

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

GRACE,
SALVATION,
THE SPIRIT,
AND
CHRIST

WITNESS LEE

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Living Stream Ministry

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In this booklet we shall consider four very important terms used by Paul in Philippians: grace, salvation, the Spirit, and Christ. In [Philippians 1:7](#) Paul tells the Philippians, “Both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel you are all partakers of my grace” (lit.). Notice that here Paul speaks of “my grace.” Then in [1:19](#) he goes on to say, “For I know that for me this shall turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” In this verse Paul speaks of salvation and of the Spirit. Then in [verses 20 and 21](#) he says, “Even now Christ shall be magnified in my body...for to me to live is Christ.”

In these verses grace, salvation, the Spirit, and Christ are not defined in a doctrinal way. Rather, they are related to experience. When Paul says “my grace,” he is referring to grace in his experience. Likewise, when he tells us that for him this will turn out to salvation, he is not speaking of a mere objective salvation, a

doctrinal salvation, but of a very experiential salvation. Furthermore, when he mentions the Spirit, he is surely speaking of the Spirit in his experience. Certainly his word about magnifying Christ and living Him is very subjective and experiential.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF SALVATION

What does Paul mean in [Philippians 1:19](#) by “my salvation” (KJV)? When Paul wrote this Epistle, he had been saved for many years and had even become an apostle. Why then does he indicate that he still needs salvation? What did Paul mean by saying that all that was happening to him, persecution, imprisonment, and even the dissenting preaching out of rivalry, would turn out for him to salvation? What kind of salvation is he talking about?

It would not at all be accurate to try to answer this question by asserting that salvation is not complete. Rather, we need to point out that, according to the Bible, there is more than one kind of salvation. God’s salvation rescues us from His condemnation. As sinners, we were condemned by the righteous God according to His righteous law. Thus, we were in need of salvation. Praise the Lord that we have been saved

from God's condemnation by the redemption of Christ! Furthermore, as sinners, we were under the usurping hand of Satan and under the power of death, destined for hell. Therefore, we needed a salvation that could save us from hell. However, in addition to being saved from God's condemnation and from hell, we also need other kinds of salvation. For example, we need to be saved from our temper. Furthermore, husbands and wives need to experience salvation in their married life. The wives need a certain kind of salvation, and the husbands need another kind of salvation, for both face different situations and problems.

TWO ASPECTS OF THE SALVATION NEEDED BY PAUL

The kind of salvation we need depends on our situation. Because Paul was a prisoner, he needed a salvation that applied to his situation in prison. Paul, a Jew, was not a prisoner in an ordinary jail; he was a prisoner of Caesar's royal guard, the praetorium. Paul's case was extraordinary. He had not committed any crime. His imprisonment was due to the fact that he preached Christ. At least part of the time each day, he was chained to a guard. No doubt, Paul

suffered there in prison. He must have been despised and treated with contempt. To be sure, he needed a specific kind of salvation. By this I do not mean that what he needed was release from prison. No, he needed to experience salvation there in prison.

He says in [Philippians 1:20](#), “According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.” Here we see that Paul’s expectation was that he would not be put to shame. Suppose Paul wept over his situation. Would not that have been a shame? His weeping would have indicated that he was defeated, that he had lost his faith, confidence, and trust in the Lord. Or suppose that Paul became angry with the jailer and argued with him. This also would have been a shame. However, if Paul could rejoice no matter how he was treated, that would be a glory. In order to maintain such a victorious standing as an apostle of Christ, Paul needed a particular kind of salvation.

In [verse 20](#) we see two aspects of the salvation needed by Paul. The first aspect was that Paul would not be put to shame in anything;

the second, that Christ would be magnified in Paul's body. Paul expected that his situation would turn out to his salvation so that in nothing he would be put to shame, but that Christ would be magnified in his body.

PAUL'S GRACE AND OURS

Let us now consider the meaning of the words "my grace" in [Philippians 1:7](#). If we consider this expression in the context of the entire book of Philippians, we shall see that the grace which was Paul's grace was nothing less than the Triune God whom Paul enjoyed and experienced and of whom Paul was a partaker. Thus, Paul's grace was not God in an objective way; it was God subjectively and experientially, the Triune God processed to be his portion. Paul truly enjoyed and experienced the processed Triune God. He was rich in his experience of the Father, Son, and Spirit. This processed Triune God was Paul's grace.

Grace is the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—processed for our experience and enjoyment. Today our Triune God is no longer the unprocessed God, or the "raw" God. Rather, He has been processed through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. God

has passed through a process not only to redeem us, but also to make it possible for us to enjoy Him as grace. Today the One we enjoy as our grace is the Triune God who has passed through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. As such a One, He is ready for us to take and enjoy.

[John 1:17](#) says that the law was given through Moses, but grace came through Jesus Christ. When this grace becomes ours in our experience, we then enjoy the Triune God, and we can speak of my grace, our grace. Our grace is the very Triune God enjoyed by us.

THE DEFENSE AND CONFIRMATION OF THE GOSPEL

Paul experienced God both in his imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. Paul defended the gospel, on the negative side, from perverting and distorting heresies, such as Judaism, dealt with in Galatians, and Gnosticism, dealt with in Colossians. Paul confirmed the gospel, on the positive side, with all the revelations of God's mysteries concerning Christ and the church as unveiled in Paul's Epistles.

The goal of the gospel is Christ and the

church. Paul preached message after message telling people about God's economy. He taught that Christ is the mystery of God and that the church is the mystery of Christ. In this way, he confirmed the gospel by making the positive goal of the gospel clear to all who received it.

Today there is also the urgent need for the defense and confirmation of the gospel. If we do this, however, we shall meet opposition. Both the defense of the gospel and the confirmation of the gospel are difficult tasks and heavy burdens.

EXPERIENTIAL GRACE

Because of the defense and confirmation of the gospel, Paul was persecuted, arrested, and imprisoned. The responsibility given to him to defend and confirm the gospel required a divine supply. It could not be carried out by ordinary means. Paul needed the divine strengthening and energizing. This divine strength and energy is the Triune God Himself. As Paul was defending the gospel and confirming it, God was with him to supply him. Furthermore, Paul was suffering persecution, mockery, and ridicule. No ordinary human being can bear such

treatment without a special divine supply. But in the midst of imprisonment, Paul could enjoy God and experience Him. Eventually, this processed Triune God experienced by Paul became his grace. The Philippian believers were very blessed to partake of Paul's grace. This means that they partook of Paul's God, the very God he experienced.

Now we understand the meaning of the expression "my grace." This denotes the very God experienced, enjoyed, and partaken of by Paul. It is not objective grace; it is subjective, experiential grace. It is a living, divine Person, the Triune God, processed to become grace to us.

REJOICING IN THE LORD

The grace experienced by Paul became his salvation. Whatever Paul enjoyed of the Triune God became his salvation. No doubt, as Paul was suffering persecution in prison, he was thinking about his work. Prior to his imprisonment, his work had been marvelous and powerful. It was spreading even in Europe. But now his work had ceased. Certain ones among his contemporaries, out of rivalry with him, were glad that Paul was in prison and restricted

from carrying out his work. If in the midst of such circumstances Paul wept, he would have been defeated and put to shame. However, we know from the book of Philippians that, instead of weeping, Paul rejoiced in the Lord. In this short book Paul speaks again and again of rejoicing. This indicates that when he was there in prison, he was rejoicing in the Lord. The guards did not hear him weeping; they could hear him rejoicing. In this, Paul experienced and enjoyed the Triune God as grace, and this grace became his salvation. Whatever happened to him turned out for his salvation.

When Paul was used of the Lord to bring those in Philippi to Christ, he was no doubt full of rejoicing. However, if Paul could rejoice only in that kind of environment but not in prison, he would not have been a true overcomer. Paul rejoiced not only when the work in Philippi was flourishing, but he also rejoiced in prison when his work for the Lord was restricted. In this we see real victory. This victory is the salvation which was Paul's salvation.

EXPERIENCING THE SPIRIT

The Triune God could become Paul's experiential salvation because God today is the Spirit.

For this reason, in the context of speaking of salvation, Paul also mentions the Spirit.

If the Triune God is to be our experience and enjoyment, He must be the Spirit. The Spirit in [Philippians 1:19](#) is actually the very Triune God. [John 7:39](#) says, “The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” In [John 7:37](#) the Lord Jesus had stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink.” He also said that those who believed in Him would have rivers of living water flowing out of their innermost being ([John 7:38](#)). According to [verse 39](#), “This He said concerning the Spirit.” The reason the Spirit was not yet was that Jesus was not yet glorified; that is, He had not yet been fully processed. But since the Lord Jesus has now been glorified, fully processed, the Spirit is here for us to enjoy. This Spirit is the very Triune God who has passed through a divine process to become available to us as our bountiful supply.

We can experience the Spirit simply by calling “O Lord Jesus.” We testify from our experience that when we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, we drink of the Spirit. As we sense freshness within when we breathe deeply in the open air in the morning, we also have an inner

sense of freshness when we receive the Spirit by calling on the Lord Jesus.

Praise the Lord that He is now in our spirit! Because our God is so subjective to us, He is with us wherever we may be. By calling on the Lord's name or by praying over even a few words in the Bible, we enjoy the Spirit with His bountiful supply. The Spirit is the One who actually becomes our salvation. We have pointed out that our salvation is our grace and that our grace is our enjoyment of God.

ENJOYING THE SPIRIT AND MAGNIFYING CHRIST

When we enjoy the Spirit and partake of Him, Christ comes forth and is magnified. On the one hand, we enjoy the Spirit; on the other hand, Christ is the One who is magnified. This is true both according to the Bible and according to our experience. When we call "Lord Jesus," we inwardly enjoy the Spirit. But as a result of the enjoyment of the Spirit, Christ is magnified. He becomes our expression.

In our experience, grace, salvation, the Spirit, and Christ actually are one. Our grace is our salvation; our salvation is the Spirit; and the Spirit is the magnified Christ. We may also say

that the magnified Christ is the indwelling Spirit, that the indwelling Spirit is our salvation, and that our salvation is our grace, the Triune God whom we enjoy and experience.

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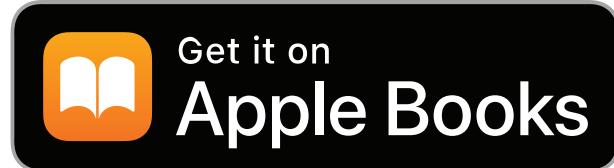
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