

Worship and Priesthood Pt 7.

“Joined to Christ in blessing”

2 Corinthians 9.

Sunday morning, April 13, 2008.

I. Introduction and review.

The priesthood of Christ and His people is a threefold calling: Sacrifice; Prayer or intercession, and Benediction or blessing.

- A. In being joined to Christ as sacrifice we die with Him to our sinful selves and to this world. We also present ourselves alive through Christ to God and to His people, to serve and to live, not to ourselves, but to the Lord and His people.
- B. In being joined to Christ in prayer, we pray with Christ for the preservation of His people. This preservation comes about through the appropriation of the armor of God. We can not effectively pray with Christ for His people without giving of ourselves what is needed to God’s people to clothe themselves in this armor.
- C. In being joined to Christ in blessing we cannot help but being made into the instruments of that blessing. This we will now consider.

II. Paul’s boasting. Vs. 1-5.

- A. Paul had boasted to the Corinthians about the Macedonian spirit of generosity in the face of great adversity. 2 Cor. 8:1-5.
- B. Yet Paul had boasted about the Corinthians to the Macedonians as well. To the Macedonians Paul had boasted about the willingness of the Corinthians whereby they were ready to help even a year earlier, and even before the Macedonian churches did anything. 9:2.
- C. This willing spirit on the part of the Corinthians, had been instrumental to stir up the zeal of many, such as the Macedonian churches. 9:2.
- D. This willingness however had not been acted upon. Nothing of a practical nature was ever done. That is why Paul sends Titus over to Corinth to complete their willingness to give, by putting together the actual collection. 8:6,10,11.
- E. Not doing so could potentially become embarrassing for the apostle as he had boasted about the Corinthian willingness, and embarrassing for the Corinthians as well as the apostle had boasted of them in vain. 9:4.

III. God’s grace. Vs. 6-11a.

- A. Paul urges the Corinthians to give with generosity; lit. “with blessing.” That is with the priestly benediction of God; God’s blessing; God’s generosity.
- B. He also urges them to give freely. With freedom in their hearts. Out of the spirit of liberality. Giving as though they were not very attached to their earthly possessions. You are giving what is the Lord’s, and He gives generously.
- C. Paul knows the strong bonds by which we are bound to this earth, and to our possessions, and so He sets God’s provision of grace before us in vs. 8.
This grace is twofold:
 - 1. It is inward. It frees our heart from bondage to this world; to our possessions, and to covetousness (the desire to have ever more of this world for ourselves.)

This is done through the work of Christ's cross in our lives; our union with His cross. By it the world becomes unattractive to us; it becomes crucified to us. Crucified entities are unattractive, in fact they are accursed. Gal. 6:14. The desire to heap up large possessions in this world for ourselves becomes repulsive to us through Christ's cross.

2. It is outward. It supplies the Christian with a generous supply of goods in this world, so that he "may have an abundance for every good work." Vs. 8.

D. Paul illustrates this grace from Psalm 112:9. Vs. 9

1. This Psalm is a description of a righteous man; "the man who fears the Lord, and delights greatly in His commandments." Psalm 112:1.

2. Among several other descriptions he is marked by:

1. "Dispersing his goods abroad;" the spirit of generosity. He freely gives.

2. "Giving them to the poor;" giving with wisdom to those who need it

most.

3. "His righteousness endures forever." God secures the lasting blessing and eternal reward.

E. Paul affirms this grace with an application to the Corinthians. Vs. 10,11.

Vs.10 and 11a are best translated as an affirmation, not as a prayer.

"Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply the seed you have sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness. You will be enriched in everything for all generosity..."

IV. The people's response. Vs. 11b-15.

A. It produces the response of true thanksgiving, or true worship of God.

1. On the part of the apostles.

"...which causes thanksgiving through us to God." Vs. 11b

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." 3 John 4.

2. On the part of other believers as they are delivered out of distress. Vs. 12.

3. As it is the proof of the genuineness of the Corinthian profession of faith in the gospel of Christ. Vs. 13

4. It is proof of the Corinthian partnership with the Judean Christians and all Christians. ("Your liberal sharing with..." is lit. "Partnership with...") Vs 13

B. It breaks down the walls of separation between races and cultures. Vs. 14.

"And in their prayers they will long for you because of the surpassing grace of God upon you."

In this case between Jew and Gentile.

See here how the hand of providence works for the good of the church. God was suppressing the Judaistic and Nationalistic spirit of the Jews. He was humbling them. At the same time he was awakening the love and care of the Gentile churches toward their Jewish brethren.

This hand of providence is still at work to loosen our grip on our possessions, and to awaken our love for the brethren. Giving ourselves to our needy brethren is still the proof of the genuineness of our profession, and the genuineness of our partnership with all the brethren. Matt. 25:40,45.