



Light from the Word

The Present Privileges of a Believer

We understand and experience privileges which are associated with certain aspects of life, e.g. occupations, offices, citizenship, etc. According to Webster, a privilege is a right granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor. A privilege is distinct from a possession, which is something we have and hold as property. In spiritual matters, our salvation is a possession we have as a result of believing in Jesus (John 5:24, Rom. 10:9-10).

Having gained the standing of a believer, saved by grace through faith, we are granted many privileges that accompany our newfound status as a child of God. What follows is a reminder and discussion of some of these blessings given to us by our Heavenly Father.

The blessing of having Christ as our Head: Having found the blessing of knowing Jesus as Savior we gladly yield to Him as Lord of our life. Paul writes that we are to “*grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*” (Eph. 4:15). In submission to Him we find the safety of a loving Shepherd who protects, guides, and corrects. He is the undisputed Head of all things, granted all authority by God (Matt. 28:18).

The blessing of the Word as our foundation: the Apostle John, who walked with the Lord and was beloved by Him, writes that Jesus was the Word made flesh and that those who saw Him “*beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,*” (John 1:14). The very Word of God has been preserved for us in written form and the example of the life of Christ is given that we might pattern our lives after His, putting on His mind and obeying His commands. (Phil. 2:5-8, Matt. 28:19-20, John 13:34-35). We will find, as David the shepherd boy who became king, that, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,*

and a light unto my path.” (Psalm 119:105).

The love and support of our brotherhood: having redeemed us, God grants us the privilege of becoming His child. “*But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*” (Rom. 8:15). He places us into His family, the church – also referred to as His Body and the Bride of Christ, terms of endearment and examples of closeness, intimacy, and covenantal relationship. Peter exhorts us to “*Love the brotherhood.*” (1 Pet 2:17). Paul gives action to that love in describing how the members relate to each other, “*And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*” (1 Cor. 12:26). Thinking of our relationship with each other in the body we grasp our need for each other, as the eye, ear, hand, and foot rely upon each other in our physical bodies. And we learn to abhor the thought that we might say to another, “*I have no need of thee.*” (1 Cor. 12:15-21). Rather we delight in the opportunity to “*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*” (Gal. 2:2).

It is a myth, and unbiblical, to think that we can experience the full benefits of the brotherhood without the sacrificial love, commitment and mutual submission essential to its functioning. It makes no more sense to say the body has no need of us than it does to say that of another member. We should prayerfully guard against the influences of the world around us, including an insidious and detrimental focus on one's own needs and the loss of the privilege of denying self for Christ's sake and that of our brother.

The blessing of an emphasis on a sanctified life: having been forgiven of our sin debt by Jesus who became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21), we go on to a life dedicated and consecrated to His service. We stand firmly on a foundation of belief that, “*by grace are ye*
— **Please turn to pg. 68**

Continued Articles

Privileges...

— Continued from pg. 3

saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9). We are "*justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*" (Rom. 3:24) and understand that "*by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight:*" (Rom. 3:20).

Finding ourselves purchased with a price as precious as Jesus' blood, we gladly yield to the sanctifying process by which we are made "*his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*" (Eph. 2:10). Indeed, in light of what Jesus has done for us, we should submit joyfully each day to the "*washing of water by the word*" (Eph. 5:26) by which we are sanctified and cleansed.

A correct and complete understanding of God's redeeming grace and the terrible price paid by our Savior will never lead to a spirit of license or the justification of sinful behavior. Rather His suffering gives strength to our resolve to "*Abhor that which is evil; (and to) cleave to that which is good.*" (Rom. 12:9). Like Paul, we reply "*God forbid!*" when the suggestion is made that we might somehow "*continue in sin, that*

grace may abound" (Rom. 6:1).

When tempted, we remember that there is always a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13) and that we may need to say, "*Get thee behind me Satan,*" (Matt. 16:23), reminding ourselves "*How shall we which are dead to sin continue any longer therein?*" (Rom. 6:2). And having fled from "*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,*" (1 John 2:16) we "*follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*" (1 Tim. 6:11).

We can be very grateful that we benefit from consistent teaching that emphasizes the critical importance of good works in a believer's life, understanding that "*faith without works is dead*" (James 2:26) and that Jesus commanded that we should "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" (Matt. 5:16).

In living an overcoming life, by the power of the blood of the lamb (Rev. 12:11), we bring glory to God – what a privilege!

The blessing of simplicity of worship: as believers we experience the need and the benefit of bringing glory and praise to God in worship. The Book of Psalms is filled with expressions of such praise, acknowledging God as Creator of all things, the giver of life, all-loving, all-knowing,

all-powerful...on and on. We experience a blessing of worship that has a focus on God and a de-emphasis of self.

Jesus taught the woman at the well that, "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*" (John 4:24). Paul was concerned that the Corinthians would stray from the "*simplicity that is in Christ.*" (2 Cor. 11:3) and stated his own determination "*not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*" (1 Cor. 2:2). Rather he hoped that his preaching, which was done in weakness, with much fear and trembling, not relying on man's wisdom, would be a "*demonstration of the Spirit and of power:*" (1 Cor. 2:4). How privileged we have been to experience such power through the blessing of worship. This calls all of us to be grounded in and committed to 2 Timothy 2:15. May we ponder these privileges and let our hearts and minds roam beyond them as we consider the multitude of benefits of being a child of the King!