

I thank my God always on your behalf

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- [0 : 00] We may now consider together as we shall be enabled words you will find in the chapter we read together. The first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, the first chapter.
- We shall read again from verse 3. First Corinthians, the first chapter from the third verse.
- Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.
- But in everything we are enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in and so on.
- [1 : 08] Especially the fourth verse. I thank my God always on your behalf.
- For the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ. This is written to the church at Corinth.
- That there was a church at Corinth was in itself an outstanding testimony to the efficacy of the grace of God.
- As you know Corinth was notoriously wicked. Idolatry and immorality abounded.
- And so deep rooted were those vices. And of such long continuance.
- [2 : 38] That judged by any standard that man could apply. There couldn't be a church at Corinth at all.
- But the standards of God. But the standards of men break down. When confronted with the grace of God.
- Paul came to Corinth preaching the gospel of God. And that gospel when accompanied by the spirit was sufficiently found.
- To break down the strongholds. Of idolatry. And vice. And while there was much.
- To be desired. Still. In the church at Corinth. While there were many irregularities. Yet the apostle addresses them.
- [3 : 50] As the. Saints. At Corinth. The church of God. At Corinth. The saints.
- Those who were. Called. Of. Jesus. Christ. Hmm. And it is to this church.
- He writes. After he had been informed. Of. Some of the. Irregularities. That prevailed there. But in full possession of those facts.
- And this is noteworthy. In full possession. Of those facts. He doesn't hesitate. Not withstanding.
- To address them. As the church of God. The sanctified.
- [4 : 50] In Christ. Jesus. Those called. To be. Saints. Which is itself.
- A conclusive. Proof. An unanswerable. Argument. That the grace of God.
- Can exist. And does exist. Where there is much. Weakness. Much.

- Lack of conformity. To God's standard. And this is true. Both individually. And. Collectively. Shall we say. That the apostle.
- [5 : 54] Viewed the church. At current. Not merely. As. What it was. But that he viewed it. Especially. As what it was. Capable of becoming. By the grace of God. The grace that had.
- Called the church. Into being. There. Was sufficient. To perfect. That church. So that it would be.
- Presented. Before God. Without spot. Or blemish. Or any. Such thing. Now he says. I thank my God. And of course.
- [6 : 51] He did. What he said. He did. He thanked God. Now we might pause. For a little. To ask ourselves.
- This question. What does this mean? What does it imply? To thank God?
- Like everything else. When we look at it on the surface. We think we know what it means. It doesn't seem quite as easy.
- To define it. As it appears. On the surface. I thank God. God. Now of course.
- This is. A high achievement. In the life of grace. In the life of faith. It is but a truism.
- [8 : 06] To say. That no one. Really. Thanks God. But on account. Of his grace. And that therefore.
- No one. Really. Thanks God. But such as. Possess. That grace. Perhaps.
- From one point of view. At least. This is the highest exercise. To which the spirit of man. Can rise. To thank God.
- I thank God. There is nothing higher. Because.
- There are two things. Included in it. At least. Two things. That justifies.
- [9 : 12] In referring to it. And describing it. As. A high exercise. Of grace. First of all. There is this. The recognition.
- That. All good. And perfect. Gifts. Come. From God.
- There is this. This. Knowledge. Of the bounty of God. This knowledge. Of the kindness of God.
- Of the compassion of God. Of the goodness of God. But secondly.
- There is also. The recognition. That man has no claim. On this bounty. That he cannot put in a plea.
- [10 : 24] On the grounds of anything. That is in himself. Or that can be in himself. hombre. With his name.
- That will before. I will. that all good things are from God and that they themselves are unworthy of the least of it.
- Now brought into this sacred place of the Most High taught in the inner sanctuary where both God's goodness and man's demerit are seen in their clearest night.
- There and there only Intelligent thanks is rendered to God. There and there only can it be said I thank God.
- I thank God. Blessed is the man who thanks God. Blessed is he who recognizes his indebtedness to the Most High.
- [12 : 03] Who in all humility of spirit can say Blessed be God who has blessed us.

I thank God. But the apostle goes on further to say that he thanks God for the grace that was given unto the Corinthian church.

For the grace of God which is given you. I thank God for the grace of God which is given you.

It is fitting. It is right. That we should thank God for his goodness to ourselves personally.

But where the spirit of true God it is look at it it is. There is a wider field than that covered by it.

[13 : 33] It is not that I should thank God for his goodness to myself only. But also to thank him for his goodness to others.

For his grace bestowed upon his people. His grace given to him. For his grace given to you.

to you. Now there is a sense in which this thanksgiving the church of God the king had a special reference to the apostle himself.

For it was at least partly For it was at least partly to his instrumentality that this church was planted at Corinth.

So that there was that tender and close bond between the apostle and the Corinthian church.

[14 : 57] But we are not to confide his thanksgiving to this. He certainly gave thanks to God for the success of the word preached by himself and by Sosthenes, by Apollos, by Zephas, by all the apostles, by all the teachers who taught this.

But there is also what we read of in the episode of the Romans that when one member of the body is honored then all rejoice with it.

As when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Now Paul rejoiced in the grace of God given to these men and women.

He rejoiced in it as a member in the body of Christ. Rejoicing on account of the honor, bestowed another member of that same body.

Now perhaps this is the test of old gratitude.

[16 : 35] Whether it is on account of the grace of God or on account of our own comfort. And there is a mighty difference there.

The test is this whether we rejoice in that grace when bestowed on others.

And going a step further, whether we rejoice in the grace bestowed on others.

the truth. And we hope. When we know, at least when we think we know, that their grace exceeds our own, or to put it another way when according to our thinking they are more highly honored than we are ourselves.

to rejoice in the grace of God bestowed upon the members of Christ's body to rejoice in it wherever it is bestowed on whomsoever it is bestowed to whomsoever it is given and to rejoice in it as the grace of God there is an instinct in human nature to show sympathy to those whom we think are less fortunate than ourselves there is an instinct in human nature to this effect that is it is at least to a degree it is natural for men and women to weep with them that weep it is also natural to a degree to rejoice with them that do rejoice and in the sense in which we speak just now this is but the expression of our gregarious instinct of our herd instinct we like to do what the others are doing we like to follow the crowd whether they weep whether they rejoice there is definitely something in human nature that inclines men and women in that direction that's no sign of grace but when the apostle says rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep he raises it above the natural instinct he asks them to do this because because they are members one of another to do it not merely as the expression of a natural instinct but to do it not merely as the expression of a natural instinct but to do it has been closely bound with their fellow believers but while that is true we have to recognize this fact we have to recognize this fact that it is not natural for man to rejoice at those who are promoted at one's own expense it is not natural for man to rejoice then it is not natural for man to rejoice then it is not natural for man to rejoice then it is not natural for man to rejoice in his neighbour's wellbeing disinterestedly

[21 : 45] he can do it up to a point but only up to a point and it is then that the grace of God shows what it is I thank God for the grace given unto you he doesn't say I thank God for you certainly he had he had that at heart but that is not the order in which he puts it he sees first the grace of God he sees first the grace of God and then he sees them he doesn't see them first and then the grace of God and I tell you there is a mighty distinction there and this is the only way in which one can disinterestedly rejoice in the good of his fellow being of his fellow believer up to any point to view man in the light of grace not grace in the light of man he sees God's grace and this is precious this is glorious in his eyes all the time now he follows that grace let us say and this grace is bestowed upon a person here a person there and so on now he rejoices in that grace of God given unto them and notice again it is in grace he rejoices what is this?

grace grace nothing but grace grace while he is sent into the world to declare this grace of God that was his work primarily as a preacher of the gospel to declare the grace of God to all who would hear he proclaimed this far and wide he was ready to preach it at all times in as much as in my life I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at home also at home and everywhere else starting from Jerusalem he was ready to preach it this grace of God no God's grace no God's grace is something for which the world never looked and furthermore it is something which the world can never understand the grace of God the grace of God it is something which is beyond the comprehension of man's mind in the following chapter in the same epistle you see how the apostle brings that out he states categorically that the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God and what things are these well in a word they are the grace of God man doesn't understand the grace of God he stumbles at it every time it is a stumbling block it is a rock of offence and this grace of God of course is in Christ and it can truly be said it is Christ but no man cannot understand the grace of God and the grace of God and the grace of God in a word is this that God gives something for nothing that God gives everything for nothing that God gives everything for nothing that is for no payment on the part of man or no work on the part of man it is that which God gives freely without any respect to the worthiness the deservedness of those to whom it is given it is not given to people because they deserve it because they are worthy of it because they have worked for it and it is precisely at that point that the grace of God becomes a stumbling block man cannot understand it he refuses to believe it so every time

he comes with gifts and sacrifices provided by himself he likes to buy of God he likes to do his part he likes to give what is his own the law of his mind is a fair exchange he may not and does not go according to that law but that's the law of his conscience a fair exchange if I will do this God will do that if I will give this God will give that that's the law of his conscience now that is not grace that is the very antithesis of grace and here we repeat man stumbles every time stumbles in all his endeavours to do business with God

God talks grace man talks works God says freely I give man replies a fair exchange is what I know and this is part of the offense of the gospel that it is free without money and without price in other words that it is grace and nothing but grace now perhaps the last stronghold in which man takes Shazner is the one of faith regarding the grace of God he argues like this

I quite believe that at least he thinks he believes that man is justified without the works of the law but then he takes refuge in this with his own ideas he takes refuge in faith he says and tries to act on this principle I will believe and then God will give me grace or I will be saved for whichever form you care to put it this is his last resort I will believe and of course in saying that and in acting on that principle he is still acting on the principle of a fair exchange in other words he is still under the law he is acting under the law he doesn't know grace he tries in the last analysis to buy the grace of God with his own faith and that is all the gospel that thousands know who profess the name of Christ they don't know any other gospel they don't know any other grace the only grace they know is the one they bought by their own faith and that's no grace none at all that man is still in the bond of iniquity and in the gall of bitterness he is still bound hand and foot by the spirit of the law although he calls it faith and calls it grace it is still love and nothing but love

[33 : 06] I will believe then he believes and then he takes to himself in this spirit of bondage and legality he takes to himself what doesn't belong to him he stretches forth unholy hands to the promises of God and applies them to himself and that is what he is told to do that is the teaching he receives a teaching which he can lap up like water because his nature is in that direction already he is biased in that way but this is grace something entirely different basically fundamentally different from what man can achieve by any doing of his own including his faith it is something that God gives free it is something to which God attaches no conditions no conditions whatsoever all God says is take take take take take without money and without price take to your heart's content you see with no conditions absolutely no conditions the only condition the only condition and that cannot be a condition is that you take that you receive that you accept whichever word you prefer that you receive freely without any conditions and then unto those who receive the grace of God makes its own conditions that is it works inevitably according to its own nature we have received this grace the grace of God given something given freely something given freely but also received of course and it is the grace of God that makes way for its own reception it is not something like this now I am ready to receive the grace of God the grace of God nobody is ready to receive the grace of God it is the grace of God that makes one ready for receiving grace it is the grace of God that makes room for itself in the heart of man it is given and it is given so as to surmount every barrier to overcome every difficulty to surmount every obstacle that is the nature of the grace of God it is not something for which one can be prepared beforehand it is something that brings with it its own preparation now he says

I thank God for this grace and well did the apostle knew well did he know that no other grace could have worked at Corinth and incidentally that no other grace could have worked anywhere else the grace of God given to you given freely and fully and that grace given made way for its own reception and that grace planted a church in Corinth a church in Corinth called men out from the worst of Isis and made them saints of God made them the called of Jesus Christ the church of God at Corinth

I thank God for this grace the grace that accomplished this and this is the only grace that will work anywhere at any time the grace of God and this grace will work it is always the power of God unto salvation it doesn't matter where put it into the worst places imaginable the darkest dungeons of ice that ever existed but this grace of God given and received will work according to its own nature and nothing in the universe can prevent it and surely this is the grace that will do for us individuals the grace of God given

I thank God for it as if the apostle said I thank God for it on my own account and on your account I thank God that this is the grace which he gives I thank God that it works that it is not only mighty but almighty and this is the grace that will perfect you this is the grace by which you shall be presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy I thank God for the grace of God given unto you how by Christ Jesus there is no grace apart from Jesus it is the grace which is in him the grace which resides in it for it pleased the Father that in him all fullness including the fullness of grace should dwell it is the grace of God by Christ Jesus so that in Christ this grace is personified he wasn't referring to something in the abstract he is referring to the grace of God by Christ Jesus the day grace the grace we beheld his glory full of grace a glory full of grace a glory full of grace we beheld his glory full of grace grace it would be fully true to say we beheld his grace full of glory we received his grace full of glory full of grace and truth may this be our position and condition that the grace of God be given us and may God in his mercy so work in us as that we shall walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called in the gospel of God's grace that we might from the heart for ourselves and for one another may give thanks to God for the grace given unto us by Christ Jesus let us pray

O Lord bless us bless us with thy grace and we would bless thee that there is grace and for the nature of the grace there is may our hope and confidence blessed entirely in thee because of thy grace through Christ Jesus the Lord is gracious and he is full of compassion lift upon us the light of thy countenance and I am to take away our sins for Christ take him "