

The Trinity Benediction

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II Corinthians 13:1-14

Salvation is of the Lord (Jonah 2:9). As we seek to understand / grasp the importance of the Trinity, we hopefully will learn that this is not an intellectual pursuit, but rather a humbling, comforting, spiritual journey for our hearts. Every aspect of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is needed for our salvation and prosperity. Our hearts must settle and direct our minds, as we see the triune God revealed: loving, providing, protecting, preserving, guiding, and living within us. God, in all His fulness, has thought of everything, has provided everything, and is providing everything. He is completely committed and will not forsake us. Our completeness is found in Him alone. Take some time to meditate on the Trinity in John 14:1-31; 16:1-33; Galatians 1:1-5/4:4-6/5:1-26; Ephesians 1:1-23; 2:1-22; 3:14-21; 4:1-32; 5:1-21.

Our Scripture reading (II Corinthians 13:1-14) is the finale of Paul's writings to the Corinthian church. Paul has been called into question by some erring brethren. They would have him examined. Paul warns them that they should examine themselves and start correcting themselves, before he has to come and deal sternly with those who are interrupting the peace and order of the church (II Corinthians 13:1-7). Paul's true motive is to edify the church - build it up, not destroy it (II Corinthians 13:10). He shows them the greater goal of a body of believers in a church (II Corinthians 13:11 cp. Romans 14:17-19; Colossians 3:12-17).

The two epistles to the Corinthians provide us with much practical instruction on how to deal with problems and growing pains, both personally and as a church. Carnality, unspirituality, pride, competitiveness, open sexual sin, marital issues, dishonesty, doctrinal problems, priorities, and spiritual warfare are among the many issues that Paul had to deal with. Yet these epistles also reveal God's great love for them.

This second epistle ends with a wonderful benediction, revealing:

The Blessings of the Triune God – II Corinthians 13:14

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

In John 1:14,16-17 we learn that Jesus came to us, *"full of grace and truth."* He came to reveal things about the Heavenly Father that were not easily seen in the law. The law condemns sin and points us to our need of a savior. Jesus Christ is the one and only Savior (Galatians 3:24; Acts 4:12). The condemnation of sin requires payment / punishment. The grace of God, through Christ brought forgiveness and cleansing (Romans 3:20-24; I John 1:5 – 2:2).

We need to receive this grace. It is described as “*grace upon grace*.” – a continual flow of generous grace. As sin condemns, so grace (the gift of God through Jesus Christ) transforms and enables. In order to live a life that pleases God, we need the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to supply for us (John 15:5; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:11; 4:13; II Timothy 2:1; Hebrews 4:14-16; 13:20-21).

The Love of God (the Father)

We can hardly discuss divine love without mentioning all three persons of the Trinity. They are inseparable and so is this love. “*For God so loved the world, that He gave...*” (John 3:16). “...That the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them as you have loved me.” (John 17:23). Love originates with God. We are to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We cannot manufacture our own love. We need to receive His love and submissively operate under the power and influence of it (Matthew 5:44-48; John 15:9; Romans 5:5; 8:38-39; II Corinthians 5:14-18; Galatians 5:6; I John 4:7-19; Jude 20-21).

The Fellowship of the Spirit

The word “fellowship” means to share things in common. The Greek word is sometimes translated “communion.” The Holy Spirit causes us to share the things of God in common with each other. In so doing, He is causing us to be united in one with the Triune God. It would be good to think of the word “fellowship” as a partnership. We are united with God and each other to advance the will of God and the kingdom of God. See Romans 8:14-17; I Corinthians 2:1-16; I John 1:1-7; 3:23-24

The fellowship of the Spirit reminds us of the constant, indwelling presence of God. We are united in love, joy and sorrow. He will never leave us or forsake us. For all eternity, we will never be alone. This allows us the gift of His peace (John 14:27; 16:33; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 3:14-21; Philippians 4:4-9) This gift of the Holy Spirit is a privilege that also gives us the responsibility to not grieve or quench the Spirit, but rather walk in the Spirit, and be filled with the Spirit. See John 14:16-23; Romans 8:1-13; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:20-32; 5:18-21; I Thessalonians 5:11-24 cp. Psalm 46:1-3; 139:1-24.