

A “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ”

- ❖ Paul begins and ends his second letter to the Corinthians with a reference to the grace of Jesus (2 Cor. 1:2; 13:14). What does this grace consist of?
 - He left the eternal riches of heaven and became poor so that we might inherit his riches (2 Cor. 8:9)
 - He walked through our world so that we might know Him, love Him, and imitate Him (John 15:12)
 - He humbled himself and became obedient unto death to forgive our sins and give us eternal life (Phil. 2:8)
- ❖ What happens to those of us who receive his grace?
 - We are justified (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7)
 - We rejoice in hope (Rom. 5:2)
 - We receive power from Christ (2 Cor. 12:9)
 - Sin does not have dominion over us (Rom. 6:14)
 - We will reign in life with Jesus (Rom. 5:17, 21)

B “The love of God”

- ❖ The Bible emphatically declares that God is love (1 John 4:8). He has poured out that love on all of His creation. We can see it in our own hearts; in the relationship between parents and children; in beautiful flowers; in melodious birds; ...
- ❖ Paul taught the Corinthians (and us, of course) that love builds up (1 Cor. 8:1); that nothing has value without love (1 Cor. 13:1-3); and that everything should be done with that love that comes from God (1 Cor. 16:14).
- ❖ But, without a doubt, the greatest expression of God's love can be seen in the offering of Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins (Jn. 3:16).
- ❖ This example leads us to behave towards others with the same love that God has shown us (1 John 3:16)
- ❖ Paul presents God in a multifaceted way:
 - “God of patience” (Rom. 15:5)
 - “God of hope” (Rom. 15:13)
 - “God of peace” (Rom. 15:33)
 - “God [...] of mercies” (2 Cor. 1:3a)
 - “God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3b)
 - “God of love” (2 Cor. 13:11)
- ❖ God not only possesses all these characteristics, but He is the source from which they all emanate to us.
- ❖ As we saw, God is love, but He is also the God of love, that is to say:
 - That God the Father gives us his love (1 John 3:1)
 - That God Christ fills us with all fullness with his love (Eph. 3:19)
 - That God the Holy Spirit pours out his love on us (Rom. 5:5)

C “The fellowship of the Holy Spirit”

- ❖ Paul desires that they be with us: the grace of a Person (the Lord Jesus Christ); the love of a Person (God); and the fellowship... of a power or of a Person? (2 Cor. 13:14). For the sake of consistency, Paul is speaking of a Person (the Holy Spirit), and not of a power.
- ❖ In his more than 40 references to the Holy Spirit in the letters to the Corinthians, Paul presents him with personal qualities, and not as a mere force emanating from God:
 - Equip people for the mission (1 Cor. 2:4)
 - He reveals to us the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10)
 - He teaches us (1 Cor. 2:13)
 - He dwells in us (1 Cor. 3:16)
 - Cooperate with Christ for our justification (1 Cor. 6:11)
 - He bestows spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7-11)
 - He seals us for salvation (2 Cor. 1:22)
 - Imprint the law on our hearts (2 Cor. 3:3)
 - He gives us new life in Christ (2 Cor. 3:6)
 - He gives us freedom from sin (2 Cor. 3:17)

D “Be with you all”

- ❖ Although we are accustomed to referring to the Trinity (three divine Persons, one God) in the order “Father, Son, Spirit” (Mt. 28:19), Paul presents it as “Son, Father, Spirit” (2 Cor. 13:14), and Peter as “Father, Spirit, Son” (1 Pet. 1:2).
- ❖ There is no hierarchy among them; each one simply assumes a different role in the plan of salvation, but all share the same characteristics and purposes.
 - GRACE
 - (1) From the Father (1 Cor. 1:3)
 - (2) From the Son (1 Cor. 1:3)
 - (3) From the Spirit (Heb. 10:29)
 - LOVE
 - (1) From the Father (1 John 2:15)
 - (2) From the Son (Rom. 8:35)
 - (3) Of the Spirit (Rom. 15:30)
 - FELLOWSHIP
 - (1) From the Father (1 John 1:3)
 - (2) From the Son (1 John 1:3)
 - (3) From the Spirit (Phil. 2:1)
- ❖ Paul concludes his letter, therefore, wishing that the grace, love, and fellowship of the whole Godhead be with us all (2 Cor. 13:14)