

THE GRACE OF GOD: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:8-11; 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

1. CHRIST WAS SEEN BY PAUL: 1 Corinthians 15:8; Paul saw Christ when he was traveling to Damascus to persecute Christians. Acts 9:1-7 “ 1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. “

Paul was an enemy of Christ and His church. His life was committed to imprisonments and death

of all who followed Jesus Christ. He was sincere in doing what he did and truly believed he was pleasing God by what he believed and did. He did so because of his religious beliefs. He was faithful to his belief; but one day on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians there, Jesus appeared to him, and his life was changed. He realized that although he was sincere in his belief, he was wrong. That encounter with Jesus changed his belief into right thinking and instead of persecuting the followers of Jesus Christ, he lived the rest of his life passionately persuading all to follow Jesus Christ.

1. PAUL'S HUMILITY: He declared that he was the least of all the apostles and he was not fit to be called an apostle, because of what he did previously when he persecuted Christ's followers. I thank God that He forgets our past when we repent. He forgot Paul's and used him to tell others about His grace. Nothing in our past can or will disqualify us from allowing God to us to proclaim His love and grace. Paul said he was the least of all the other apostles, they had the opportunity to be with Jesus on a daily basis during His earthly ministry, he did not. However, his encounter with Jesus on his journey to Damascus qualified him to be numbered among them. Today there are so many who boast of their titles, yet Paul who spent the rest of his life as a missionary, evangelist, church planter and apostle who wrote thirteen of the books of the New Testament counted himself as the least. I think we can learn from him.

2. PAUL ACKNOWLEDGED THE GRACE OF GOD: He declared that it was God's grace that caused the changes in him. God's grace saved him from death and damnation and showed him favor he did not deserve. He knew that he deserved death for persecuting the followers of Jesus Christ; but because of God's grace he received forgiveness instead. He was very thankful, and he was all in for the defense of the gospel of Jesus Christ after that encounter.

3. PAUL ATTRIBUTED HIS NEW LIFE AND WORK TO THE GRACE OF GOD: He did not

boast on his accomplishments but herald that it was God's grace that made him what he was. His grace kept him while he fulfilled his purpose. In verse ten he said that the grace God showed him, was not in vain. When he remembered God's grace towards him, he worked harder than others to share the gospel. He was not selfish he wanted all to share the similar experience. He preached, taught and wrote more than all. He was not competing, but when he recalled what the grace of God did for him, he had to call others to come, taste for themselves that the Lord is good. To whom much is given much is required. Much grace was extended to Paul, and he used the same zeal with love to preach the gospel with passion. He took no credit for what he did but gave his accomplishments to the grace of God. In verse ten he said although he worked harder than all, it was not by his power or ability but, he was able to do all by the grace of God in him. He declared "For I not ashamed of that gospel of Jesus Christ for it is the power unto salvation to everyone that believe." (Romans 1:16)

4. PAUL AND ALL THE OTHER APOSTLES PREACHED THE SAME GOSPEL: In verse eleven he said all preachers preached the same gospel which brought salvation to those who accepted it. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just for us to celebrate once a year, it is for us to celebrate every day and for us to invite others to join us and experience His grace.

5. THE APOSTLES LIVED AND SERVED BECAUSE OF THE GRACE OF GOD: Their lives were committed to the truths of the gospel, that Jesus lived a sinless life, He died, was buried, rose from the dead on the third day and ascended up into heaven and is now at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. When Paul considered the grace of God, he said in Philippians 3:7-8 "7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win

Christ,” additional Scriptures Acts 7:55-56; Hebrews 1:6, 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22; Hebrews 7:24-25 and Romans 8:34.

When you remember God’s grace, how do you respond? Paul and the other apostles committed their lives to tell others about the One who transformed them and spent their lives doing so and defending the truths of the gospel. WHAT ABOUT YOU? Do you remember what you were like before your encounter with Jesus.? How about what He has done for you and through you? Let’s not forget where His grace is taking us. Father I thank You for Your amazing grace that rescued me. I pray that I will be faithful to You and be the watchman You called me to be in the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.