

Message #4**I Corinthians 1:4-9**

Paul was a perpetual optimist. If you carefully read his letters you will discover that he is always trying to find something for which he can thank God. When he wrote to the Thessalonians, he could thank God for their faithful work and love (I Thess. 1:3). When he wrote to the Philippians, he could thank God for their willingness to share and participate in the work of God (Phil. 1:3-5). When he wrote to the Colossians, he could thank God for their faith and their love for all believers (Col. 1:3-4). What do you thank God for when the church is more carnal than spiritual?

A KEY TO PRODUCING GODLINESS IN THE LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND CHURCH IS A THANKFUL REMEMBRANCE FOR ALL GOD HAS DONE FOR HIS PEOPLE AND FOR ALL GOD HAS GIVEN TO HIS PEOPLE.

Paul WAS very thankful for what God had done for the Corinthians, but he was NOT very thankful for what the Corinthians were doing for God!

BENEFIT #1 – God’s people can be thankful because they have been given God’s grace . **1:4**

If ever there were a church, if ever there were a people who needed to be thankful for God’s grace, it was the Corinthians. The grace of God was certainly something the Corinthians hadn’t deserved, it was not something they had earned, but it was something they should remember.

- 1) God extends His grace so that a church will praise Him. Eph. 1:6
- 2) God extends His grace so that a church will work for Him. Eph. 2:8-10
- 3) God extends His grace so that a church will glorify Him. Eph. 3:21

Not every person receives this gift of grace and not in every city does God raise up a church; but God did His gracious work in Corinth and He did His gracious work in Kalamazoo.

BENEFIT #2 – God’s people can be thankful because they have been given God’s wealth . **1:5**

The word “enrich” is one that refers to riches upon riches, great wealth.

Sphere #1 - This church had been enriched in all speech . **1:5a**

The word “speech” is one that refers to teachings, discourses and instruction from the Word of God. Paul had personally taught this church for over 1 ½ years (Acts 18:11). One obvious lesson we learn from this is that just because people sit under great Biblical teaching and instruction does not automatically mean they are spiritual; in fact, they may be very carnal.

Sphere #2 - This church had been enriched in all knowledge. **1:5b**

The word for “knowledge” refers to the deep, sought out, investigated knowledge. Do you see what makes a church wealthy or rich according to God and Paul? It IS NOT the size of the offering. It IS NOT the size of the congregation. It IS NOT the impressiveness of the building. It IS NOT the programs. It IS the God-granted ability to hear and to understand the truth of God.

BENEFIT #3 – God’s people can be thankful because they have been given God’s confirmation. **1:6**

The verb “confirmation” is one that means a guarantee. The verb is passive which means God is the one who gives this confirmation. It was in no way conjured up by any of the Corinthians. God produced a confirmation in the hearts and minds of the Corinthians that they were truly saved. He confirmed the witness in them that they were believers in Jesus Christ. What this very practically means is that it is possible to truly know you are saved and truly be carnal. The tragedy of Corinth was not a lack of salvation; it was a lack of spirituality.

Everlasting life is a divine fact the moment one believes. Assurance of everlasting life is a divine grant which comes through the study of the written Word (I Cor. 1:5; I John 5:13).

BENEFIT #4 – God’s people can be thankful because they have been given God’s gifts. **1:7**

Every spiritual gift that ever existed during the early dispensation of the Church Age fully existed in the church of Corinth. They lacked nothing. It is quite clear from this one verse that we get a good glimpse of what we are to be doing as we wait for the return of Jesus Christ; we are to be utilizing our spiritual gift in the church.

The problem with the church of Corinth was not one of lacking spiritual gifts; it was a problem of misusing spiritual gifts. However, we need to also realize that just because there are many spiritually gifted people in the church does not automatically mean you have spirituality in the church. Corinth proves that it is possible to share in the fruit of the gifts, to have the gifts, to even use a gift and NOT be spiritual, but carnal.

BENEFIT #5 – God’s people can be thankful because they have been given God’s future. **1:8**

As wild as this church was, God would still guarantee it was His church until the end of the age when Christ returns. That word “blameless” means that no reproach could ever be brought against the believer that would nullify his eternity. Every believer is guaranteed a bright future with Jesus Christ.

Make no mistake about this; this verse certainly implies that every believer will face Jesus Christ. The believer IS guaranteed heaven but he IS NOT guaranteed rewards.

BENEFIT #6 – God’s people can be thankful because they have been given God’s faithfulness. **1:9**

Paul COULD NOT thank God for the Corinthians’ faithfulness to God, but he COULD thank God for God’s faithfulness to the Corinthians. As Paul saw it, their future, their eternal life and their blessings were NOT based on their faithfulness, they were based on God’s faithfulness.

The tragedy of Corinth is with such a bright future, they were living such dark lives. Instead of living as those spiritual, they were living as those carnal. Is the same tragedy occurring in your life? Are you living more like a citizen of Corinth or like a citizen of heaven?