MESSY GRACE: **1 Cor wk 11 - Winners and Losers**

**What I love about the NT letters is how practical they are.**

**New Christians in a wild city struggling to live for Jesus. Learning to grow up. 1 Cor – answering their letter.**

**The set up - A BIG QUESTION - 1 Cor 8:1-10:33**

**Then - Is it wrong to eat meat that was once offered to an idol?**

**Biggest two issues 2000 yrs ago, food & holidays (still today)**

**Today - Is it wrong to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (Dealing w/ the grays)**

**PAUL’S LONG ANSWER - 1 Cor 8-10 (3 chapters)**

**We have great freedom, but we at times sacrifice our rights for the growth of others and for the sake of the gospel.**

**Last part (Chap 9:24-27) Paul compares this to running a race…**

**Still talking about the big question -**

**In this race there are winners and losers**

**1 Corinthians 10:1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud (miracle shekinah pillar in the desert) and that they all passed through the sea. (miracle crossing of the red sea) 2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food (miracle manna provision) 4 and drank the same spiritual drink; (Water from the rock) for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. (they experienced incredible miracles and glimpses of Jesus! Yet…) 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. (they blew it – and were left in the desert to die – regardless of how they started…)**

* **A great start is no guarantee of a good ending**

**Walk an aisle, sign a card, say a prayer, raise a hand, take a dunk, see miracles, amazing experiences, knowledge of Jesus… is no guarantee.**

**10:5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them…**

**What is the guarantee? Faith in Christ alone - as evidenced by love and obedience. If you love me, you will obey… (John 14:15) / They will know you are mine by your love… (John 13:35) / Parable of the soils… (Matthew 13:1-23)**

**1 Cor 10:6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. (let’s learn from their mistakes)**

* **We can learn from the losers**

**Chap 9: How to be a winner - hunger, focus, discipline and sacrifice required to live for Christ and reach others.**

**How to be a loser – ingredients**

**1 Cor 10:6b “to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.” (*“That we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted”)***

**1. Selfish - Focus only on what you want**

**They could not say “no” to themselves – did whatever they wanted**

**10:7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.” (ate together in worship – then did whatever they desired)**

**They pursued selfish and self-gratifying desires. They become their own idol - the idol of self. ME monster is never satisfied.**

**10:8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did - and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. (Ex 32. Num 25 - idols and orgies)**

**2. Indulge - Say yes to whatever you body desires**

**They could not say “no” to own sexual urges - self focused**

**God loves sex and created it – in his purpose and will.**

**Relates to sex, drugs, alcohol – it is what I crave, I do it.**

**10:9 We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. (complaining about God’s lack of provision – snake infestation – Numbers 21)**

**3. Negativity – complain to God about what you don’t have or get to do**

**They could not say “no” to negativity – self focused**

**I don’t have this / can’t do this! God does not want me to have fun. (sounds like the temptation in the garden…)**

**1 Cor 10:10 And do not grumble, as some of them did - and were killed by the destroying angel. (God judgment came – and they thought God would not do it)**

**4. Arrogance - Assume God will never hold you accountable**

**They thought they were above the law – arrogance. Self-focused**

**God won’t do anything to me – I can get away with this. It’s not that big a deal. Then they woke up in their consequences.**

**1 Cor 10:11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, (learn from the losers) on whom the culmination of the ages has come. (looking back, we can see it clearly) 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!**

**Look at the track record of the losers – don’t get cocky, be careful. It could happen to you. Don’t be arrogant and selfish.**

* **Wisdom is learning from others mistakes, (I see and avoid it) Knowledge is learning from our mistakes. (I know better now)**

**Pic - Temptation works like rocks in a harbor; when the tide is low, everybody sees the danger and avoids it. But Satan’s strategy in is to raise the tide, and to cover over the dangers of temptation. Then he likes to crash you upon the covered rocks. I see it every day…**

**We can learn a lot from the losers. In regard to the Big Q - causing another to stumble over small issues (food & personal preferences) is evidence of a bigger issue (a selfish, self-centered heart)**

**How do we say no to the loser mentality if temptation is pulling at us? I don’t want to lose, but I’m struggling and feel like I’m sinking.**

**Winning Over Temptation**

**Knowing they were dealing with this struggle - 1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.**

**The struggle is common. We will face it our entire life. We all face temptation - your circumstance is not unique. Even me.**

**Being tempted is not a sin, but when we entertain it or surrender to it, it becomes sin. Temptation is not polite & patient, it kicks the door down.**

* **The reason we sin is because we trade what we need the most for what we want at that moment (temptations are false promises)**

**Starts as a little dog nipping at your heels and grows into a tiger ready to eat your family. (the Mississippi home zoo)**

**Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.” - Genesis 4:7**

**1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. (then he drops some hope) And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. (God does not cause it – and limits what the enemy is able to do) But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out *(way of escape)* so that you can endure it. (it is most likely your temptation will be endured, not eliminate it. Why? To build strength and keep eyes on Jesus)**

**But in that moment – there is always an escape.**

**“way of escape” – a mountain pass – a way! The enemy is on your heels – there is a way of escape through the pass. Jesus is that way!**

**What is the way of escape? Jesus will bring it. Your Escape Room or Panic room = prayer closet (draw near to God)**

**\*\*Stand against the enemy – and run from temptation.**

**We tend to do the opposite. You see the way out – run for it!**

**Back to the big issue… In light of the Big Q – THE BIGGEST LOSER**

 **1 Cor 10:14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from *(the)* idolatry.15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. (love sandwich) 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? (our scared meals are worship) And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.**

**For a Christian our meals of worship are not just crackers & juice – but a deep profound act of worship - we are actually worshiping God with what we eat and drink. So – he explains…**

**1 Cor 10:18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.**

* + **In regard to buying meat in temple butcher shop / market**

**You are free to, as long as they’re not causing another to fall.**

* + **In regard to participating in dinners in the temple**

**Do not do it at all - this is an act of demonic worship.**

* **As real as God is, there is an active enemy – Satan (Biggest Loser)**

**There is no other God, but the LORD (they’re just wood & stone) but the false religions of the world are inspired by and the work of demons – and they are real! \*\*Traveling the world.**

**Satan would want us to believe that it is all the same God, just different names –Zeus, Apollos, Athena, Venus, Isis, Ra - or Ahura Mazda, Allah, Buddha, Brahma, Vishnu, Indra…**

**Lord God says no! They are demonic, do not participate.**

**(1 John 5:21, Rev 21:8, Ex 20:1-6, Deut. 32:16-18, Psalm 106:34-37, 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 & 14-15, Gal 1:6-9, John 14:6)**

**People are more likely to compromise their faith over anything else, participating in other places of worship… Paul says no.**

**“But they are nice people” But blind to the truth. The enemy does not care who you worship, as long as it’s not Jesus.**

**1 Cor 10:21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord’s jealousy? (he requires we worship him alone) Are we stronger than He?**

* **Do not be fearful, but be careful**

**Christians do not need to be afraid of the demonic.**

**Satan / demons are not equal to God, they are created fallen angels, headed to hell – demons are very afraid of Jesus!**

**Greater is he that is in me… 1 John 4:4 / We do not live in fear!**

**Don’t worry about indirect “spiritual contamination”**

**(1 Cor 10:23-26, John 8:44, 1 John 4:3-4, Rom 14:1-15:7)**

**That food, art, object, mask, class, teacher, resturant, holiday, book, movie - enjoy your freedom – but be mindful of others.**

**1 Cor 10:23 “I have the right to do anything,” you say - (it is believed the quotes are from their letters – he agrees – yes, but…) but not everything is beneficial. (for others) “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive. (for others) 24 No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.**

* **Our Liberty is limited by our love**

**Just because it is permitted does not mean it is profitable.**

**Love for God & love for others governs our choices. Freedom is saying no to some of our rights for the good of others.**

**We tend to live our life asking how much can we get away with? What’s the harm in a little…? We are to be mindful of how this affects others, spouse, kids, friends. Dating we compromise our convictions and think it does not affect the person we are dating.**

**V25-30 – Again he says - In regard to buying meat in the temple butcher shop / markets, they are free to do so, as long as they’re not causing another to fall. (making choices)**

**Paul finally wraps up his long answer with this - 1 Cor 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God 33 - even as I try to please everyone in every way. (ch 9 …all things to all men, so that I might…) For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.**

**The Big Ideas! Remember -**

* **Everything we do is to make to make Jesus famous!**

**“So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”**

**Whatever it is – school, work, family – for His glory!!**

* **Our choices can affect the spiritual lives of those around us**

**“Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God (That includes non-Christians and Christians)**

**Take this to heart – people are watching, and it matters!**

**Don’t plant wild weeds, clear the brush!**

* **We say no to some things, so they might say yes to ONE thing**

**“I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved”**

**Saved = rescued from this life and the next. A lifeline pulled from the sea the pain they are in. Saved from Sin and self!**

* **Don’t be angry, be the example**

**“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”**

**Don’t get angry with those around you who keep blowing it – have grace – walking with Jesus is messy.**

**Concerning all “the grays” the ultimate question is - what will help someone to know Jesus and give Him Glory?**

**Next week – we will take a break from 1 cor as we focus on the cross of Jesus for Palm Sunday.**

**Dealing with temptation**

**Ps 103:8-12 life teams**