

PAUL'S CLOSING SERMON TO THE CORINTHIANS

(2 Cor. 13:14)

Introduction:

1. The Bible is filled with verses that contain summations of the entire message of God to man: Amos 5:4; Matt. 11:28-30; et al.
2. 2 Cor. 13:14 is such a verse. In the context of Paul's two letters to the Corinthians let us consider the closing "sermon in a verse".
3. Let us consider Paul's emphasis upon the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion:

I. The Grace of the Lord Jesus.

- A. Grace = *charis* = that which affords joy, loving-kindness, favor, a gift, a benefit, thanks-Thayer.
 1. All of these definitions would work well in association with our Lord: He has made us joyful (1 Pet. 1:8); he has shown us loving-kindness (Gal. 2:20); He has given us a gift/benefit beyond measure (2 Cor. 9:15); and He has made us exceedingly thankful (2 Cor. 9:15).
 2. In context, however, it would seem that the grace being described here is the unmerited favor and gift of Jesus' atoning death on the cross.
 3. Consider some other writings of Paul: Rom. 5:1-6; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-8; Titus 2:11-14.
- B. Consider one of the major problems of the church in Corinth; pride.
 1. They were puffed up (*phusioo* = inflated, swollen, proud) and called out about it in 1 Cor. 4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4.
 2. Focusing them on what Jesus did for them, and not they for themselves would be a great reminder, rebuke, and encouragement.
- C. Remember also the problem the church in Corinth had regarding miraculous gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12-14). A reminder of the gift of their Lord Jesus Christ, through whom they had received these miraculous gifts would serve them well (cp. 1 Cor. 1:7; 4:7).
- D. Christians must always be mindful and thankful for the indescribable gift we have received from our Lord Jesus Christ = the forgiveness of sin; the continuous forgiveness of sin; and eternal life with Jesus in Heaven. Not to mention the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23).

II. The Love of God.

- A. Love = *agape* = love, affection, good will, benevolence-Thayer.
 1. All definitions would again apply: God loves us (John 3:16); is affectionate towards us (Luke 1:78); showers us with His good will (Eph. 1:5); and is the giver of all good and perfect gifts (Jas. 1:17).
 2. In context, it would seem that the love that is being described is that of the love of God by which He gave His Son to die in our place on the cross.
 3. Consider this love (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-11; Eph. 2:4-7; 1 John 4:7-11).
- B. Consider the many problems in Corinth: division (1 Cor. 1); man having his father's wife (1 Cor. 5); taking each other to court (1 Cor. 6); hurting the weak brother (1 Cor. 8); and striving over spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12-14).
- C. Consider the central and pivotal message of 1 Cor. 13!

- D. Christians must always be mindful and thankful for the love of God bestowed upon all, but especially upon those who trust and obey Him.

III. The Communion of the Holy Spirit.

- A. Communion = koinonia = fellowship, association, community, joint participation-Thayer.
- B. Consider this communion (John 14:17, 23; Rom. 8:16, 17; Eph. 4:4-6).
- C. Consider the problem of division in Corinth and Paul's teaching of unity and reconciliation (1 Cor. 1:2, 10; 12:1-27; 2 Cor. 5:18-20).
- D. Christians must always be mindful and thankful for the revelation of the Spirit that tells us of the incredible fellowship we can have with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Not to mention the incredible fellowship we can have with one another; and really the whole world in one sense.

Conclusion:

1. What a concluding message! What an important lesson for the Corinthians! What an important message for us today!
2. Never forget the gift we have in Christ Jesus and all the gifts we have from Him. Never forget the love of God and all the blessings we receive as a result of that love. Never forget what the Spirit has revealed to us and the fellowship he has taught us we can enjoy.
3. Invitation.