

A Thank You List - 1 Corinthians 1:4-8

Introduction: This morning we're going to be looking at a thank-you list in the scriptures. But before we do, I ran across this list of reasons to be thankful this Thanksgiving. It's called:

Top 10 Reasons to be Thankful you Burnt the Turkey!

10. Salmonella poisoning won't be a concern this year.
9. Everyone will think your turkey is Cajun blackened.
8. Fido won't pester you for table scraps.
7. After dinner, the guys have a football to play with.
6. No one will overeat.
5. You'll get to the desserts even quicker.
4. The family will gain a newfound appreciation for your cheese broccoli and asparagus casserole.
3. The smoke alarm was due for a test anyway.
2. The less turkey Uncle ____ eats, the less likely he'll be to walking around with his pants unbuttoned.
1. You won't be eating turkey sandwiches for the next two weeks.

In our text for today, the Apostle Paul is expressing his thanks for the Corinthian believers. Now there were a lot of things about the Corinthian church that bothered Paul, and he would spend a good part of these two letters addressing those issues. But there were also some things in the church that delighted him. In our text we see some things for which Paul was thankful concerning the Corinthians believers. These items on Paul's "*Thank you list*" are things that can also be added to every believers' list of things to be thankful for.

We often sing a song around this time of the year entitled "*Count Your Blessings*". I think it's so helpful to pause and try to count our blessings, not only during this time of the year, but all year round. Why? It's because counting our blessings will help us take our focus off our problems. Counting our blessings will help keep us from becoming too discouraged and depressed. There are many reasons to count our blessings.

However, we have to realize and understand that it's also impossible to count all our blessings. Do you remember the Brylcream ads from back in the 60's and 70's? Mickey Mantle would come on and sing, "*Brylcream a little dab will do ya. Brylcream, you'll look so debonair. Brylcream, the gals will all pursue ya. They'll love to run their fingers through your hair.*" Well, when it comes to the blessings of God, the Psalmist said in **Psalm 68:19 (KJV)**, "*Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loadeth us with benefits.*" God is not a Brylcream God. He doesn't just give us a little dab of His blessings and say, "*That ought to do ya.*" No, He is a God that loads us down with blessing every day. And if you'll look for them, there's no reason to be depressed. We all have so much to be thankful for.

Let's read Paul's thank you list and consider 3 things for which we should be thankful. First, we should be thankful for:

1. God's Grace Which Enriches Us. (4-5)

"I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way--in all your speaking and in all your knowledge." **1 Corinthians 1:4-5 (NIV)** First, Paul gives thanks for the grace of God that has been given to each believer. In **Eph.1:7 (NIV)**, Paul talks about being redeemed and forgiven *"in accordance with the riches of His grace."* It is not just that we have been given grace, but we've been given the riches of His grace.

Someone has said that *"Poverty is hereditary: We get it from our children."* There may be some truth to that, but there is no poverty in grace. We are rich in God's grace. Now let me give you some figures that will help us understand what I mean by being rich in God's grace.

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, in spite of losing \$18 billion, regained the title last year of the world's richest man. His net worth in 2009 is \$40 billion. If you calculated his wealth based on a 40 hour work week, he would make: \$769,230,769.23 per week - \$19,230,769.23 per hour - \$320,512.82 per minute, and \$5,341.88 every second. He could give away a million dollars a day and still make money!

It makes you want to send him a Thanksgiving food box, doesn't it? It makes a preacher want to go and recruit him for his church! But seriously, all of Bill Gates' wealth is nothing compared to the riches of God's grace.

We need to know that as believers who have put our faith and trust in God, we are the undeserved recipients of God's grace.

Paul tells the Corinthian believers and us that this grace has been given by God to us (4). He says, *"...you have been enriched"* in vs. 5. Grace is a gift from God, and received from Jesus Christ Himself. We don't earn it or deserve it.

But too often we think like the little boy whose mother found under her breakfast plate a note made out by her son. It read: *"Mother owes Brad: .25 for running errands; .10 for being good; .15 for taking out the trash; .5 for doing my homework. Total .55."* At lunch Brad found under his plate a note: *"Brad owes mother: for nursing him through the chicken pox, **nothing**; for loving him even when he disobeyed, **nothing**; for clothes, shoes, meals, toys, **nothing**. Total: **nothing**."*

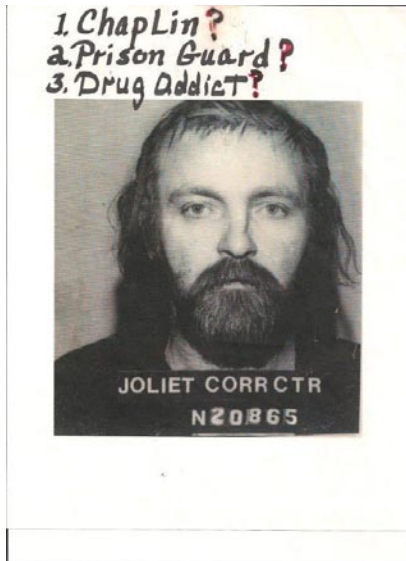
We couldn't buy God's grace or earn God's grace even if we wanted to. It cost us nothing. All we had to do was receive it. It is a gift from God.

Secondly, we need to understand that we are undeniable revealers of God's grace. The word *"confirmed"* in vs. 6 speaks of that which is stable, steadfast, sure, and established. Paul was saying that God's grace had been demonstrated in their life and there was no question about the matter. The believers at Corinth had received God's grace and it was undeniable who had brought about the change in their lives.

In 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Paul spoke of how God had saved them from all kinds of wicked lifestyles. The change in their life was but one proof that God's amazing grace had been received.

I read about a bar that had been turned into a church. Out front a sign was placed that read,

"Where sin did abound, grace did much more abound."



Look at this picture (to the left). Take a good look at this guy and tell me what you think this guy did for a living? This guy was a gang member. He worked the streets. He was a drug addict. He's stabbed people, beat people up for no reason and then laughed about it. He rode in a biker gang in Chicago that was worse than Hell's Angels, and he served five years in prison for drug possession. He was a mean dude.

Now look at this picture (to the right) and tell me what you think this guy might do for a living?



This guy is a professional

counselor and a prison chaplain. He has an international degree in counseling and works in a halfway house for drug addicts.

The two men are the same person, only several years apart.

It's our cousin, Sonny Broome. Sonny is a vivid example of what a difference the grace of God can make in a person's life. God changed this man from someone everyone was scared of; into a man people listen to and depend on for godly help. He is now revealing God's amazing grace every day of his life.

But the truth is, every believer is a revealer of God's amazing grace. We've all been rescued from a depraved past – a past that was leading us down an empty road - A path that was headed for doom and destruction. But God's grace has made our lives rich, and for that we need to be thankful. But also, Paul's thank you list included being grateful for:

2. God's Gifts Which Equip Us. (7)

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

1 Cor. 1:7 (NIV).

One of the main subjects of 1 Corinthians is that of spiritual gifts. Paul declared in **Eph. 4:8 (NIV)**, that Jesus *"gave gifts unto men."* As believers, we have not only been given grace but spiritual gifts as well.

The subject of Spiritual gifts confuses a lot of people. That apparently was the case in the church at Corinth because there was a lot of heresy being taught about gifts, so Paul wrote a good deal about it in 1 Corinthians.

But in spite of the confusion, one great truth of the Bible is that God has given unto every believer spiritual gifts. Everything God created, He created fully equipped to function in their environment. Humans have lungs to breathe in oxygen from the air, and fish have gills to breath in oxygen from the water. Humans have eyes and ears and arms and legs that enable us to get around in our world, and bats have sensors and radar capabilities

that enable them to operate in their dark world. Everything God has created has been created equipped to function, and so believers are no exception. Each and every believer has been equipped to function as a child and servant of God by being given spiritual gifts.

Now these Spiritual gifts are not talents or skills that we develop. They are not things we can pick and choose and decide if we're going to use them either. Paul said in **1 Cor. 12:11 (NIV)**, that God divides these gifts *"to each one, just as He determines."* They are divine abilities imparted by God the moment we're saved to equip and enable us to do His work and will.

The word *"gift"* is the Greek word *"charisma,"* which comes from the word *"charis,"* which is translated *"grace."* The word literally speaks of a gratuitous endowment. We could say spiritual gifts are a *"grace-gift."* They are not earned or deserved.

In vs. 7, Paul spoke of his desire that the Corinthians believers do not *"lack"* a spiritual gift. In other words, God hasn't blessed some people with gifts, while depriving others.

Every believer has a gift or gifts. Paul said in **Ephesians 4:7 (NIV)** *"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it."* Gifts are given to every believer, so we can't blame God for our living a defective Christian life.

Spiritual gifts must be viewed as a trust from God. He is placing the responsibility on us to know our gift and use our gift in service in the kingdom of God.

You see, Spiritual gifts are not given for our benefit. They are given for the benefit of others. Paul said in **1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV)** *"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."* The *"common good"* speaks of unity and working together. So, Spiritual gifts are given to each one so that the church may be built up. Spiritual gifts are not toys to play with, but tools to build with. So, if you have not discovered your gifts or, you're not using your gifts, you are depriving others of spiritual blessings and growth. Someone has said, *"To not know your gift is a tragedy. To not use your gift is a travesty."*

Each believer is important to the church. We need each other. We need the blessings that come from others using their spiritual gifts. That is why we should thank God for the gifts He has given.

So, let us be thankful for God's Grace Which Enrich Us, for God's Gifts Which Equip Us. But finally, let's be thankful for:

3. God's Glory Which Awaits Us. (7b-8)

"...as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." **1 Corinthians 1:7-8 (NIV)**

Finally, Paul speaks of the future life that awaits each believer. What a blessing to know that this life is not all there is. One day Jesus will come again, and for that we all ought to be truly thankful!

The word *"revealed"* in vs. 7 describes that which is concealed being uncovered. When Jesus appeared on earth, He was God in the flesh. His first coming was a revelation of the mystery of God. John said, in **John**

1:14 (NIV) *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

But Paul said in **1 Cor. 13:12 (NIV)** *“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”* The glory of Jesus which John saw was only a partial glory. When Jesus comes again and ushers His children into the life to come, that glory will be uncovered and revealed to all believers.

John the Revelator, could only speak in the language he knew. But he said this about that future glory that awaits us:

*1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” 5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. **Revelation 21:1-7 (NIV)***

He continued on in vs. **22-27 (NIV)** *22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

That is what awaits us as believers. Are you *“eagerly awaiting”* that day? Are you watching and waiting for that day by trying to be found *“blameless”*

You know, we don't know when that day will come, so we should live every day in anticipation of our Lord's return.

Conclusion: This Thanksgiving season, may we never forget to give our thanks to God for His grace which enriches our lives; for His Spiritual gifts which equips us; and for the glory of the Lord that awaits us. The best way you can thank Him is by giving your life to Him, and serving Him. Will you submit to do that today? Will you bow with me?

Do you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior today? Have you ask Him into your life? Have you repented of your sins and ask Him for His forgiveness? The Bible says in **Romans 10:9-10, 13 (NIV)** *“That if you*

confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved - everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Will you call on His name today? If you want to be saved, pray this prayer with me: *"Dear God...I know that Jesus Christ is God's Son. I believe He died on the cross...and was raised from the dead...I admit that I am a sinner...and I need your forgiveness...I now turn from my sinful way of life...and receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior...Thank you for saving me...In Jesus' name, Amen."*