

# Because of Grace

## 1 Corinthians 1:4-8

We received a lot more than heaven when we die when God saved us by His grace. Our salvation is wholly a work of grace – “not of works” the Bible tells us. If it’s not of works, then it is all of grace.

Once that grace has been accepted for our salvation we are imparted spiritual gifts that God intends to be used to bring glory to Him and others to Christ. Along with those spiritual gifts, grace has brought us other blessings, other gifts that we all can have. That’s what this text helps us see, in part.

These verses continue the greeting (salutation) from the Apostle Paul to the believers in Corinth, and it’s his way of encouraging them for what they have done, even though he’s going to be fairly direct with them later in the letter when it comes to areas of their lives and ministry that aren’t what they should be.

Because of grace:

### **I. WE HAVE BEEN EQUIPPED – VS. 4**

Because of grace we have been equipped at our salvation with certain things that will allow us to live for Christ more fully

#### ***A. To promote thankfulness – “I thank my God always on your behalf”***

1. Our grace-gifts should cause others to be thankful to God
2. Considering he had a lot of negative things to say to the church, the Apostle Paul wanted them to know that He was thankful for their testimony and their intent to live

right. This demonstrates to us, as a church, that even though there may be things we have that are not according to biblical standards, and although we may disagree with other churches in some things, there is still something we can find to be thankful about in our church and in other churches, as well as others having something to be thankful for in ours.

***B. To partake of grace and its benefits – “for the grace of God which is given you”***

1. This seems like a redundancy, considering the word “grace” means something given (unmerited favor, specifically) by definition
2. The redundancy is on purpose – it points to what it is we have and from Whom – in this case, we have saving and living grace from the only One that can give both – our God

***C. To praise our Saviour – “by Jesus Christ”***

1. The grace that equipped us – both saving grace, and living grace – is given to us for the primary purpose of bringing glory to the Lord that saved us
2. If we don’t use those grace-gifts that we have then we have misunderstood what they are for; and if we use them for our own personal glory or gratification, then they will not bring glory to the Savior and we will hinder the Spirit of God in our lives

**II. WE ARE ENRICHED – VS. 5-7A**

Because of grace we are enriched – we have been

made wealthy with grace-gifts that we are to use for the cause of Christ

**A. With something to say for Christ - "All utterance"**

1. Some consider this to be referring to what is later called the "gift of tongues" in chapters 12-14 – Barnes says of this, "with the power of speaking various languages. That this power was conferred on the church at Corinth, and that it was highly valued by them, is evident from 1 Cor. 14... The power of speaking those languages the apostle regarded as a subject of thanksgiving, as it was a proof of the divine favor to them."

1 Corinthians 14:5

(5) I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

1 Corinthians 14:22

(22) Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

1 Corinthians 14:39

(39) Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

2. Whether or not the issue of "speaking in tongues (unknown languages)" is in view is not as important as what the word itself means that is translated here as "utterance"

- a) The Greek word is “logos” – used most often for our speech – literally, what we say
- b) It also is used for what we teach, as in doctrine
- c) Considering its use overall, the point that is being made in relation to the church, and to grace, is that the believers in Corinth were blessed, were graced, with the ability and desire to open their mouths and use their speech for the furtherance of the cause of Christ

#### Ephesians 6:18-19

(18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

(19) And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

#### Colossians 4:3

(3) Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

- d) As the verses we read from 1 Cor. 14 point out, even the point of speaking in tongues was so that others can hear the gospel and the truth of the Word of God in their language and be saved

### ***B. Because we have a working knowledge of who He is - “all Knowledge”***

1. The word for “knowledge” here is a common one in the New Testament period - “gnosis” – gathering of information, intelligence

2. To many Greeks at the time, knowledge was everything – it was superior to everything else, and to some, it was superior to even matter itself
3. This philosophy began to permeate the church in Corinth and is dealt with later on in the letter
4. What Paul is telling them, in relation to speech, knowledge of the Word of God, and the doctrines it teaches, are necessary to what we say about God and His Word  
“The outward expression (*logōi*) here is put before the inward knowledge (*gnōsei*) which should precede all speech. But we get at one’s knowledge by means of his speech.” (Robertson Word Pictures)

***C. In order to live as a witness for what He’s done for us and what He can do for others – vs. 6***

1. “Even as” – in the same measure
2. “The testimony of Christ” – evidence of Him
3. “Was confirmed in you” – established, proved
4. Grace has equipped us to demonstrate through speech and knowledge (wisdom of the Word of God) our testimony, evidence in our lives that being born again can change our life and establish us in His truth. In the same measure that we demonstrate our faith in Christ by our life, we are to demonstrate our faith in Christ with our speech, showing to others our

knowledge of Him and His Word.

**D. So that we don't come up short in the use of our grace-gifts – vs. 7a**

1. One of those grace-gifts, as is seen in 2 Cor. 8 and 9, is the gift of giving (it's also considered a spiritual gift in Rom 12:6-8)

Romans 12:6-8

(6) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

(7) Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

(8) Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

- a) The Corinthian church was asked to give financially to the church in Jerusalem, and this is referenced in this verse
- b) The churches of Macedonia were praised for their giving – considering they were the poorest churches at that time, the Apostle Paul here encouraging the Corinthian believers to not come up short in their giving for the relief of other believers
- c) This is seen at the end of the letter – 1 Cor. 16:1-3

1 Corinthians 16:1-3

(1) Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

(2) Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

(3) And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

2. To “come behind” is to come up short, to want, to be without, to lack
3. Grace has equipped us to demonstrate to the world our faith, and in so doing, demonstrate to other believers that we are using the grace-gifts (including giving) for the edification of the body of Christ, as we have learned from His Word

### **III. WE SHOULD BE EXPECTING – VS. 7B-8 – “WAITING”**

Because of grace we should be expecting the Lord’s return with eagerness

#### **A. Fully**

1. “Waiting” – being fully assured, fully expecting – awaiting eagerly, looking for
2. “For the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” – the revealing of Him – when He returns for His bride – 1 Thess. 4:13-18

#### **B. Faithfully – “Who shall also confirm you unto the end”**

1. “Who shall also confirm you” – “Who shall establish you in the hopes of the gospel. He shall make you “firm” (βεβαιώσει bebaiōsei) amidst all your trials, and all the efforts which may be made to shake your faith, and to remove you from that firm foundation on which you now rest.” (Barnes)

2. The purpose of grace, and the gifts that we have because of grace, is to make us firm to establish us, in our faith and in those gifts so that we can maintain a faithful testimony for Christ until the rapture takes place or we are taken home to heaven through death (either way, we are “waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”)

#### 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

(12) And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you:

(13) To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

#### 2 Thessalonians 3:3

(3) But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

#### 1 Peter 5:10

(10) But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

### ***C. Fruitfully – “That you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ”***

1. The way to be blameless – without indictment, without indictable offenses, is to be full of fruit at the Judgment Seat of Christ
2. “The day of our Lord Jesus Christ,” for the believer, is that of the Judgment Seat of Christ, where the believer will receive rewards – “the things done in his body”

## 2 Corinthians 5:10

(10) 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.

**Conclusion:** What have we done with the grace we have received? It has equipped us, it is enriching us, and it's something that should cause us to be looking forward to the time we come before Christ – the question is, has it?

Grace does not make everything right. Grace's trick is to show us that it is right for us to live; that it is truly good, wonderful even, for us to be breathing and feeling at the same time that everything clustering around us is wholly wretched. Grace is not a ticket to Fantasy Island; Fantasy Island is dreamy fiction. Grace is not a potion to charm life to our liking; charms are magic. Grace does not cure all our cancers, transform all our kids into winners, or send us all soaring into the high skies of sex and success. Grace is rather an amazing power to look earthy reality full in the face, see its sad and tragic edges, feel its cruel cuts, join in the primeval chorus against its outrageous unfairness, and yet feel in your deepest being that it is good and right for you to be alive on God's good earth. Grace is power, I say, to see life very clearly, admit it is sometimes all wrong, and still know that somehow, in the center of your life, "It's all right." This is one reason we call it amazing grace--. Grace is the one word for all that God is for us in the form of Jesus Christ.

Lewis B. Smedes, *How Can It Be All Right When Everything Is Wrong?*

--James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited* (Wheaton:  
Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 256.