

***“Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy —
Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth Demands That We Follow Paul — Part 4”***

Review:

- ***Following Christ Apart from Paul Exalts Law and not Grace***

Matt. 23:1-3

***1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,
2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, [that] observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.***

- ***Our reason for looking at this scripture was to see what the Lord had said about the scribes and Pharisees in relation to Moses. They sat, he said, in Moses' seat and the disciples were told to do as they said, that is, to obey Moses and the Law. I cannot imagine Paul writing such a thing as this, can you? There are significant dispensational issues to take note of here.***

Galatians 3 states the significant differences between Law and Grace so clearly: Law requires Obedience and Rewards with the Promise of Blessing while Grace Freely Provides Blessing and Exhorts Obedience:

Gal. 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

- ***The issue dispensationally is this: “what is God doing”. Moses was the admin of the Dispensation of the Law while Christ was of the coming Kingdom. But Paul was the admin of the Dispensation of the Grace of God. If we do not learn this by Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth we will not have the truth but a lie, and, we will seek to do what we cannot do [except perhaps with satanic power, witness the Pentecostal movements, etc.] ... quickly leading one into the spiritual slavery of false religions with their burdensome legal requirements.***

So following Christ without following Paul's example and doctrine today brings spiritual failure for the one so living is not living with the power of God's grace in one's life.

- *The last chapter in Mark is revealing. We see there how the Kingdom preaching was accomplished along with and by the power of Almighty God so that when Kingdom Law was preached there was an enablement given that included signs and wonders. This was needed so that the messenger of the message of the Kingdom might be properly “authenticated” and the message thereby “certified”. Isaiah had taught this dynamic in several places that are quoted in the gospel accounts (see especially Is. 35:4-6):*

Mark 16:17-20

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with [them], and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

So the Lord worked miracles and signs and his disciples worked as well. And clearly this was not by Satan's power but by God's through the Holy Spirit. When the Kingdom was preached the signs and wonders signifying that God was working according to the Kingdom were seen by many as the disciples worked the work of God. Their preaching of the Kingdom was accompanied by signs just as the Lord's own preaching and teaching had been similarly accredited.

- **The Work of God under Grace Exalts God's Grace and Not the Law**
 - *Signs and wonders were common in Paul's pre-prison ministry as recorded in the book of Acts. But there is no indication that God continued to work in this way through his people. In fact there are both doctrinal teachings to that effect and other evidences but most importantly, Paul's own testimony. Some compelling examples are these:*
 - *A good place to start was with Timothy's physical infirmities. As the apostle's ministry reached its final phase, Paul could not gain healing for Timothy, his son and co-minister in the faith!*

1 Tim. 5:23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

- ***Another example is Epaphroditus, Paul's co-worker. He could not bring about a healing and need to wait on the Lord for that healing in due time. See Phil. 2:27***
- ***And then there was Trophimus: At the very end of his life and ministry, Paul, greatly dependent on his co-workers since he had been arrested by the Romans and cast into prison. But Trophimus, a trusted co-worked on his final missionary journey became ill and had to be left behind as Paul and others went on from Miletus.***

2 Tim. 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

- ***So it is clear that new principles of God's working among his people were put into place for this Dispensation. Paul taught that the "charismatic" gifts and all the "sign" gifts, including the apostolic gifts and prophecy were merely temporary! They quickly passed away as Paul said they would. The doctrinal teaching on this is found in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapters 12 - 13 where we will focus today.***

Our Outline:

- ***Some Dear Things Must Be Lost For Grace To Be Fully Revealed!***
- ***Following Christ Apart from Paul Is Living Without the Power of God***
- ***Some Dear Things Must Be Gained For Grace To Be Fully Enjoyed!***

I. Some Dear Things Must Be Lost For Grace To Be Fully Revealed!

- ***Chapters 12 and 13 of 1 Corinthians contains the detailed teaching concerning the temporary phenomenon of signs, wonders, and miracles. I am saddened to say that few today will take the apostle's words here seriously enough effectively rendering them nearly meaningless. This will be our primary focus today.***
- ***We saw how Signs, Wonders and Miracles were associated directly with the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom. But Paul is writing here in the Corinthian letters to the churches where in some places special "gifts of the spirit" were being used. Although he himself***

manifested “the signs of an apostle”, other teachers and leaders apparently did not have such enabling. But it is these miraculous gifts of the spirit in the church in Corinth in particular that Paul is addressing here. There are several questions answered here in these verses the most important being whether these gifts would be temporary or a permanent part of church life.

[READ] 1 Cor. 13:8-13

8 Charity never faileth: but whether [there be] **prophecies**, they shall fail; whether [there be] **tongues**, they shall cease; whether [there be] **knowledge**, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we **prophesy** in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these [is] charity.

- *In chapter 12 verses 8 - 10 there are actually three different classifications of gifts of the spirit mentioned and the apostle here in chapter 13 has chosen one gift out of each of the three as representing the rest in each grouping. The one chosen (knowledge, prophecy, or foreign languages) stands in for the rest in each group in some significant way. We will see how in a moment when we look at what was written in chapter 13:*

[REREAD] 1 Cor. 12:8-10

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of **knowledge** by the same Spirit;

//9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another **prophecy**; to another discerning of spirits; // to another [divers] kinds of **tongues**; to another the interpretation of tongues:

▪ ***The three groupings of gifts:***

- ***The First Group (Verse 8): Words of wisdom, words of knowledge***

- *The Second Group (Verses 9-10a): faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discerning for spirits*
 - *The Third Group (Verse 10b): The speaking of foreign languages including the translation of those languages into what is understandable in church assemblies.*
- *I have arranged this list into three divisions according to evidence in the Greek words themselves as found in chapter 12. For there are two different Greek words that imply such a three-part division. The two words are translated here using the same English word, the word “another”, hiding the distinction given by the Greek words themselves. To paraphrase these words found here, it is as if Paul wrote in this way:*
- “to the one is given the word of wisdom, and accordingly, ..., but on the other hand, one is given faith and similarly, healing, ...; and finally in a different way, one is given the gift of foreign languages and accordingly interpretation of foreign languages. So there are three groups here identified and kept separate by the design of the Holy Spirit of God.*
- *The gifts of wisdom, faith, and foreign languages signify the different groupings then as we reach the critical verses of Paul’s teaching starting in chapter 13, verse 8. We see here these three groups referred to by the choice of just one of the gifts chosen as representative of the others in the group. The teaching in all cases is that those gifts shall pass away, but different words for “passing away” are used signifying a different time or manner of their “passing”. The one word, “cease” or “be rendered useless” is used with “wisdom” and “faith” while the other one, “pass away or become small” is used with “foreign languages”. I believe this is because the different kinds of gifts would be terminated abruptly in many cases though some would last perhaps a little longer.*
- *So, that these would be passing away should be so clear. But the question remains, when will this occur? Many assume here that Paul is writing about Christ’s return although that cannot be since that would not be a meaningful exhortation. Something that was so helpful and such an incredible blessing would be passing away with the implication that it would be soon. To say the blessing would not continue after Christ had returned would be no consolation at all in*

the present time. But that these gifts of the spirit would pass away because something far better would come into being soon is the intent here. One thing passes away by the design of Almighty God while another better thing takes it place.

- ***Paul is here writing to encourage. For if these dramatic Signs and Miracles disappeared as he suggests here that they would, there would be mass confusion. But rather this change is to be seen as the basis of a great encouragement for those that would be entering into the fulness of God's abundant grace. The maturity of the Dispensation will then have come as the remnants of the former age of immaturity have passed away. Paul is looking forward to that with great anticipation and joy. What is the essential teaching here though as to WHY - the completion of the word given to Paul is the essential as indicated in verses 9 - 12.***

- ***Verses 9 & 10 use the expression “ek meros” or “out of a part of the whole” ... “perfect” or “complete” is used in contrast. It seems that these gifts all in some way relate to prophecy or God's giving to man revelation through the gift of his word. It is the gift of prophecy that is singled out in this verse to characterize all gifts of that sort.***
- ***Note that the first grouping here is signified by the gift of knowledge or “word of knowledge” in chapter 12. That also is connected to revelation as indicated in that chapter. These gifts will cease or be rendered inactive, he writes here, and that this will occur in relation to the “perfect” coming into being. He writes that at the time of his writing those gifts were operating in the realm of “the partial” or “the incomplete”. But the partial is in relation to the complete, or the “perfect” as revealed here.***
- ***The next verses are essential parts of Paul's explanation of the “when”. The “what” and the “when” are revealed together here for they are intimately intertwined:***

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect [or the complete] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

- ***Literally, this is to “know from out of a part (of the whole)” and similarly, to “prophecy from out of a part of the whole”.***
- ***What is the “part” and the “whole” in reference to? Well, these are gifts associated with the word and the revelation of God to man of what he is doing or will do (prophecy). The gifts are to accomplish that revelation.***
- ***Verse 10 then completes the picture: “But when that which is perfect [or the complete] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” Again, in the context, I think it is clear what this is all about. What is the “perfect” then? In the context it is the completed revelation of God (called in chapter 12 both word and prophecy). So Paul is saying here that those gifts only made sense in the context of an incomplete revelation of what God was working out through his grace. And doesn’t this actually say just that! These gifts were for the time then but would no longer be needed when the “complete” or the “perfect” had come into being and the former witness through those signs was no longer needed. More could surely be said about this and how the event of Acts 28:28 signifies a profound change in the working of God towards his people.***
- ***This is not the only place Paul writes about this perfect or complete entity. In Col. 1 we see the statement, written during Paul’s prison ministry, that that perfect or complete thing, namely, the word of grace given to Paul for the Church which is his Body had indeed been given through he himself and it was being completed in those days in which he was writing:***

[READ] Col. 1:24-27

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil [or complete] the word of God;

26 [Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

- ***So what is Paul saying here in chapter 13? He is saying quite simply that things were about to change from what they had been. We must take note that there was a transitional period between the early Acts teaching of the Twelve apostles for the Jews and Paul's ministries to the Gentiles. The one emphasized the coming Kingdom while the other was focused on God's abundant grace through Jesus Christ. Both taught the risen Christ. But the content of the teaching otherwise was quite different.***
- ***Wonders and miracles for the Twelve were a matter of course. For Paul God also worked miraculously in his early years. The book of Acts gives much testimony to that. But there were differences due to the gifts of the spirit to the members of the churches, especially in Corinth and Paul wanted to prepare the believers for that great change.***

II. Following Christ Apart from Paul Is Living Without the Power of God

- ***So we have seen how a dispensational change was occurring as Paul carried out his ministry. Those changes were significant in the lives of believers. If we are not ware of this Dispensational change and try to live as if we were living in an earlier day — or a future time — we will undoubtedly be living as believers without the empowering of God Almighty. That is a sad situation indeed, but its effects are inevitable.***
- ***Chapter 13 verses 11 & 12 complete the teaching here through an analogy that is so applicable to his teaching:***

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

- ***Paul draws the analogy with a child maturing and in the course of time willingly gives up what had previously been so important in training and growth. What had been so important was no longer needed. The time maturity and adult***

living had come. Even one's speech radically changes as the child becomes mature. Babbling becomes clear speech with meaning contained in language understood by adults. This seems to be a direct reference to the foreign languages and interpretation of such. What was needed before would no longer be provided. Maturity brings independence always.

- *Then there is his mirror analogy. What a perfect one indeed that is. When the revelation of what has been accomplished though our Lord Jesus is complete, then “we shall know even as we are known”, as it were, face to face. No more mirrors, no more helps that were so needed before. No we know ourselves as Christ himself knows us. This is a constant theme in Paul's letters, isn't it? Remember this words which say it so well:*

Col. 1:26-27

26 ... [Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [See also Col. 3:1-4 for an elaboration of this teaching]

- *In that regard, let's not forget Paul's testimony which as always rings so true. Not only did the signs for the Jews pass away as Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 13, the signs of an apostle also passed away as Paul learned while his life was nearing its conclusion. The apostle learned to rejoice in the total and absolute “sufficiency” of God's super-abundant grace “so that the power of Christ might rest upon him”. This is the lesson we also are privileged to learn today:*

[READ] 2 Cor. 12:7-9

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- ***Yes, this is about Paul himself, the apostle of the Gentiles. But the implications for us as well living under this Dispensation of the Grace of God should be clear too. We are not apostles even. What is our testimony? Is it of faded Kingdom glories with that power of apostolic times, or is it a testimony of his abundant and always sufficient grace?***
- ***Here Paul exclaims in very clear and powerful terms how through the abundance of grace God's power is displayed today. It is through weakness and not through signs and wonders as was the norm under the preaching of the coming Kingdom and while Israel and the Jews were either the center focus or still an important goal in ministry (as in the Acts transitional period).***

Now, the full revelation of God's grace has occurred. We may now fully know therefore of Christ's completed work. That revelation has been brought to "perfection" through Paul so that "we may know as we are known"! What a glory this grace is. What glory through our Lord Jesus as he reigns within us to give us "all things".

III. Some Things Dear Must Be Gained For Grace To Be Fully Enjoyed!

- ***When we come to understand this lesson regarding how God is working today under grace, we may begin to enter more fully into that grace and it is our privilege to do so. Paul is our example. The Signs and Wonders associated with the preaching of that Earthly Kingdom, with this earth so burdened with sin and its consequences, are past. Though our God is still a miracle working God indeed, he is not working as described in the Acts and in the gospels. Even those special gifts of the spirit, so common in Corinth, have passed away. Those powers and signs are no longer needed. Our Kingdom citizenship is heavenly, not earthly, and we have gained so much more in that heavenly realm that our joys in the spirit may be full. What does Paul write about that?***

1 Cor. 13:13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these [is] charity.

- ***So in conclusion, we have lost the miraculous signs of the Kingdom that was previously "at hand". It is no longer since now the Prophetic Calendar has been stopped for a while as grace is poured out on sinners far and wide. We have lost those miraculous signs and the gifts of the spirit even the early Body Church experienced in***

some places (as in Corinth). We have gained so much as we have seen.

- ***But what have we gained? Well, there are many exhortations in Paul's letters with promises attached. They are important and so practical for our living today under grace. I include only one today:***

[READ] Phil. 4:6-9

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Conclusions / Application:

- ***Today Grace Rules! Let's Enjoy the Lord of Glory and Grace, Always!***
- ***Applications for today are so clear and so powerful. We face hard times indeed perhaps with what is occurring in our land and world in these days and hours. But if we focus on what will "abide", we shall do well. Faith, hope, and love. And God's grace will be sufficient through it all. Paul believed it as he neared his execution. Do we?***
- ***Many today are drawn into signs, wonders, and miracles not knowing that they are all today a part of satan's work as part of his "mystery of lawlessness". They are drawn into prophecy not knowing that that was written for the nation of Israel regarding their coming Kingdom. We should not be so drawn as we have the great privilege of "knowing even as we are known" by the Lord of glory! Amen and amen!***