

## Message 4

### **The Spirit of Paul & Christ as Grace**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 6:11-13; 7:2-4, 12-16; 10:1-2, 7-12; 11:1, 5-31; 12:1, 11-19; 1:12; 4:15; 6:1; 8:1-2, 9; 9:8, 14-15; 12:9; 13:14; John 1:14, 16-17; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 6:18

#### **I. Our spirit is the deepest part of our being:**

- A. We want to see nine aspects of the wonderful spirit of Paul—Acts 17:16; 19:21; Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 2:13:
1. This man Paul has an open spirit:
    - a. When you open your spirit, you are fully, thoroughly open to others.
    - b. Our natural man has to be broken; then we will be open in the spirit one to another.
    - c. For the Lord's sake and for the building up of the church, we have to be open one with another.
  2. Paul was a man with a frank spirit—12:11:
    - a. We have to get rid of all the elements of the cunning serpent within us.
    - b. In the local expression of the church, of the Body of Christ, we have to be so faithful and frank.
  3. The apostle Paul was also one who had a pure spirit:
    - a. A frank spirit has to be matched with a pure spirit.
    - b. If you are frank without purity, you will damage and destroy the saints; in the church life we need such a frank and pure spirit.
  4. Paul also had a bold spirit—13:2; 2 Tim. 1:7.
  5. Paul's spirit was bold, and yet it was also humble:
    - a. Boldness needs the balance of humility.
    - b. These characteristics of humility and boldness in our spirit are necessary for the church life.
  6. Paul's spirit was a loving spirit, a spirit always stretching out to love others, to take care of others.
  7. Another characteristic of Paul's spirit is that his spirit was tender.
  8. Paul's spirit was not self-seeking:
    - a. Second Corinthians shows us that he had a spirit that never sought anything for himself; he had a spirit fully, wholly, and thoroughly delivered out of the self.
    - b. Whatever his spirit sought was for the good of the church and for the interest of Christ; Such a spirit is greatly needed in today's church life.
  9. The final characteristic of Paul's spirit is that his spirit was always coordinating with his co-workers, coordinating with the local churches, and even coordinating with those believers who did not treat him so well.
- B. These are the real characteristics of a person's spirit who lives in the Holy of Holies; we need such a spirit for the building up of the Lord's Body:
1. Without such a balanced, adjusted spirit, the church life could never be realized by us regardless of how many doctrines and how much knowledge we possess.
  2. For us to realize the church life, we need such a balanced and adjusted spirit. May we all look to the Lord that we may have such a spirit.

#### **II. The grace of the Lord is the central thought, the subject, of 2 Corinthians— 1:12; 4:15; 6:1; 8:1, 9; 9:8, 14; 12:9; 13:14:**

- A. The New Testament shows us that grace is nothing less than Christ Himself as the very embodiment of the processed Triune God for our enjoyment—1 Cor. 15:10; cf. Gal. 2:20-21:
  - 1. Christ has come not merely to do something for us objectively, not merely to bring some good things from God to us freely.
  - 2. The purpose of the work of Christ was so that He could come into us; His dying on the cross was not the purpose but the means to fulfill the purpose of Him coming into us for our enjoyment in order that we may enjoy Him as our life, our life supply, our strength, and our everything.
- B. Grace is not something received outwardly but Someone within, energizing, enabling, and strengthening us to do something for the Lord—2 Cor. 8:1-2; 12:7-9.
- C. Out of the enjoyment of Christ Himself as grace comes forth the Body of Christ:
  - 1. The Body of Christ cannot come forth, cannot be brought into our practical experience, by teachings alone.
  - 2. The practical life of the Body of Christ could only come forth out of the enjoyment of Christ as the grace of God.

**III. We must have a bird's-eye view of the entire book of 2 Corinthians so that we can see the way to enjoy Christ:**

- A. To really enjoy Christ in a rich way, we must be persons who are symbolized by the ten aspects that we have seen; we have to be captives, letters, mirrors, vessels, ambassadors, co-workers, a temple, a virgin, lovers of the church, and tasters of Christ:
  - 1. If we have all these aspects, whenever we exercise our spirit, we will taste Christ.
  - 2. Whenever we pray-read the Word, we will take into us the sweet foretaste of Christ; this is the message of 2 Corinthians.
- B. I hope that we can bring all this fellowship to the Lord in prayer so that we all might be brought into the realization of the riches of Christ in 2 Corinthians; then there will be a living expression of the Body of Christ in many localities by the experience of Christ.