

## 11.17.24 / United in the family of Jesus / 2 Cor 13:11-14

**Prayer / This letter** is infallible / inspired / authoritative

Today we come to the end of this letter. We've seen Paul respond to the church with humility, boldness, thoughtful directness, and with passion. With **that** character, he's called the church to...

- Share the comfort of Jesus / Live as a captor of Jesus
- Be formed into Christlikeness
- Share the Gospel / Confession / Generosity
- Wage war like Jesus – humility and gentleness
- Examine ourselves

Now he's closing his letter with some final thoughts: **2 Cor 13:11-14**

I want to camp **first** for a few moments on the last sentence: "May the grace..."

This is not simply a rote closing tagline.

This is more significant than: sincerely, cordially, love, etc.

This **packed statement** gives us a window into Paul's view of the Trinity: **3 in 1** - Deeply supported in scripture yet mysterious because it seems to be outside the bounds of human logic. *Carefully ponder...*

**Grace of Jesus** – The grace of Jesus was Him stepping away from the perfect community of Trinity, for a time, putting on human flesh and walking among us – living out the love of God in full display.

The grace of Jesus was Him being misunderstood and mistreated while never losing patience or lashing out.

The grace of Jesus was Him walking willingly to a horrific death – a death that he did not deserve but that every sinner over all time deserves.

The grace of Jesus was Him rising from the dead and offering His substitutionary death and new life to everyone who believes in Him.

To receive this offer is to step **back into** peace with God. This grace is underserved. This grace is for the peace of mankind and for the Glory of God.

**Love of God** –

How do poets describe the love of God?

- Psalm 103: *For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him*
- Psalm 63:1-4a

How did the apostles act when they came to better understand the love of God?

- Persecution, Gal 2:20, not perfect but sold out.

What do angels do when they see the love of God?

- Rev 4:8 – “*Day and night, the never stop...*”

Ponder these things.

Scripture shows – a tenacious, pursuing, forgiving, self-sacrificing, life-altering **love of God**.

As I look at human history and the current state of our world, it seems to me that sacrificial love (not power, nor strategy, nor a particular kind of government)... **sacrificial love** is the only thing bright enough and powerful enough to break through the dark and devastating forces of evil and selfishness in our world. We see the impact of evil and brokenness in our world and if we're honest I think we'll admit that the only thing we see transforming or dismantling the darkness and devastation of evil is **sacrificial love** which originates with and comes from God.

### **Fellowship of Spirit -**

John 14:26 – Speaks to us

1 Cor 12:4 – Empowers us for ministry

Eph 1:14 – Guarantees inheritance

Eph 4 - teaches that there is one Spirit of God and He dwells in the heart of every believer.

Every single person with the Spirit of God in them can now share in the peace and community of the Triune God.

The **fellowship of the Spirit** ties us together with the **grace of Jesus** and the **Love of God** (ponder this union - **volunteers**)

and... **with each other**. This is the spiritual reality; live into it.

That's why Paul sees followers of Jesus as a family. We actually share a deeper commonality than any biological family or any club, team, or community. **We share the same Spirit and are united with the same God.**

When the **grace of Jesus**, the **love of God**, and the **fellowship of the Spirit** is with you... **do you know what can happen?** (*v sit back down*)

Rejoice, strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, and live at peace! **(11-12)**

**Rejoice!** Consider the context – suffering, persecution, failure, hurt, pressure, Phil 4

**How can he/you/we rejoice?** Because – even in the midst of suffering, persecution, failure, hurt and pressure – followers of Jesus are tied to Grace/Love/Fellowship. When we hurt, Paul, desires that we feel the spiritual and physical embrace of **G/L/F** and each other. Rejoice – not **for** our suffering, but **in** our suffering **for** our **G/L/F**.

**Strive for full restoration** – 1) w/ the Lord and 2) w/ each other

- James 4:8 – **Your pursuit will never go unmatched**
- Eph 2 – **Dividing wall of hostility removed**

**How?** It starts with taking your eyes off whatever other thing/circumstance they are on and setting them on Jesus.

**Illus:** 1) eyes on idol 2) eyes on another's wrong

You're moving towards full restoration only & always when your eyes are on Jesus.

encourage one another – Seeing God's view of others and calling out what you see – As your eyes are on Jesus you begin to see/sense God's view of others – so you encourage them.

be of one mind, live in peace. How can there be peace amidst conflict & differences?

illus: water is love / water line is peace (shallow vs. pool)

Peace is not about the absence of wrestling, it's about the presence and quantity of love in the midst of the wrestling.

<sup>12</sup> Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Mentions this in Romans, 1&2 Cor, 1 Thes

Significance/meaning of The Holy Kiss? Shared by those with different social standing was a radically counter cultural symbol of unity and equality.

And then the words that you are hopefully now more familiar with...

<sup>14</sup> May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

We going to close our worship service by physically demonstrating that unity through sharing

**Communion.** At the Last Supper, Jesus broke the bread and He said...

He died on the cross and was separated from God the Father so that we don't have to be. (pray and pass the bread)

Later during that meal Jesus poured the wine and He said...

He shed His blood to pay for **our** sins. (pray and pass the cup)

**Pray:** Jesus, your body was broken for us. Your blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins. You raised to life showing victory over death. And you invite us to share in your death and life – to enter back into G/L/F. Thank you for your gift. Amen.