

THANKSGIVING - SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time for reflection. It should be a time to remember the many blessings we have. Our nation has provided us with many opportunities not available to most people. We have personal freedoms and financial blessings. Most importantly, we have had religious freedom. In the midst of holiday activities, let's consider our spiritual blessings..

Paul was overwhelmed by what God had done for him. He proclaimed in 2 Corinthians 9:15, *Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!* At this time of year, it is worth our time to consider the gift of which Paul was speaking. According to verse 14, the gift is the grace of God in you. How can such a gift be described. From the divine side, Paul gives a beautiful description in chapter 8, verse 9, *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.* The indescribable gift is God's gift of His Son which is received by grace through faith.

On the human side, how can we attempt to describe this indescribable gift? I would encourage you to meditate on the following words: foreknowledge, adoption, justification, sanctification, and glorification. These are theological terms that help us grasp, to a small degree, the indescribable gift of God's grace.

Foreknowledge is tied to election. Augustine clearly stated, "God elected believers in order that they might believe, not because they already believed....It is only by an act of great compassion that He saves anyone. The condemned receive just what they deserve. The elect receive more than they deserve." What a gift of grace!

Adoption is the act of God which places believers in His family. We who were separated from God because of sin and enslaved to sin, are now part of His family. What a gift of grace!

Justification is the act of God whereby we who were dead in sins are declared righteous. Jesus Christ became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. What a gift of grace!

Sanctification is the work of God whereby we who are justified are being conformed to the image of Christ. What we believe becomes more and more what we do. What a gift of grace!

Glorification is the work of God whereby we who are justified and being sanctified will be fully conformed to the image of Christ. Oh, to be like Him. What a gift of grace!

Paul rightly calls God's gift of grace indescribable. Yet, I encourage each of us to think biblically and thank God for His grace: He called us; He places us in His family; He gives us right standing; He enables us to live for Him; He is sufficient to bring us blameless into His presence. What a gift of grace!