

Sunday, May 31, 2015—I Corinthians 1:4-5: I Thank My God Always on Your Behalf

Introduction

- Two weeks ago (before I was gone at the conference in Ohio) we finished our study of verses 2 and 3.
- In verse 3 we saw how “grace and peace” is more than just Paul’s standard greeting. Rather, “grace and peace” is a declaration from our apostle Paul regarding the Godhead’s attitude toward the world today. Just when the wrath of God had come to full, instead of pouring out wrath, the Godhead suspended the prophetic program, saved Saul of Tarsus, and revealed the mystery pertaining the church the body of Christ and the dispensation of the grace of God.
 - Ephesians 2:8-9—we are saved by grace through faith.
 - Romans 6:14—we are not under the governing principal of the law but under grace.
 - Ephesians 3:2—we live during the dispensation of grace.
 - Colossians 2:6—we live and walk by grace.
- Today, I want to continue our exposition of I Corinthians by looking at verses 4 and 5.

I Corinthians 1:4

- **I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;**
- Verse 4 begins a new sentence that runs all the way through the end of verse 8.
- *I thank my God always on your behalf*—one of the first things that Paul says to the Corinthians is that he thanks God always on their behalf. In other words, Paul continually expressed to God the Father his gratitude for the saints in Corinth.
- The word translated “thank” in verse 4 is the Greek word *eucharisteō* which means to be grateful, or feel thankful.
 - Romans 1:8—it seems obvious that Paul’s activity in this regard for both the Romans and the Corinthians would be a function of his prayer life. How else would Paul thank God always for these saints on their behalf?
- Romans 1:9—Paul does not make a long winded dissertation on behalf of the Romans. Rather he makes mention, i.e., a brief remark on their behalf.
 - Mention—“A hint; a suggestion; **a brief notice or remark expressed in words or writing**; used chiefly after make.” (*Webster’s 1828*)

- Ephesians 1:16—“making mention of you in my prayers”
- Philippians 1:3—“upon every remembrance of you”
 - The English word “remembrance” is a translation of the same Greek word rendered “mention” in Rom. 1:9, “making mention” in Eph. 1:16, and “remembrance” in Phil. 1:3
 - Remembrance—**“The retaining or having in mind an idea which had been present before, or an idea which had been previously received from an object when present, and which recurs to the mind afterwards without the presence of its object.** Technically, remembrance differs from reminiscence and recollection, as the former implies that an idea occurs to the mind spontaneously, or without much mental exertion. **The latter imply the power or the act of recalling ideas which do not spontaneously recur to the mind.”** (*Webster’s 1828*)
 - In other words to make “remembrance” is something that one must give mental mention attention unto. Having previously been in the presence of the Philippians Paul is diligent to keep the saints at Philippi on his mind, i.e., he is actively recalling his time a ministry among them or holding them in remembrance.
 - The fact that the King James translators rendered the same Greek word variously as “mention” and “remembrance” indicates a connection between these two concepts. Before I can “make mention” of a particular saint or assembly don’t I first have to be holding that saint or assembly in “remembrance?” To hold them in “remembrance” is synonymous with “making mention” of them. This means that Pauline prayer is more of a spiritual state of mind than an outward religious activity.
- I Thessalonians 1:2—“making mention of you in our prayers”
- II Timothy 1:3—“remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day”
- Philemon 4—”making mention of thee always in my prayers”
- Paul’s epistles confirm that he did not pray for people only when they needed or asked for prayer. Throughout Paul’s epistles we see Paul praying for saints either when they came to “remembrance” or when he heard reports how they were doing. Paul did not wait for prayer requests; instead he prayed short “making mention of them” prayers whenever saints and assemblies came to mind. In short, in Paul’s thinking and practice to hold a saint or assembly in “remembrance” was to pray for them.
- I Corinthians 1:4—Paul “always” did this. In this sense Paul practiced what he preached regarding being “instant in prayer.”

- Romans 12:12—“instant” means to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing, to continue all the time in one place
 - Romans 13:6—“attending continually upon” comes from the same Greek word translated “instant” in Romans 12:12. To be “instant” in prayer means to “attend continually” upon something.
- . . . *for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ*;--what was Paul always thanking God on behalf of the Corinthians for? The grace of God which was given unto them by Jesus Christ.
- Notice how this part of verse 4 builds upon what Paul just stated in verse 3.
 - Verse 3—Grace *be* unto you, and peace, **from** God our Father, and **from** the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Verse 4—. . . for the grace of God which is given you **by** Jesus Christ;
- Verse 3 deals with the *point of origin* of this grace given to the Corinthians it was “**from** God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In other words, it was the Godhead’s grace to give. Whereas verse 4 focuses our attention on the *means by which it was given* i.e., it was given “**by** Jesus Christ.”
 - Ephesians 2:7
- I Corinthians 1:4—Paul always expresses his gratefulness and gratitude to his God, not because of what the Corinthians had done, but because of what God had given them, “by Jesus Christ.”

I Corinthians 1:5

- **That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;**
- Verse 5 is a continuation of Paul’s expression of gratitude to God the Father on behalf of the Corinthians.
- Paul tells the Corinthians that in “everything” they have been “enriched” by Christ.
- Please note that the phrase “are enriched by him” is in the present tense. So the Corinthians were already in the state of having been “enriched” by Christ i.e., “made rich or wealthy; fertilized; supplied with that which is desirable, useful or ornamental,” according to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*.
 - II Corinthians 6:10—“making many rich”
 - II Corinthians 9:11—“Being enriched”

- I Corinthians 1:5—before we go running off thinking that Paul is teaching that God “enriched” the Corinthians monetarily in Christ we need to look carefully at the verse.
- The Corinthians had been “enriched” by Christ “in all utterance, and in all knowledge.” So their enrichment in Christ was in the specific categories of “utterance” and “knowledge.”
- Acts 2:4—the word “utterance” is used in connection with speaking in tongues.
 - I Corinthians 14:9
- I Corinthians 12:8—“word of knowledge” was one of the gifts that was being given during the formative stage of the dispensation of grace.
- I Corinthians 13:1-2—when Paul begins to address the function of spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church he specifically mentions “tongues” and “knowledge.”
- I Corinthians 1:7—that Paul is contextually talking about spiritual gifts in verse 5 is evident from verse 7, “so that ye come behind in no gift.”
 - II Corinthians 8:7