



1 Corinthians 1:4-9: Beginning with Thanksgiving...God is Faithful!

June 9, 2013

Text: 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

- Friends, remember from last week the milieu into which Paul was sending this letter...
 1. One of the most immoral areas in the world
 2. A church divided and compromised with sin
 3. A church that struggled with gifts and basic doctrine
 4. A city in which Paul was brought before a tribunal for his preaching
 5. A church and area that struggled with idolatry and paganism
- Knowing he's about to tackle some VERY tough issues, he gives us a wonderful model...
- **He gives thanks! He begins this epistle with Thanksgiving!**

Paul's Thanksgiving...

1. To **God** (v4)
 - a. He is always our first source and first place to render thanksgiving!
2. For God's **people** (v4)
 - a. We must never lose sight of the love of God for us!
3. Because of **Grace!** (v4)
 - a. Yes! Unmerited favor! Manifold blessings we don't deserve!
4. For their **growth** in Christ (v5)
 - a. Despite all the error and sin, there were GOOD things afoot!
5. For the **power** of the Holy Spirit among them! (vv 6-7)
 - a. Who confirmed that there was a REAL, ALIVE church in sin-city Corinth! Thank you Jesus, because if you can do it underneath Aphrodite's temple, you can do it in Chesapeake!
6. For God's **sustaining** power! (v8)
 - a. Until the end! The vision Paul cast here was "guiltless until the end!" What a word to use for Corinthians who were obviously struggling! Can you say substitutionary atonement? Can you say faith? LOL!

As we begin studying this Epistle, let's also be Thankful! Why? Because....

1. **God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1Co 1:9 ESV)**
2. Say that with me: "God is faithful." Breathe that wonderful truth in again: "God is faithful!"
3. I cannot tell you how badly I needed verse 9 recently. We live in a modern day Corinth: rampant and celebrated immorality, gifts either non-existent or out of control, confused gender roles in both inside and outside the church, marriages in disarray, idolatry, and lots and lots of divisions and confusion over the Gospel.
4. But yet despite it all...GOD IS FAITHFUL. Whew!
5. One of the **weaknesses** of the **warrior** is a forgetting to pause (even in the fight) and give God thanks. This is a personal fault of mine, and one that leads to frustration at times! ☺
6. Yet, the giving of thanks is just as commanded as fighting against **sin**, and we forget to do this to our own detriment . . . for "*the joy of the Lord is our strength!*" (Nehemiah 8:10)
 - a. *1Ch 16:8-9 ESV Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him; sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!*
 - b. *Psa 9:1 ESV I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.*

- c. *Psa 30:4-5 ESV Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. (5) For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.*
 - d. *Psa 33:1-3 ESV Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright. (2) Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! (3) Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.*
 - e. *Psa 79:13 ESV But we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise.*
 - f. *Psa 95:1-2 ESV Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! (2) Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!*
 - g. *Psa 100:1-5 ESV A Psalm for giving thanks. Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! (2) Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! (3) Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (4) Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! (5) For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*
 - h. *Psa 107:1-6 ESV Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! (2) Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble (3) and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. (4) Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in; (5) hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. (6) Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.*
 - i. *Psa 136:1-3 ESV Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. (2) Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. (3) Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever;*
7. I don't want this wonderful church to take on an attitude of either cynicism, **hopelessness**, or to otherwise become jaded by the fight. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal (2 Cor 10:4), and neither are our attitudes! ☺
8. From prison, Paul wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." (Php 4:4 ESV) As we strive to advance Christ and His Kingdom, giving thanks is SO important:
- a. Giving God consistent thanks helps us retain our **joy!**
 - b. Giving God consistent thanks helps us lead with **love!**
 - c. Giving God consistent thanks helps us maintain a right **perspective!**
 - d. Giving God consistent thanks makes our problems seem **smaller!**
 - e. Giving God consistent thanks helps us remember who the **battle** really belongs to....

*1Sa 17:45-47 ESV Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. (46) This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, (47) and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. **For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand.**"*

In addition to the same sort of thanks Paul gave in our Text, may I offer you a few more? Prayerfully, it will **strengthen you in the fight , and **lengthen** your ability to fight as well...**

1. Thanksgiving for **salvation!**
 - *Rom 7:24-25 ESV Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (25) Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*
 - *Joh 10:27-28 ESV My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (28) I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*
2. Thanksgiving for daily **bread!** (Matt 6:11)
 - *1Ti 6:6-8 ESV Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, (7) for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. (8) But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.*
3. Thanksgiving for **family**, friends, and church!
 - Our text, v 4. Also, this was a common thing in most epistles--thanking God for God's people right at the beginning! ☺
 - Embedded in honoring father and mother is thankfulness. A part of acknowledging children as a blessing and heritage is thankfulness for them. Submitting to godly elders has thankfulness for them built in. Loving and respecting one's spouse is difficult if you don't truly thank God for them! ☺
 - Even sharing the whole Gospel is made more loving when a person can sense you truly thank God for their lives.
4. Thanksgiving for some portion of health and strength and for **life** itself!
 - *Isa 38:19 ESV The living, the living, he thanks you, as I do this day; the father makes known to the children your faithfulness.*
 - For each breath, each day alive, each heartbeat . . . Lord, THANK YOU! ☺
5. Thanksgiving for continual, consistent, common grace and **deliverance.**
 - This was the constant cry of the psalmist: "Thank you Lord for delivering me from my enemies!"
 - *Psa 54:6-7 ESV With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O LORD, for it is good. (7) For he has delivered me from every trouble, and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.*
 - *2Ti 4:18 ESV The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*
6. Thanksgiving for the chance to **serve** others and share the gospel.
 - *1Th 2:11-13 ESV For you know how, like a father with his children, (12) we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (13) And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.*
7. Thanksgiving for the **crosses** we must bear.
 - *Act 5:40-42 ESV and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. (41) Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. (42) And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*

Final Thought Today:

May we approach all the corrections, exhortations, adjustments, and encouragements in 1 Corinthians **with a deep sense of thankfulness** to Christ our Lord for saving us, to the Holy Spirit for teaching us, for one another as we learn and grow together, and for the faithfulness of our God, who has not left us nor has He forsaken us.

Amen.