January 30
Greetings, DGCC Family,

This week we will continue our walk through the books of the Bible in order by taking a brief look at the book of 2 Corinthians.

The apostle Paul actually wrote four letters to the church at the city of Corinth, located in Greece. Two of those letters are now lost to us. What we know as the book of 1 Corinthians is actually his second letter, and this book, 2 Corinthians, is actually the fourth and last of his letters to the Christians there.

Paul wrote this letter around 55 AD while he was in Macedonia. He was deeply concerned about the false teachings that were taking place at Corinth and so wrote this letter to offer correct teaching and to admonish those who were pronouncing these false teachings.

Starting in the first chapter, Paul sets forth two gifts that God gives all of us when we become followers of Christ:

“Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (vs. 21-22).

First, God provides us with the means to “stand Firm in Christ” by setting His “seal of ownership on us.” Think about it. This is an awesome gift! God claims us as His own and puts His royal seal of ownership on us, a seal that cannot be broken.

Secondly, God puts His Spirit in our hearts as a “deposit…a guarantee of what is to come.” And the “what is to come” that God Himself “guarantees” to us is eternal life when we “stand firm” in Christ, and Christ alone.

So for today, know that God claims you as His personal and royal possession and marks you with His personal seal. Know that He has placed His Spirit in your heart. And know that He gives you the means to stand Firm in His Son, with a guarantee of “what is to come.”

IHS,
Pastor Lou
January 31

Grace and peace to you this day.

One of the greatest blessings, as well as one of the greatest challenges, of the Christian walk, at least for me, is the concept of faith. I often hear things like, “my faith is weak” or “you just have to have faith.” Our human need to experience things, to touch them, to see them, to hear them, often crashes into a Christian faith that asks us to rely not on our physical sense but on our spiritual sense.

The apostle Paul said it like this:

“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (4:24).

One might ask, “how do we fix our eyes on what is unseen?” Said another way, “how can we see what cannot be seen?” Good question.

Pail is stating a greater truth here that goes beyond our physical senses. We are spiritual beings, and it is through our spiritual sense that we see the God who Himself is Spirit. Recall what Jesus Himself said to the Samaritan woman at the well: “God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Paul is saying that we must fix the eyes of our spirit on the God who is Spirit.

Right now you’re probably saying something like, “that’s all well and good, Lou. But what does it actually mean?” Another good question.

I think it means this: Paul is saying that it is through the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Scripture, worship, and service that we truly can see God. And, when we do so, we get a glimpse into eternity, and our eternity.

So go ahead. Close your eyes and pray. Reread your favorite Scripture passage. Come to church, or come on Thursdays and prepare meals for the least among us. And then, see what you can see.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
February 1

Greetings to you this day in the name of our Savior, Jesus the Messiah.

Many of us have had jobs where we have had co-workers. Colleagues who were supposed to help and support us in our daily work life. But let’s face it, often that spirit of camaraderie and common goals was far from the truth.

Not so in our work for the Kingdom of God. This is how the apostle Paul describes our roles as members of the Kingdom:

“As God’s fellow workers, we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1).

First, Paul is saying that we are God’s “fellow workers.” That means that He trusts us with the work of the Kingdom. That means that we labor side-by-side with Him. And, it means that the work of the Kingdom is important. I know that because the King’s business is never insignificant or inconsequential.

Secondly, Paul is saying that we should never receive the gift of God’s grace in vain. That is, this gift is so valuable and so priceless and has such great merit attached to it that we should always, in all circumstances, receive it with great reverence, humility, and gratitude. Never should it be taken lightly, and never should it be taken for granted.

So for today, I encourage you to think of yourself as God’s “fellow worker.” Imagine that he is in the next office, the next cubicle, the next chair or the next room working with you side-by-side for His glory and for His kingdom. Imagine He is with you as you go about your daily routine, encouraging you in your conversations and interactions with others.

And then imagine that at the end of the day, when you sit down in your favorite chair, God Himself sits next to you and says, “How was your day?”

IHS,

Pastor Lou
February 2

Hello DGCC Family.

Human suffering, which is part of the human condition, often begs many questions in our earthly existence and in our Christian walk. Perhaps the question most asked is simply, “Why does God allow it?”

I think the answer to that simple question is itself anything but simple. The apostle Paul, however, gives us some insight into this question with one of the most well-known verses in all of Scripture:

“Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

Powerful words.

We do not know what Paul’s “thorn” was. Much has been written about it, but it’s all speculation. I have to believe, frankly, that if Paul, or the Lord, wanted us to know, they would have told us.

In any case, Paul states that a “thorn in the flesh,” “a messenger from Satan,” has been given to him. This “thorn” is not from God, but nonetheless, is clearly allowed by God. And that brings us back to our original question: “Why?”

Paul “pleaded” with God three times to remove it, and the Lord’s answer was this: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in your weakness.” In other words, God is saying to Paul, and to us, “Whatever you are going through, my grace is enough. My grace is all you need. My grace is steadfast. The Greek word Paul uses here for “sufficient” is arkeo (pronounced ar-kay-oh). Its literal translation means “of unfailing strength.”

Think about the thorns in your flesh. Have they brought you closer to God? Have your prayers become more urgent? Has your faith been strengthened by the ongoing test your thorn brings into your life? If so, my prayer for you is that in those moments, you feel God’s grace, and feel God’s power, because that is when it is made perfect.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
February 3

Happy Friday, everyone!

Here’s your musical devotional for the week. Turn up the volume and enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk93vVropFE

IHS,

Pastor Lou