

1 Corinthians 1:5-9 You Lack Nothing in Christ

1 Corinthians 1:4-9 ⁴ I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, ⁶ even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

As we've seen over the last couple weeks this letter begins with an encouragement to these Corinthian believers to consider what Christ has given them in the way of grace; a grace which results in a gift of eternal life to all who would receive it by faith in the One who purchased this gift for us, Jesus Christ.

This is why Paul was so excited, because he was watching the grace of God in action as the Lord extended to a vile and immoral people in Corinth the same gift of eternal life He gave to Paul. He knew he didn't deserve it any more than these people. And so, he recognizes this grace and give thanks to God, and in that sense he worships the living God who is the life-giver.

This is the basis upon which Paul can begin this letter with such encouragement. He's excited that God is working in the lives of these people and he just wants these Corinthians to get a handle on the gift they possess in Christ so that their appreciation will be the result of their understanding.

This, by the way, is one of the reasons we study the Scriptures. We study them to grow in our relationship with our Savior. You see, Christ has called us to be servants. But, unless we grow and mature in this gift of eternal life we will always be the one's on the receiving end instead of being able to give back to Christ in the form of service to the saints and the world.

There's nothing wrong with receiving, but we certainly don't want to spend the rest of our lives in Christ being spiritual babies. Paul would have us realize that it's time for all Christians to grow up and become responsible members of this Kingdom to which we've been called in Christ.

In fact, as Paul continues in this letter, as we'll see this morning, he wants us to realize that the reason we've been given gifts and grace in Christ is so that we can use those gifts to the benefit of the body and to the glory of Christ. He mentions this when writing to the Ephesian church.

EPH 4:11-15 "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ."

To be given life and yet not grow in that life is a contradiction to what life is all about, just as it would be if a baby born into this world never got beyond the milk stage and stayed an infant, physically, for the rest of his life.

This is what Paul is dealing with. He's dealing with a people who have been given every opportunity to grow. He's dealing with those who have life and yet don't appreciate that life and have decided to live on both sides of the fence.

When you truly treasure this most beloved possession of eternal life in Christ, then the way you live that life out will begin to manifest itself to God's glory and this is what Paul is about to bring to light in our text.

In verse four he was thankful that they received the same life he received and now he's about to describe some of the benefits of this grace.

1CO 1:5-6 "For in him you have been enriched in every way - in all your speaking and in all your knowledge - because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you."

What Paul is saying here is that these people have been made rich. That's what the word enriched implies. No, Ed McMahon didn't knock on their doors and give them the 10 million dollar sweepstakes prize. They have actually been made much richer than that.

The wealth they receive cannot be eaten up by moth or destroyed by rust or be burned up at the end. The riches they possess are eternal in nature, which make them eternally more valuable. Jesus touches on this when writing to the church in Smyrna.

REV 2:8 "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last. Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (MAT 16:26)

So what if Howard Hughes was one of the wealthiest men in the world. So what, if Bill Gates has an empire second to none as he controls and sets the standard for communications through computers.

Contrary to popular belief the one who dies with the most toys, does not win. To compare the wealth of this world with the wealth we have in Christ is like trying to compare a child's lemon-aid stand to wealth which is traded everyday on the New York Stock Exchange. And even that comes infinitely short of what wealth we possess in Christ.

But we must be careful not to compare the wealth of this world with the kind of wealth we have in Christ. We won't be exchanging dollars in heaven. We won't be trying to impress each other with big houses and fast cars.

The wealth our Lord speaks of is a wealth of immeasurable value because it is a wealth in life itself, because it is a wealth in the One who is the maker of heaven and earth, the life-giver. And the irony is that this One who is life, is the same One who gave us life that we may have this gift which is beyond any wealth we can have in this world.

2CO 8:9 "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

When Paul tells us that Christ was rich, he alludes to the glory and the power He had on His throne before humbling Himself to become a man to live among us. And yet, because of His humbling Himself, even unto death on the cross, we now receive the riches which He offers in a relationship with the living God as we will be with Him forever in His kingdom.

JAM 2:5 "Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?"

This is the way in which we have become enriched in Christ, but it doesn't mean that it won't have immediate consequences and benefits even in this life for the believer.

1CO 1:5 "For in him you have been enriched in every way - in all your speaking and in all your knowledge -..."

What does Paul mean by the phrase, "in all your speaking and in all your knowledge -..."? Well, this is in relation to the gift God has given these people, these very same people we will find out later, who are in many cases abusing the gifts they've received.

Paul gives us some insight into what he means here in this first letter by writing on this subject in his second letter to the Corinthians.

2CO 8:7 "But just as you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us - see that you also excel in this grace of giving."

Here in the context Paul is encouraging these believers to give from their pockets to the blessing of those Judean saints who do not have anything because of persecution. But, he puts that in the context of the spiritual wealth they possess.

And in a sense, with that comparison, Paul means to say that just as you can give monetarily because you actually possess it, you can also give spiritually with what you possess.

And so, the gifts which God gives are meant to be used. They are meant to bless those in the body of Christ as well as those in the world who need this gift of eternal life in Christ. And so, when we talk about the enriching of speech we must place it in its proper context to mean that it is tied to the speech we can use to edify one another and bring the gospel to the world.

You don't need to be a seasoned saint of many years to do this. Once you have received Christ by faith you immediately are given gifts. Notice what Paul says in verse four.

1CO 1:4 "I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus."

This was given to them, past tense. They may not be using them to God's glory but it doesn't mean they don't presently possess these gifts. Every believer in this room this morning was given gifts by Christ the moment you came to faith in Him.

Admittedly, some of these gifts will be developed over a lifetime to be used at a point where they will become more and more effective as we use the means to grow in the grace of Christ.

As I've mentioned on a variety of occasions, the Lord gave me the gift of teaching many years ago when I first came to Him by faith. But that particular gift was not able to be used as effectively until I began to couple it with the one thing which is vital to use it; a knowledge of the Scriptures.

As I grew in the knowledge of the Scriptures the Lord allowed me to use that gift. After gaining a little knowledge I used it in a relatively small way for some years. But, after much study the Lord opened up bigger doors to walk through where more lives would be effected.

If I had never opened the word of God that gift would never have been as effective. And yet part of the gift, I believe, is the desire that God gives to be in the word and to study it with the idea of sharing it with others.

And so to be enriched in Christ, which includes the enriching of our speech and knowledge, is a gift which is meant to be used and practiced. You don't need the gift of knowledge or the gift of evangelism to utilize the general gifts of speech and knowledge.

In fact, we are all to be utilizing these riches from Christ for the benefit of the body. This is what the writer of Hebrews tells us.

HEB 10:23-25 "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

In other words, we must use our speech and knowledge to edify the body so that the body can be built up to use their gifts to in turn edify others as well. But because of the relationship we have in Christ every single one of us has (present tense) the ability as well as the privilege and responsibility to do this.

What Paul is saying in our text is that you already possess these riches in Christ because of His mercy and grace extended to you which you received by faith in Him alone.

No true believer in Christ can say that they possess no gifts from God or that they don't have the ability to use whatever gifts they do possess. Whether you're one day in the Lord or 25 years in the Lord, Jesus Christ can use you and has gifted you to be a servant and a blessing to the body of Christ.

Your level of usefulness may be different at any one time, but your potential is only limited by your desire to be used and to grow in Christ as you submit to the Lord and the means He's provided to grow in this relationship.

This is why Paul makes such an issue of how each person in the body is essential to the rest of the body, even in this very letter to the Corinthians.

1CO 12:12-18;27 "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

Paul wants these Christians to realize what they presently possess, not to think that maybe years down the road they can consider how such gifts will be a part of their lives and how at some future date they can begin to utilize them.

No. They are a part of the body today and they form the body as God has made each one a very special part for a very special reason.

And now Paul is encouraging these saints by saying that he recognizes the work God has done in them and therefore they should be living as the saints and sanctified ones that they presently are. This is partly what he means when he says, "because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you." (1CO 1:6)

The word confirmed in the Greek suggests to make firm, establish, make sure. In other words, Paul is saying, I've seen the fruit of the Spirit in your lives. And because there has been fruit you therefore

are of the Spirit. You've been confirmed in the way the Spirit has worked in your lives.

But this is to add more conviction because though the fruit of the Spirit has been evidenced to some extent in the lives of these Corinthians it doesn't mean they can now take a vacation from God and coast the rest of their lives by doing things contrary to His word and will, which is what we'll see these people were doing.

Paul is saying, you've been given everything in Christ. You've been given His Spirit, His grace, His gifts and His love and yet you snub the faith with recent your actions. Consider how you dishonor the One you claim to have received as Lord and Savior.

And yet Paul is always the encourager. Look at verse 7.

1CO 1:7 "Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed."

Because the testimony concerning Christ in their lives at one point proved them to possess this eternal life in the Savior, Paul says, they don't lack anything. There's no excuse to say, 'it's just too hard to live this new life in Christ.' It's just too hard to walk away from the temptations of this world.'

Paul says, 'no, you've got every good gift from above and the Lord knows what you need to live unto Him. The Lord knows the grace and strength you need and He can supply all the grace you need to go forward in this relationship to His glory.'

There's no excuse to sit on the side of the road waiting for the race to end, or to begin walking in the other direction because the old life was easier to deal with. Paul is saying that we have a responsibility to use the grace and the gifts we've been given in Christ to not only run the race but to finish the course.

But even that aspect of our salvation God will not leave to our own strength. The perseverance we need will not depend on our intestinal fortitude, but on the One who has called us to Himself and who expects us to walk in His ways.

1CO 1:8 "He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You mean we don't have to go it alone? You better believe it. Don't ever think that the One who loved us enough to die of the cross for the penalty for our sins has somehow lost interest in us now that we've been adopted into His family.

More than ever His love and grace are being lavished on us. In fact, that's the way Paul put it when writing to the Ephesians.

EPH 1:7 "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding."

There is nothing the Lord won't do to enable us to bring glory to His name and to be effective servants and children in His kingdom. We don't have to wilt every time a trial comes our way, or give up and return to the old ways.

All strength comes from God and continues to come from Him as we seek Him and submit to Him trusting that He is the Almighty God who loves us and will never abandon us. I love that phrase we read in verse 8 of our text.

1CO 1:8 "He will keep you strong to the end,..."

The word strong in verse 8 is the exact same word in the Greek we find in verse 6 which spoke of being confirmed or established in Christ.

What Paul means in verse 8 is that God will make sure you are established and confirmed in Him to the very end. He will not let you go. And for that reason He will supply the strength and power we need to endure and persevere to the end. This was the same message he wrote to the Ephesians.

EPH 3:16-21 "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

It's when, as Paul says, that we "grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that [we may] may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

Many Christians are waiting for a magic wand to be waived over them before they begin to walk and follow Christ whole-heartedly. Paul is saying, get a glimpse of what Christ has already given you and grasp it in such a way that you begin to see the awesome gift you've been given in Christ, and then you'll begin to understand the power of God and the love that surpasses knowledge.

And at that point we will begin to experience what it is to be filled to the measure of the fullness of God. There is where we begin to walk on a level road instead of always finding ourselves in the valley one day and on the mountain the next.

God will supply all the power we need to accomplish this because He has a vested interest in our spiritual well-being. After all, we are His children in Christ and He desires for us to shine for Him.

He is the One who began this good work in us and He will make sure He finishes it in us as well. This is where our confidence comes from and in fact that's exactly the way Paul puts it when writing to the Philippians.

PHI 1:4 "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

And so, as the end of verse 8 in our text says, God will confirm us and we will be found blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our blamelessness is found in the righteousness of Christ, today and for all eternity. And because of that we should hope in His coming, knowing that we will stand before Him not guilty.

Can we count on God to bring us to Himself? You better believe it.

1CO 1:9 "God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful."

And because He is faithful, we must be found faithful to seek Him and follow Him and love Him all of our days, because He first loved us. Is that reason enough to honor Him with our lives? I hope so, because we have an awesome God whose love for us is beyond anything we can begin to imagine. And yet it's real because He is a faithful God who cannot lie.

HEB 10:23 "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."

1TH 5:23-24 “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”