

January 14, 2014

## Humbled and Equipped for Service

Romans 12:3 (NASB), ***“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”***

I was blessed to be brought up in a home where humility was both modeled and taught by my parents. Humility is one of the essentials of the Christian life if not *the* essential. I always cringe a bit when I am around someone who lacks this essential component of following Christ. Proverbs 11:2 says, ***“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”*** Proverbs 16:19 says, ***“It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.”***

In Romans 12:3 Paul makes the very salient point that one of the primary characteristics of the Christian should be humility. Paul begins this verse with ***“For through the grace given to me...”*** Grace is the divine and undeserved favor that called Paul and calls us to salvation and to serve the Lord and it should also produce within the Christ follower true humility.

In Romans 1:5 Paul wrote, ***“Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name’s sake.”*** In Galatians 2:9 Paul writes, ***“and recognizing the grace that had been given to me...”*** Then in 1 Timothy 1:12-14 he wrote, ***“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus...”*** Paul had humility because through grace (which is God’s unmerited favor) Paul had been saved and he understood where he had come from and just how merciful God had been towards him.

This is why Paul continues in verse 3 and says, ***“I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think...”*** Because of the salvation which we have been so freely and mercifully given we should not think more of ourselves than reality dictates. Romans 11:20-21 says, ***“Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.”*** Romans 12:16 says, ***“Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”***

We are not as Christ followers to be marked by conceit but rather we are ***“to think so as to have sound judgment...”*** A faithful and mature Christ follower is going to exercise ***“sound judgment.”*** This phrase ***“sound judgment”*** is translated to mean “sound mind and sober.” The exercise of ***“sound judgment”*** or being of a sober mind is going to lead the believer to recognize that in themselves there is absolutely nothing good in us and therefore there is absolutely nothing. Romans 7:18 says, ***“For I know nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of good is not.”***

As Christ followers we are not to be conceited we are to be humble and we are to serve the Lord with the faith He has given to us. Paul ends verse 3 with, ***“as God as allotted to each a measure of faith.”*** The word ***“allotted”*** is translated to mean “apportioned.” This is the proportion of the

spiritual gift and ability that the Holy Spirit gives to each believer in order for them to fulfill their role within the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:7 says, ***“But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”*** Then in 1 Corinthians 12:11 it says, ***“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”*** This ***“faith”*** that Paul is referring to here is not saving faith, but instead it is the faithful stewardship, the kind and quantity that is required to use one’s particular gift. Everyone who is a Christ follower has received the exact gift and the exact resources that they will need to fulfill their role within the body of Christ. As Christ followers we not saved by grace to sit and do nothing instead each of us is equipped by the Holy Spirit to serve the Lord and bring glory to His name.

As Christ followers we are not to be puffed up or conceited but rather the Christian is to be marked by a sincere and humble heart for God. We come by this humility through the understanding of what Christ has done for us and how He pulled us up out of the pit of destruction and sin. We are then to faithfully serve Him with the faith that He has so graciously bestowed upon us.