

praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints" (Colossians 1:3-4)

"I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints" (Philemon 4-5).

For encouraging and supporting him in his efforts to serve the Lord.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Philippians 1:3-5).

For their work and labor in the

Lord.

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father" (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3).

I fear that somewhere along the way, many of us have gotten out of the habit of thanking God for others. Could it be that we are taking the faith, love, encouragement and work of our brothers and sisters in Christ for granted? Let's remember to thank God for one another! As you count your many blessings, remember that some of God's greatest blessings are not things; they're people! ~

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth

(2 Thess. 2:13 NKJV)

We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre. Call for directions and more information (850) 939-8109

Navarre church of Christ
8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

Place Stamp Here

Assembly Schedule
Sunday

Bible Class for all ages ___ 9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service ___ 10:00 AM
Evening Worship Service ___ 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages ___ 7:00 PM

VISITORS ARE WELCOME!

This entire publication and previous issues are available online at navarrechurchofchrist.net along with some more useful information

For a free Bible correspondence course by mail, call us.

NAVARRE MESSENGER

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(Continued from last issue: Edward O. Bragwell, Sr. The Reflector – January 2011)

The Basis of Our Salvation and Fellowship with God

What then is the basis of our salvation and fellowship with God? It is not faith alone nor is it grace alone, nor is it works alone. All are involved. It is true that we cannot work our way to heaven but it is also true that we cannot depend on the grace of God alone to get us there. Paul says that we

have to "work out (our) own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). In this text, the working out is the same as obeying because he says "as you have always obeyed."

When Paul said that we are saved "by grace ... through faith," (Eph. 2:8) he is summarizing the basis of our salvation. It is God's grace combined with man's faith. Neither is passive but both are active toward its object. It is by God's active grace toward man and man's active faith toward God. It

includes every act of the grace of God toward us and our every act of faith toward God.

The grace of God is His answer to our sin for "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20-21). Without it we would all be condemned. There is no one so perfect in his obedience that he does not need forgiveness. Forgiveness comes from the grace of God. Yet there are conditions (acts that must be performed) in order to receive forgiveness, like repenting and

being baptized (Acts 2: 38). This is our salvation from past sins (Mark 16:16). Our eternal salvation yet to come is also conditioned upon obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9). The grace of God comes into play here as well. Our obedience will not be perfect so by the grace of God we are allowed to "confess our sins" with the assurance that "he is faithful and just to forgive our sins" (1 John 1:9). However, we cannot "go on sinning willfully" without "insult(ing) the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:26-29 NASB).

The word of God in the New Testament is called "the perfect law of liberty" by James (1:25) that requires our "doing of the work" in order to be blessed. It is also the law by which we will be judged (2:12).

But God will not be mocked. He will not allow us to take advantage of his grace by taking a lackadaisical attitude toward strict obedience to God's word. In contrasting the old and new Testament systems, the Hebrew writer said, "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:2-3 KJV).

As recipients of the grace of God, we must extend grace or mercy to others. We are told that we will have judgment without mercy if we show no mercy. (James 2:13). And Jesus quoted Hosea ("I will have mercy, and not sacrifice") to the Pharisees who criticized his disciples for breaking the Sabbath

law – did he not? (Matt. 12:7). From all of this, some have concluded that grace and mercy trumps strict obedience to law.

This assumes that Jesus conceded that his disciples had technically broken the Sabbath law and that he had also in healing on the Sabbath, but with good reason – mercy (or grace) takes precedence over sacrifice (obedience to law). But would he criticize the Pharisees for setting aside the commandment of God, (Mark 7:8-9) in one breath, and allow himself and his disciples to do so in the next breath? He is not even saying that since he is the "Lord of the Sabbath" that he had the right to set it aside in the name of mercy and grace. He is simply saying that, as such, he was in position to know what was lawful and unlawful to do on the Sabbath. He declared that his disciples were "guiltless" in what they did on the Sabbath. While the law forbade harvesting the fields on the Sabbath, it did not forbid eating grain on the Sabbath. That is all the disciples were doing. They were simply eating by reaching and picking the grain off the ear rather than off the plate or table. Jesus' healing on the Sabbath was not breaking the Sabbath law against "working" on that day. The Sabbath law allowed acts of mercy and the Pharisees knew it (Luke 13:15; 14:5). Mind you, they did set aside the Jews' traditions about the Sabbath, but not God's law in the name of mercy.

"But, did not Jesus justify David, in Matthew 12, for breaking the Sabbath," some ask. No, he did not justify him. He specifically said that what David did was not lawful. What he was doing was ex-

posing the Pharisee's hypocrisy in condemning his disciples who were "guiltless" yet they would not have condemned David who was guilty.

So, God's grace is truly amazing. When one looks at the sinfulness of man it is amazing that God would be willing to sacrifice his only begotten son and provide a way for one, no matter how sinful he is, to be forgiven and enjoy fellowship with him in this life and throughout all eternity if he will only repent and become obedient unto him. Then even after that, if he returns to sin, he provides a way for him to return by repenting and confessing his sin. But, it is not as amazing as some perceived it to be. It is not amazing enough to overlook sin, but amazing enough to forgive sin when we turn to God in repentance and submit to his other terms of pardon. ~

**What shall we say
then? Shall we
continue in sin that
grace may abound?
{2} Certainly not!
How shall we who
died to sin live any
longer in it?**

(Rom 6:1-2 NKJV)

Bound to Give Thanks...For You



by Steve Klein

Teaching little children to pray can be a wonderful and sometimes amusing challenge. I recently read about a little three year old girl named Kelli who, when saying her nightly prayers with her mother, would thank God for every family member, every friend, and every pet animal (current and past). For several weeks, as she finished her prayer, Kelli would add, "And all girls." Finally her mother asked her, "Kelli, why do you always add the part about all girls?" Her response: "Because we always finish our prayers by saying 'All Men!'" You have to admit, "all men" and "amen" do sound alike. Kelli wanted to make sure the girls were included too!

I wonder if the Lord thinks that teaching adult disciples to pray is also a challenge. In 1 Timothy 2:1, the apostle Paul exhorts that "giving of thanks be made for all men" (and yes the word "men"

here includes girls). Have we learned this lesson? Do we thank God for all men? Do we even thank Him for any men?

Writing to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul asserted twice that he was "bound" to thank God for the Thessalonians.

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other" (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren

beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

The word "bound" in these passages implies duty or obligation. We have a very special responsibility to give thanks to God for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Over and over again Paul mentions giving thanks to God for fellow Christians, and he gives several reasons for doing so:

For their faith and love.

"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (Ephesians 1:15-16).

"We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,