

Blessings: Receiving and Giving

10/13/2019

I Peter 4:7-11

Our Scripture reading tells us to:

- Maintain a proper perspective on the temporary state of the world's agenda, having a serious and alert mind, being attentive to prayer (I Peter 4:7 cp. I Corinthians 7:31).
- Maintain a high priority on love and forgiveness with each other, practicing genuine hospitality (I Peter 4:8-9).
- Maintain good stewardship with God's spiritual gifts that He has given us, passing on His grace to others (I Peter 4:10-11)

Considering Paul's Trinity benediction / blessing in II Corinthians 13:14, we realize that we depend on all three persons of the Trinity to save us and keep us. We should desire and seek the blessings of the triune God for our lives and the lives of other Christians. As we receive the gifts and graces of our God, we then must also learn how to be good stewards of these blessings and minister to others.

Consider the problems the churches of the past have had when they neglected or drifted away from the three-fold blessings of God, as described in II Corinthians 13:14.

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ – the Galatian churches had doctrinally fallen from grace. They were bringing legalism and fleshly works into their gospel, contaminating the pure doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. See Galatians 1:6-7; 2:21; 3:1-3; 4:9-11; 5:1-9,22-26; 6:12-18 cp. Galatians 1:3-5; 2:20; Ephesians 2:8-10.

The Love of God (the Father) – The Ephesian church was a doctrinally strong church. The letter that Paul wrote to them had virtually no rebukes or corrections to deal with. Among other things, they were given positive instruction to focus and meditate on God's love, to speak the truth with love, and to walk in the power of that love. See Ephesians 1:3-5; 2:4-5; 3:14-19; 4:15; 5:1-2; 6:23-24. Less than thirty-five years later this hard-working church, that was so zealous for truth, became cold and mechanical in its life and ministry. The people had left their first love somewhere and had become hardened. Jesus was threatening to take their light away and quit using them. See Revelation 2:1-7 (note vs. 5).

The Fellowship of the Spirit – The Corinthian church had taken the gifts of the Spirit and turned them into a contest. If they were not competing to see who had the most or the best gifts, they were dividing among themselves over who was the best minister. Then there were the mystics who said, “I am of Christ,” claiming not to need any human ministers. Despite the Holy Spirit’s call to holiness and sanctification, they were tolerating open sexual sin – boasting of their “gracious and loving spirit.” Some were getting drunk at the church’s love feasts and the Lord’s table. Others were suing each other at public courts. They boasted spiritual gifts but had little spiritual grace. They were following worldly wisdom, pride, and fleshly, impulsive appetites. They were spiritual infants. See I Corinthians 1:10-13,18-31; 3:1-4; 18-23.

The Holy Spirit leads us to godly thinking – giving us different wisdom than the world – wisdom which can be called “the mind of Christ.” He (the Holy Spirit) promotes love, peace and unity in the context of truth. See I Corinthians 2:1-5,9-16; 13:1-8a cp. Ephesians 4:1-3,17-32; 5:1-21; Colossians 3:12-17; Philippians 2:1-5.

The Holy Spirit leads us to fruitful living – causing our works to be like gold, silver, and precious stone, rather than to be like wood, hay, and stubble / straw (I Corinthians 3:10-15).

The Holy Spirit will lead a church to **do all things**:

- For the purpose of edifying / building up the body of believers (I Corinthians 14:26).
- In a decent and orderly way [i.e. honest, honorable, & Scriptural] (I Corinthians 14:40).
- In a charitable / loving way (I Corinthians 16:14, 23-24).

Blessings should be contagious!

The blessings of God are precious privileges, but they also bring responsibility. God has showed us His wonderful good will towards men. We should be careful to gratefully receive His blessings. We should also be vessels of blessing to others – receiving and giving (I Peter 4:10). Our hearts should desire that all men know and experience the goodness of God. We especially want our brothers and sisters in Christ to experience God’s love, joy, peace, hope, power, and grace:

“Now may the God of Hope fill you with all love, joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” – Romans 15:13

“Peace to the brethren, with love and faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen” – Ephesians 6:23-24