressive in his promotion of such an approach. When the soul perceives something of the greatness of salvation, faith and hope become robust, the commandments are no longer grievous, and the world loses all of its appeal. That is why Paul now speaks of abundance.

THE ABUNDANT

: . . . *that the abundant . . .*”

Other versions read, “*having spread*

only sees prohibitions in being “*saved.*” That is because salvation cuts the umbilical cord to the world, mandating “*death*” to the “*old man*” – death by crucifixion (Rom 6:6; 8:13; Gal 2:20; 5:24; 6:14; Col 3:5). Faith, however, perceives a **plentitude** in salvation that whets the appetite for glory.

About Abundant Life

Jesus said He came that we “*might have life,*” and that we might have it “*more abundantly*” (John 10:10). What did He mean by these intriguing words? Some have supposed that life in this world is what He meant – a life of **obvious** abundance, with more possessions and more external advantages. This, however, is a completely wrong assessment of the case. Jesus said, “*Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*” (Luke 12:15). When, therefore, a person possesses more and more “*things,*” this is not to be equated with abundant life, for

depicted in the parables of the talents and the pounds. In both of those parables, Jesus severely rebuked the person who had not **increased** what was given to him. *“Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own **with usury**”* (Matt 25:27). *“Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own **with usury**?”* (Luke 19:23). The “usury” of those parables is the “abundant” of our text. **It is the “overflow” – the fruit that was produced with the gift that was given to the individual.** It is a principle of the Kingdom that what God gives is to increase, not remain static.

GRACE

“... grace...” Other versions read, *“that the grace bestowed”* ^{NAB} *“so that as grace spreads,”* ^{NJB} *“As God’s grace brings,”* ^{NLT} *“so that gracious love,”* ^{IE} *“As His grace,”* ^{ISV} and *“grace (divine favor and blessing).”* ^{AMPLIFIED}



This is the “grace” that was **bestowed upon Paul**, and was received, as Jesus said it would be, **“with persecutions.”** This “grace” was embodied in the spiritual insights Paul received. Paul spoke his ministry as one that was received by God’s grace. *“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, **is this grace given**, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of*

the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:10).

Notice how remarkably the grace given to Paul overflowed, or became abundant. It was given to him. It spread to the Gentiles. It moved on to *“all men.”* **The wake of the revelation given to Paul even rippled into the unseen world, where “principalities and powers” came into an fuller knowledge of “the manifold wisdom of God.”**

This is the manner of Christ’s Kingdom – *“increase!”* As it is written, ***“Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this”*** (Isa 9:7). It all started with the heavenly “Seed,” Christ Jesus. He was sown into the earth, fulfilling Christ’s own word, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit”* (John 12:24). As His life is transmitted to others, it begins to increase, bringing forth *“much fruit.”* This is the manner of the kingdom – a principle that is carried out not only in the *“Head of the body,”* but throughout the body itself as well.

This principle was fulfilled in the twelve Apostles, then the three thousand that were added to the church on the day of Pentecost. Then the increase was seen in the addition of five thousand more shortly after that (Acts 2:41; 4:4). Then *“multitudes”* were added, of both men and women (Acts 5:14). Following that, the whole city of Samaria (Acts 8:5-8), etc. It continued to spread, bringing forth *“much fruit,”* until, around the middle of the first century, Paul wrote, *“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature*

which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Col 1:23).

PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

A very wonderful picture is being painted in this text. It is a commentary on having this treasure in earthen vessels, in order that the excellency of the power may be perceived as belonging to God alone. Paul’s *“earthen vessel”* made him vulnerable to the enemies of righteousness. That is the **only** reason he could be *“troubled on every side,” “perplexed,” “persecuted,”* and *“cast down.”* On the surface, this opposition appeared to be inhibitory, thwarting the work of the Lord. **However, the pressure created by these sufferings caused the grace of God – the grace Paul had received – to flow out from him.** The truth was spoken with more fervency and greater insight. It was delivered with a **greater dependency** upon God, and with a **more profound faith** in Him. His trouble caused Paul to lean **more fully** upon the Lord, for it became obvious that he was not sufficient of himself for the task Jesus had assigned to him – *“to make all men see.”*

And what was the outcome of it all? The grace of God was realized by the Corinthians, and Christ was made unto them *“wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption”* (1 Cor 1:30). **The experience of grace was multiplied, with more and more people receiving and being empowered by it.**

We must not allow the unpopularity of the truth to lead us to believe it is intended only for a few. **The glory of salvation is that in the end it will have garnered “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues”** (Rev 7:9). Before the *“end of all things,”* the saying of the prophets will be fulfilled: *“for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”* (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14).

That is the *“abundant grace”* to which our text is referring. It is declaring that by trouble and affliction, the grace of God was brought to multitudes through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. It was an overthrow of the wicked one.

IN ORDER TO THANKSGIVING

“^{15c} . . . might through the thanksgiving of many . . .”

The experience of grace is not an end of itself. The purpose of Divine blessing is not merely to resolve a problem, or make a correction. The grace of God is intended to provoke a response among men, and where it does not do so, it has been received in vain. This is expounded in the closing part of our verse.

THROUGH

“ . . . might through . . .” Other versions read, “may cause,”^{NASB} “may increase,”^{NRSV} “because,”^{BBE} “by them”^{GENEVA} “may also overflow,”^{NJB} “because of,”^{YLT} “it will increase,”^{ISV} and “by multiplying.”^{WILLIAMS}

The grace of God is a means through which certain reactions are provoked. To view it from another perspective, when the grace of God is allowed to work freely, it will produce certain reactions in the individual. These reactions confirm that grace has, indeed, been received. Their absence negates any claim to having received the grace of God.

Because men are prone to view grace as “unmerited favor,” they are often unable to connect it with anything men do. Somehow the impression is received that where grace is received men are idle, doing little or nothing at all. To be sure, the grace of God is not realized because we have done something that merited its reception. Grace is always realized “through faith” (Eph 2:8). However, grace does **work** within the individual, and the work it performs is an appointed one.

THE THANKSGIVING OF MANY

“ . . . the thanksgiving of many . . .” Other versions read, “through the many, may cause thanksgiving,”^{NKJV} “more and more people . . . the giving of thanks,”^{NASB} “the greater the praise,”^{BBE} “the more there are to thank Him for His great kindness,”^{LIVING} “the thanksgiving of more and more people,”^{IE} “the thanksgivings of the increased number,”^{WEYMOUTH} “multiplying the thanksgiving of many,”^{WILLIAMS} “the thanksgiving of many

voices,”^{MONTGOMERY} and “the more thanksgiving.”^{AMPLIFIED}

Here thanksgiving is the result of people having received the grace of God. It is the peculiar work of grace to cause the one perceiving it to be thankful to God. In this text, the thanksgiving is seen as coming from “many,” not merely the individual. Through many people thanksgiving is “multiplied.”^{WILLIAMS} To be sure, God is glorified when one person gives Him thanks. However, He is honored more when a multitude give thanks to Him – when more and more people perceive what He has done in Christ Jesus.

The grace of God is not calculated to build a religious institution, but rather to produce “the thanksgiving of many.” It will **not** move men to say, “See what we have done.” Rather, it will compel insightful souls to cry out, “**HE hath done marvelous things: HIS right hand, and HIS holy arm, hath gotten HIM the victory**” (Psa 98:1).

What God is doing in Christ is acquainting men with the not-so-obvious fact – that “the whole earth is full of His glory.” He is even showing them more of this glory than the seraphs have been able to see. What holy angels “desire to look into” is now being shown to the sons of men (1 Pet 1:12). Those who see it render insightful thanksgiving to God. They see God in the affairs of men. They perceive the Lord in the convulsions of nature. They behold His hand in the setting up and taking down earthly potentates. They can discern the overthrow of the devil and his hosts. They are able to insightfully account for the change that takes place in those who are “baptized into Christ,” and put Him on (Gal 3:27).

Thanksgiving is a premier activity in the body of Christ. The word “thanksgiving” is loaded with meaning. Here, it is a noun denoting “an attitude of gratefulness, thankfulness,”^{FRIEBERG} and “to express gratitude for benefits of blessings.”^{LOUW-NIDA} McClintok and Strong’s Encyclopedia

The truth of the matter is that “the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isa 6:3). The six-winged seraphs that Isaiah saw standing over the throne of God perceived this, and cried to one another concerning their perception of this. How they must marvel that this fact is so little known among men, who are living in the very earth that is “full of His glory.”

Allow me to put the matter in perspective. The truth of the matter is that “the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isa 6:3). That is a statement of the real situation! The six-winged seraphs that Isaiah saw standing over the throne of God perceived this, and cried to one another concerning their perception of this. How they must marvel that this fact is so little known among men, who are living in the very earth that is “full of His glory.”

provides Dr. Barrow’s insightful words concerning “thanksgiving.”

- (1) A right apprehension of the benefits conferred.
- (2) A faithful retention of benefits in the memory, and frequent reflections upon them.
- (3) A due esteem and valuation of benefits.
- (4) A reception of those benefits with a willing mind, a vehement affection.
- (5) Due acknowledgment of our obligations.
- (6) Endeavors of real compensation, or, as it respects the Divine Being, a willingness to serve and exalt

him.

(7) Esteem, veneration, and love of the benefactor.

Thanksgiving, or thankfulness, is compelled by an insightful and grateful heart. By its very nature, thanksgiving cannot be provoked by law. Neither can it be done acceptably perfunctorily, or by routine and without discernment.

The saints are admonished to give thanks **always for everything** – that is, to give thanks because they discern the hand of the Lord in everything: *“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Eph 5:20). This is a facet of spiritual life in which we are to

“abound.” *“Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, **abounding** therein with thanksgiving”* (Col 2:7). Solemnly we are told, *“be ye thankful”* (Col 3:15). Such a response is God’s will for us: *“In every thing give thanks: for **this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you**”* (1 Thess 5:18).

Lest we miss the significance of giving thanks to God, Paul is here declaring that **his personal life had been so Divinely orchestrated as to produce thanksgiving to God among many people.** The Divine objective was for God to receive thanks from a multitude of people. There is, then, much more to this matter of thanksgiving than

men are prone to think. As ordinarily perceived, thanksgiving is generally associated with simplicity.

I have long observed how infantile average church people become when they are asked to give thanks to God. Their thanksgivings often betray little, if any, spiritual insight. They appear to be no more thankful than the person of the world who has his health and enough to eat. Such a condition is not acceptable to God. The great investment of Jesus, and the abundance of grace that has been experienced, mandates insightful praise and thanksgiving. It is imperative that believers see this and come into a greater participation in insightful thanks.

REDOUNDING GLORY

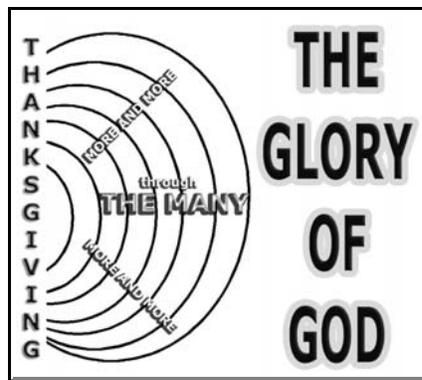
“^{15d} . . . redound to the glory of God.”

How does God receive a lot of glory? That is an arresting question to consider. One might ponder the answer from the standpoint of the locus of the thanksgiving. **There are heavenly hosts that enunciate thanksgiving to God.** The *“four living creatures”* who stand in immediate proximity of the Throne of God are said to *“give glory and honor and **thanks** to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever”* (Rev 4:9). In another place, it is said that *“all the angels”* who *“stood round about the throne,”* said, *“Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and **thanksgiving**, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen”* (Rev 7:12). In yet another place, the twenty-four elders who sit before God on thrones said, *“We give Thee **thanks**, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned”* (Rev 11:17). That kind of thanksgiving certainly brings glory to God.

But that is not the *“thanksgiving”* of our text. **This is a thanksgiving that flows out from grace – and that is a Divine quality that is experienced by men.**

REDOUND

“ . . . redound . . . ” Other versions read, *“to abound,”*^{NKJV} *“to overflow,”*^{NASB} *“may increase,”*^{NRSV} *“the greater is,”*^{BBE} *“more and more,”*^{NLT} *“the more,”*^{LIVING} *“will overflow,”*^{IE} *“may more and more promote,”*^{WEYMOUTH} *“make the cup run over,”*^{WILLIAMS} *“may increase [and redound],”*^{AMPLIFIED} and *“will redound.”*^{PHILLIPS}



What an interesting word: *“redound.”* From the contemporary English point of view, this is an “archaic” word meaning “1-to become swollen: overflow, 2-to have an effect for good or ill, 3-to become transferred or added, 4-rebound, reflect.”^{MERRIAM-WEBSTER} **From this perspective, “thanksgiving” is pictured as a**

swelling flood that becomes larger and larger. It is also seen to be something that causes an increasingly favorable impression in heaven. Again, it sees *“thanksgiving”* as being rendered to God as people become more and more aware of His hand in the affairs of men.

The Greek word from which *“redound”* is translated is περισσεύω (peris-syoo-sa). It means “to exceed a fixed number or measure; to be over and above a certain number or measure . . . to make abundant or excellent,”^{THAYER} “to provide for an abundance, cause to increase,”^{FRIBERG} “to abound, to be in abundance, to be a lot of, to exist in large quantity,”^{LOUW-NIDA} and “to be made to abound.”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

The picture is that of thanksgiving swelling, as it is taken up by more and more people. It is like a great tidal wave swelling in the ocean of humanity, and rushing toward the heavenly shore. It becomes larger in size, and gathers momentum as it moves forward.

Again, this is the nature of spiritual life. Whether in the individual, or among a plurality of believers, real *“thanksgiving”* **tends to increase** as the people see more and understand more, perceiving the hand of the Lord all around them. If thanksgiving diminishes or wanes, it is only because there is *“no*

God is at work among men, bestowing His grace and directing His people in order that thanksgiving may “redound” – passing the boundaries of normal and average, and swelling into a great flood-tide of grateful thanksgiving and praise.

vision” (Prov 29:18).

When the blight of mediocrity fastens upon a person or a church, thanksgiving always begins to wither. This is so common that men tend to think it is the normal manner of life in Christ Jesus. But it emphatically is **not**. God is at work among men, bestowing His grace and directing His people in order that thanksgiving may “redound” – **passing the boundaries of normal and average, and swelling into a great flood-tide of grateful thanksgiving and praise.** Where this is not happening, the will of the Lord is not being fulfilled.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD

“... to the glory of God.” Other versions read, “praise to the glory of God,”^{BBE} “the praise of God,”^{GENEVA} “God will receive more and more glory,”^{NLT} “the Lord is glorified,”^{LIVING} and “to His glory.”^{PHILLIPS}

The objective of thanksgiving is not the satisfaction of the individual – although that will no doubt be realized in some measure. Nor, indeed, is it the mere fulfillment of a requirement. It is “the glory of God” that is the real aim. **If “the whole earth is full of His glory,” then it is appropriate, yes even mandatory, than men see it, and give**

Him thanks.

There are certain ordained ways in which God is glorified. These are ways that involve beholding what great things He has done. Note some of the expressions of this kind of glory.

- “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us **to the glory of God**” (Rom 15:7). Here, God is glorified by Christ receiving us as His people, to love and to cherish. God is glorified by this reception because it is the fulfillment of His purpose. It reflects the implementation of His objective when He “sent His only begotten Son into the world, **that we might live through Him**” (1 John 4:10).
- “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all **to the glory of God**” (1 Cor 10:31). God is glorified when men live altogether for Him. That is precisely why Jesus died, “that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor 5:15).
- “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, **to the glory of God the Father**” (Phil 2:11). Here the glory of God is advanced by the acknowledgment of

the One to whom He has given “all power in heaven and on earth” (Matt 28:18). For some, this will be a grateful confession. For others it will be an acknowledgment that will mandate their condemnation, because they refused to confess it on earth.

This objective – **that increasing multitudes might join in a swell of thanksgiving to God** – moved Paul to labor in spite of being surrounded by trouble. It compelled him to continually toil on, even when sorely pressed with perplexity. When he has held down and pummeled by persecution, he continued to preach and teach by every means possible. When he was struck down, and put to great disadvantage, he got up again, and continued to fulfill his calling. **He had a desire to not only glorify God himself, but that his ministry might result in others also glorifying God.**

In the economy of salvation, what is given by God’s grace is intended to eventually redound to God’s glory. **Grace is not intended to terminate with the satisfaction of human need.** Rather, it is an ordained means of drawing attention to the Person of God. **Glory is brought to Him when He is perceived as the Originator and Objective of all things.** As it is written, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? **For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen**” (Rom 11:33-36).

Glory “redounds” to the God of heaven when this is perceived and embraced with the heart, and spoken with the mouth. It is like living waters flowing out from the belly.

CONCLUSION

Like two spiritual book-ends, “the spirit of faith” and “the glory of God” provide the true context of spiritual labors. “The spirit of faith” involves insight, persuasion, and confidence. It has a compelling power

Faith is the motivating and animating principle or law of the Kingdom – by Given O. Blakely



about it that overcomes all obstacles. There is no adversarial circumstance that can successfully restrain the individual who has *“the spirit of faith.”* Such a person may be surrounded by trouble, but they are not *“distressed”* or *“crushed.”* They may be *“perplexed,”* seeing no way out of a given situation, but they are not found *“despairing.”* Fierce and relentless persecutions may assault them, but they are not *“abandoned,”* and they know it. Often, they may be *“struck down,”* pummeled to the ground by a fierce foe, but they are *“not destroyed,”* and rise again to labor together with God.

The *“spirit of faith”* is our connection with *“the heavens,”* which *“do rule”* (Dan 4:26). It is the result of being *“fully persuaded”* that what God *“has promised, He is able also to perform”* (Rom 4:21). This is the *“spirit”* that compels men and women of God to speak – to declare to the very people who oppose them, *“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard”* (Acts 4:20). And again, *“We ought to obey God rather than men”* (Acts 5:29). **Where there is either an ignorance of God’s purpose, or a lack of persuasion concerning God’s ability to fulfill His purpose, men will be hesitant, if not totally unwilling, to speak in the face of opposition.** This accounts for much of the serious lack of faithful and sound preaching in our day.

The circumstances in which

salvation is worked out demand that the individual live and speak by faith. No person can afford to be distracted by the seen. Faith takes hold of realities that cannot be substantiated in the domain of the seen. The raising of the Lord Jesus, the resurrection of all believers, and their presentation before the Presence of the Lord faultless and without spot, can only be apprehended by faith. There are no rules of grammar that can confirm these realities to the heart. There is no form of human reasoning or logic that can persuade the heart and mind of their reality. There is no religious artifact or archeological find that can convince the child of God of their verity. **If God had not revealed these pillars of thought, there is no person who would have stumbled upon them.**

But they have been revealed, and the Holy Spirit works with revelation. He persuades the heart of their reality, removing all doubt, and showing all opposing threads of thought to be untrue.

When the kingdom laborer is convinced of what God has done and will do, confidence and boldness enter into the heart. **The believer is able to make a connection between what he is doing, and the revealed purpose of God.** Because that purpose is *“eternal,”* and cannot possibly be overturned by the devil, trouble is then seen as an appointed means to a Divinely purposed end.

There is no way to adequately state the marvelous impact that all of this has upon those who are called to labor in the Lord’s harvest field.

The magnificent greatness of God’s *“eternal purpose”* is also perceived by those possessing *“the spirit of faith.”* **Although, at any given time, this purpose may appear to involve only a small number of people, yet, from the heavenly perspective, it is exceedingly large.** It involves gathering a people out of the world who are beyond human comprehension – *“a great multitude, which no man could number”* (Rev 7:9). These souls have been garnered from every age, and *“from all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues”* (Rev 5:9; 7:9; 14:6). All of this was done in the domain, and among a people, who were *“under the control of the evil one”*^{NIV} (1 John 5:19). In spite of *“principalities,” “powers,” “the rulers of the darkness of this world,”* and *“spiritual wickedness in high places,”* the Lord took out of this conglomerate of deceived and *“dead”* souls *“a people for His name”* (Acts 15:14). Those who sat in great darkness saw a *“great light”* (Isa 9:2), and those who were hopelessly *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph 2:1) were *“quickenened,”* forgiven *“all trespasses,”* and raised to *“sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Eph 2:1-6).

Viewing the whole panorama of redemption, we will see that God was imminent in every phase of it, working all things together for the good of those who love Him, and have been called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). No vital part of it was left in the hands of men. Every aspect of it was appropriated and maintained by faith, over which Satan has no power at all. In fact, steadfastness in the faith voids Satan’s power, making his efforts useless. As it is written, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world”* (1 Pet 5:8-9). This is how the devil is successfully resisted – by believing. This is why faith is called, *“the victory that overcometh the world”* (1 John 5:4). It takes hold of realities Satan cannot touch!

A wonderful salvation, indeed! For Paul, like Joseph, the things that seemed to be against him were actually God working all things together for the ultimate good of others. Joseph confessed, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much

people alive" (Gen 50:20). Commenting on his circumstances Paul said, "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the

Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil 1:12-14). This is the nature of the kingdom of God. May you be able to make an association of your difficulties and trials with the garnering of more praise and glory for the God who has raised and is guiding you.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 2/4/2005. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the Epistle of Second Corinthians. The twentieth lesson will cover verses sixteen through eighteen of the fourth chapter: **"TWO DIFFERING REALMS."** We are living in two competing realms. One is seen and one is unseen. The realm upon which we fasten our attention, and in which we choose to traffic, will determine our eternal destiny. This is something we must see, for there is no chance that it will not come to pass. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>