

Rich in Grace and Mercy

January 17/18, 2009

Last week we learned that "in Christ" we are richer than we often think we are.

Ephesians 1:3 - How we praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we belong to Christ.

Did you use your "Heavenly Bank Account" this week?

Did you allow the Holy Spirit to dispense to you the riches of Christ this week?

More Keys to Feeling and Living Rich in Christ

1) We will feel rich and live rich lives in Christ when we truly realize and remember what we were and what Christ saved us from. Paul did and he wrote the believers in Ephesus to remind them of the riches of God's mercy and grace that saved them. ***Ephesians 2:1-12***

Over and over Paul emphasizes what we were, what we used to do, and what we didn't have, not to shame us but to remind us of the incredible riches of God's grace and mercy that we have received through faith in Christ.

Before Christ we were: dead, doomed forever, full of sin, obeying Satan, following passions of our evil nature, outsiders, uncircumcised, excluded, without God, without hope, under God's anger.

Do you believe what the Bible says you were before Christ saved you?

Paul knew that loving Christ obediently comes from living with a great rear view mirror! A biblical rear view mirror keeps us from becoming proud, self-righteous, hard hearted, disobedient and judgmental. It also renews our love for Christ and our desire to serve Him even extravagantly. *Luke 7:41-47, Revelation 2:4-5*

2) Remembering who you were biblically makes you feel incredibly grateful for who you are now biblically!

Knowing who you are now in Christ is the clear windshield God wants you to use to "drive" forward in your life today. *Eph. 2:13-18*

Now we: belong to Christ, brought near, able to come to the Father, at peace with God and others, one body, , forgiven, alive, promise receivers, saved by grace through faith, no longer strangers and foreigners, citizens, members of God's family, His house, His holy temple, His masterpiece.

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

We love Jesus passionately and obey His commands whole heartedly when we see biblically what we were, what saved us and what we are now all because of the riches of God's grace and mercy.

How biblically do you really love Jesus as we begin 2009? Let's find out. Jesus said...

John 14:21a - He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me.

Please use the following Personal Discipleship Inventory to see where your love for and obedience to Jesus needs to grow in 2009.

Believers who see what Jesus has done for them biblically also give to Him biblically. They lovingly give back to Him what He commands out of what He provides! *Malachi 3:8-10*

How can we rob God after He's lavished on us the riches of His mercy and grace in Christ Jesus?

Ephesians 2:8-9 - God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Study Questions

- 1) Read through all of Ephesians 2 together. Now read the list that describes what we were before receiving Christ. Do you honestly see yourself through that biblical rear view mirror? Why or why not? Does seeing yourself through that lens produce overflowing gratitude in you?
- 2) Read the list of who you are now in Christ. Isn't that amazing? What thoughts or feelings does the "now" you produce in you? Take time to look at the inventory together. If you feel comfortable, share where you really are with one another in your love for and obedience to Christ. Where is your love strong? Where does it need to grow?
- 3) Do you give biblically? Read about tithing and discuss what the Word of God says about biblical giving. Take time to pray for one another's growth and the ability to give biblically.