







<sup>1</sup> *Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you **the grace of God** which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,*

Have we ever noticed how "**the grace of God**" changes everything it takes up!

- **What can grace not reach?**
- **Is there a demand too hard for it to consider?**
- **Is there an evil too deep for it to comprehend?**
- **Is there a sin beyond forgiveness?**

One of the ways we can understand the grace of God was the **willingness** of those people who had very little to give, gave.

***<sup>2</sup> that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their “generosity.”***

- a. God took care that the first to respond should be saints **not** in the wealthy city of Corinth
- b. but in the long desolated and impoverished district of Macedonia,
- c. that the work might be of God's grace, and in no way a matter of worldly circumstances.

The reality of their “generosity” was the more evident that it came from a divine source; for in the face of hardship their joy overflowed.

## What was the source of their attitude?

- It was God Who gave them the grace that so shaped their attitudes.
- It was unselfish devotedness.
- It was loving others better than themselves.
- Paul describes it in love to the saints in Corinth.
- Truly we may say, **to us all**, that our hearts too should go forth in no less love.
- **For love is as energetic and fruitful, as it is holy and free;** and God would have none of the grace seed lost.

<sup>3</sup> For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord,

Love and grace do not calculate what it can spare nor what it can impact.

Paul testifies of the Macedonian saints, that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord.

- No earthly incentives were here
- No pressure of agents
- No rivalry of donations
- No moving appeals among multitudes
- No circulated lists to shame or to stimulate
- No personal or favorite party aims of any kind

**It is** the grace of God given from the beginning to the end; and as God treasures it, so His servant testifies of it so much the more because those in whom it worked thought nothing of it in the love that understood only the need of its objects.

Kelly

*<sup>4</sup> begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,*

The Macedonian saints, far from being solicited, were themselves the wooers of Paul and his companions, and with considerable request begged of Paul and his companions the grace and the fellowship of the ministering unto the saints themselves, that is, to be allowed a share in the grace or favor of caring for the suffering saints of Judea.



<sup>5</sup> *and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.*

By the grace of God in whom is commended to the Corinthians, the Macedonians did not merely go beyond their means, but beyond the apostle Paul's hope and expectations.

Notice that the primary motive was *first gave themselves to the Lord and (through that) to us by the will of God.*

And no wonder that they exceeded expectations, seeing that, as the Interlinear shows: “***But themselves they gave first to the Lord and to us through the will of God.***”

Interlinear

***<sup>5</sup>and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.***

It is not only consistency with His will, though this of course was true, but God's will is the spring of the self-sacrifice.

1. Beyond their power
2. Of their own volition
3. Requesting to be allowed to take part in helping far beyond money
4. They gave beyond Paul's expectation

***<sup>6</sup> So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.***

This acted on the heart of Paul up to the point of urging Titus to carry out what he had formerly begun among the Corinthians when he delivered the first epistle.

It is the theme of the whole epistle.

- If you want to be made strong, be weak.
- I can do nothing as a man.
- The most impressive language will never bring truth home to a soul.
- No, says the Lord, it must all be by *My* power.







## 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.





