

## **WASTING THE GRACE OF GOD**

1 Corinthians 1:1-17

Introduction

### **1. Corinth:**

- a. Location: Achaia, on isthmus, 40-50 miles west of Athens.
- b. Culture: "The meeting place of the Occident & the Orient." Roman colony; cosmopolitan (up to 700,000 pop., incl. a large slave pop.).

### **2. Notable characteristics:**

- a. Center of pagan immorality. Cults of Bacchus (drunken feasts); Aphrodite (Venus, worshiped via fornication, 1,000 "priestesses").
- b. Moral corruption ("live as do the Corinthians" - vilest, cf. Tenney).

#### THE MORAL CORRUPTION OF CORINTH

"Morally, Corinthians were regarded as inferior even according to the loose standards of paganism. They were usually represented on the Roman stage as drunk. 'To live as do the Corinthians' was a euphemism for the vilest kind of life. The temple of Aphrodite in Corinth at one time lodged one thousand priestesses who were professional prostitutes, and the ebb and flow of travel and commerce brought to the city a floating population that included the scum of the Mediterranean." -Merrill Tenney, New Testament Survey, p. 288

- c. Worldly wisdom & wealth (philosophers, architecture, trade, etc.).

### **3. Apostle Paul went to this materially prosperous, intellectually alert & morally corrupt city on his 2nd journey (Acts 18:1).**

- a. Stayed more than 11/2 years - Church was the best people in town!
- b. Sin & its temptations everywhere - Xians were affected! (cf. today)

### **4. In about 3 years Paul heard of their troubles & wrote them a letter (1 Cor.).**

Two sources of information:

- a. Household of Chloe (1 Cor. 1:11) - Responds in 1 Cor. 1-6.
- b. Letter from the church (1 Cor. 7:1): Responds in 1 Cor. 7-16.

### **5. 1 Cor. 1:1-17 - Tragedy of wasting the grace of God (misusing His blessings).**

## **I. CORINTHIANS RECEIVED THE GRACE OF GOD - 1 Cor. 1:4-9**

A. **Through Gospel Preaching** - 1:5; cf. Acts 18:5, 11 (Tit. 2:11-12; Acts 20:32). Saved - Acts 18:8.

### **B. Through Miraculous Spiritual Gifts - 1:6-7.**

1. Revealed, inspired & confirmed word was a solid basis for their faith, & ours, too! - **1 Cor. 2:4-5** (Heb. 2:1-4).

### **C. Obtained a Sure Hope of God's Faithfulness - 1:8-9 (Rom. 5:1-2).**

1. God is faithful to confirm (approve of) those who rely on Christ & faithfully obey Him.
2. **Tit. 2:11-13** - Recipients of God's grace can look forward to the Savior's return!

### **D. Lesson: God's Grace Is Available to The Most Wicked (All)!**

1. **Acts 18:1** - Paul could have said: "To go to Corinth is a waste of time...if I thought Athens was bad, why even bother with Corinth?!"
2. **Acts 18:8-10** - But he didn't. He went there & preached: Many were converted (v. 8), & God had many there! (You can't see them, but they're there!)
3. Cf. God has people who need to be found with the gospel of His grace!

**Matthew 9:37-38** NASB 37 Then He \*said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

## **II. TRAGEDY OF WASTING THE GRACE OF GOD - 1 Cor. 1:1-17.**

-(Something had to be done, despite obtaining grace, sin had weakened their influence for Christ & was wrecking the church...!)

### **A. Cleansing From Sin Was Being Replaced by Immorality - 1 Cor. 1:2.**

1. Set apart: "Separated from sin & therefore consecrated to God..." (Vine, II:226). Saints were turning back to sin! (cf. Titus 2:12)
  - a. Former state: **Sin** - 1 Cor. 6:9-11.
  - b. Grace: **Saved from their sin** - 1 Cor. 1:2, 9; 6:11.

c. Waste: **Immorality** - 1 Cor. 6:12-13, 19-20.

**B. Divine Power & Blessings Were Being Replaced by the Impotence of Human Pride - 1 Cor. 1:5-7.** (They had all the advantages of any church, yet were abusing & wasting those advantages & blessings!)

1. Former state: **Human power & reasoning** - 1 Cor. 12:2.

1 Corinthians 12:2 NASB 2 You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led.

2. Grace: Divine power (spiritual gifts) - 1 Cor. 1:7; 2:4-5. Their faith stood in the power of God!

3. Waste: Pride had turned God's gifts *into confusion*, disorder, division & fighting among them - 1 Cor. 4:6-7.

**C. Unity Was Being Surrendered For Contentions** - 1 Cor. 1:10-13 (Prov. 6:16, 19 - one who sows discord is hated by God!).

**Proverbs 6:16** There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

**Proverbs 6:19** A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

1. Former state: **Divided by race, culture, economic standing.**

2. Grace: **Unity in Christ (church)** - 1 Cor. 1:2, 9.

3. Waste: Division, contentions, quarrels among them.

4. They needed: Same doctrine, attitudes & judgment - 1 Cor. 1:10.

5. Division hinders evangelism & spiritual growth - Jno. 17:20-21.

**D. Thus, the Power of the Gospel Was Being Made Void - 1 Cor. 1:17.**

1. Ellipsis construction: Emphasis on preaching the gospel.

2. Gospel preaching is not based on human wisdom/will:

a. Former state: **Error, without truth.**

b. Grace: **Gospel truth came to them** - 2:1-2.

c. Waste: **Reliance on human wisdom** - 3:18-19.

3. We must "become fools" - Surrender our wisdom - in favor of God's wisdom, the word of the cross (1:18) - the gospel!

#### Conclusion

1. The best people in town have problems, too!
2. How Christians deal with problems shows their true faith (1 Jno. 1:8-9).
3. Never take for granted / waste God's grace: Salvation, sanctification, power of truth, unity of His people & the truth of the gospel.