

MEMORY VERSE: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week’s lesson examines the “apostolic greeting.”

1. The love of God is beyond measure (Mon, Tue)

- Many scholars understand 2 Cor. 13:14 as “the most complete and explicit summary of the doctrine of the trinity.” SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 6, p. 928
 - “On the supposition that, the Lord Jesus is a mere man, an angel, or an archangel, and that the Holy Spirit is an attribute, or an influence from God, how unintelligible, confused, strange does all become! That Paul, in the solemn close of the Epistle, should at the same time invoke blessings from a mere creature, and from God, and from an attribute, surpasses belief.... The passage, therefore, furnishes a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity that has not yet been answered, and, it is believed, cannot be.” Dr. Barnes Commentary on 2 Cor. 13:14
- The lesson addresses both the “love of God,” (v. 14) as well as the “God of love,” (v. 11 – the only place this phrase is used).
 - The concept of a God of love was very foreign to the pagan world (see Jn. 3:16; Ac. 17:24-28)
 - Furthermore, Paul’s reference to the God of love a few verses before his benediction applies this attribute to all three members of the Godhead (see Qtly, Tue, par 5).
 - The love of God is prevenient – it existed before any action or attitude on our part (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8-10; Eph. 2:4-7; 1 Jn. 4:10).

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. 5T 740.1

2. The Spirit's fellowship is what makes us Christians (Wed, Thu)

- The Greek word *koinonia* means “a participation with” or having anything in common.
 - It is through our fellowship with the Spirit of God that we are made alive by the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:18), justified by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11), and sanctified by the Spirit (2 Th. 2:13), and thereby assured an entrance into God's spiritual kingdom (see Rom. 8:9, 14).
 - “This is also a wish or prayer of the apostle Paul; and the desire is either that they might partake of the views and feelings of the Holy Spirit; that is, that they might have fellowship with him; or that they might all in common partake of the gifts and graces which the Spirit of God imparts.” Dr. Barnes Commentary on v. 14

It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal. DA 388.1

3. The grace of Jesus is all we need (Sun)

- In his benediction, Paul prays for the grace of Jesus to be with the believers in Corinth (v. 14; 2 Cor. 8:9).
 - Paul's most common greeting is “grace to you and peace...”
 - This also speaks of the prevenient love of God; God proclaims peace to us (Jer. 29:11; Lk. 2:14), and urges us to pursue peace with Him by ceasing our warfare against His law.
- In the previous chapter, Jesus told Paul “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor. 12:9).
 - “My grace is all you need” (GNB)
 - As we've studied previously, the grace of Christ is His divine power, freely given without merit, for the restoration of fallen humanity.

The Corinthian believers, once so prone to lose sight of their high calling in Christ, had developed strength of Christian character. Their words and acts revealed the transforming power of the grace of God, and they were now a strong force for good in that center of heathenism and superstition. AA 372.2

CONCLUSION

The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested.... The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio. In the name of these three powers,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.” BTS, Mar 1, 1906 (Qtly, Fri, last par)