

2 Corinthians 8 - The Grace of Giving; Heaven's Law of Supply & Demand

II. Paul's instructions concerning the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:1—9:15)

- (1) Example of the Macedonians (8:1-7)
- (2) Example of Christ (8:8-9)
- (3) Equality is the purpose in giving (8:10-15)
- (4) Delegates of the churches (8:16-24)

2 Corinthians 8

II. Paul's instructions concerning the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:1—9:15)

- (1) Example of the Macedonians (8:1-7)

1 Now, brothers *and sisters*, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,

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

1 We want you to know, brothers, about God's grace that was given to the churches of Macedonia.

1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

2 In spite of their terrible ordeal of suffering, their abundant joy and deep poverty have led them to be abundantly generous.

2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

- Their difficulties could be traced directly to their Christian faith. They may have lost their jobs or been excluded from the trade guilds because they refused to have anything to do with idolatry.

- No computer can analyze this formula: great affliction and deep poverty + grace = abundant joy and abounding liberality! (Cf. 2 Cor 6:10)
- Also, it reminds us of the generous offering taken at the building of the tabernacle (Ex 35:5-6), and the temple (1 Chr 29:6-9). We should be challenged to break out of our self-centered posture and trust God.

3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* voluntarily,
3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord,

3 I can testify that by their own free will they have given to the utmost of their ability, yes, even beyond their ability.

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,
4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,
4 They begged us earnestly for the privilege of participating in this ministry to the saints.
4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

- The Macedonian churches needed no prompting; they were not only willing to share, they begged to be included!

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

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

5 We did not expect that! They gave themselves to the Lord first and then to us, since this was God's will.

5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

- Renouncing all self-life—self-esteem, self-importance, self-righteousness, pride, arrogance.

— He who knows he does not own himself will never again say that he owns his money.

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

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

6 So we urged Titus to finish this work of kindness among you in the same way that he had started it.

6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

7 But just as you excel in everything, in faith, speaking, knowledge, and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you also excel in this gracious work.

7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also.

7 Indeed, the more your faith, speech, knowledge, enthusiasm, and love for us increase, the more we want you to be rich in this work of kindness.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

- The Corinthians were so wrapped up in the gifts of the Spirit that they had neglected the graces of the Spirit (1 Cor 4:5)

— To claim to have experienced the grace of God in forgiveness, yet fail to display the grace of God in action is a total contradiction.

(2) Example of Christ (8:8-9)

8 I am not saying *this* as a command, but as **proving**, through the earnestness of others, the sincerity of your love as well.

8 I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.

8 I am not commanding you but testing the genuineness of your love by the enthusiasm of others.

8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

- "...proving" - "testing"; giving is a test of our sincerity and love

— Freewill giving is never according to obligation or command

- Generosity is essential to spiritual development. It is the nature of God to be generous. It is impossible to love God and ignore the needs of your neighbor (2 Cor 5:15).

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His **poverty** might become rich.

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah. Although he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, so that you, through his poverty, might become rich.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

- Interesting that Paul refers to the Incarnation of Christ and the hypostatic union in the context of giving; when the subject of giving came up, Paul unfolded to them the doctrine of Christ

- "...poverty" - *ptōcheia*, the lowest level of poverty that a person could endure

— Used two other times in the NT: to describe the financial state of the Macedonians (Cf. v2), and Jesus used it to describe the poverty of the church at Smyrna (Rev 2:9)

(3) Equality is the purpose in giving (8:10-15)

10 I give *my* opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do *this*, but also to desire *to do it*.

10 I give *my* opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do *this*, but also to desire *to do it*.

10 I am giving you my opinion on this matter because it will be helpful to you. Last year you were not only willing to do something, but had already started to do it.

10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

- There can be a great difference between promise and performance

— Promises were made but not kept, and an entire year had been wasted

— The delay was due to the spiritual condition of the church: when a church is not spiritual it is not generous

11 But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the willingness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability.

11 But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability.

11 Now finish what you began, so that your eagerness to do so may be matched by your eagerness to complete it.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

12 For if the willingness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

12 For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what you have, not according to what you do not have.

12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

- Our motive for giving is God's spiritual blessing in our lives; our measure for giving is God's material blessing. "Let every one of you lay by him store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor 16:2).

13 For *this* is not for the relief of others *and* for your hardship, but by way of equality—

13 For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality—

13 Not that others should have relief while you have hardship. Rather, it is a question of fairness.

13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

14 at this present time your abundance *will serve as assistance* for their need, so that their abundance also may serve as *assistance* for your need, so that there may be equality;

14 at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their need, so that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your need, that there may be equality;

14 At the present time, your surplus fills their need, so that their surplus may fill your need. In this way things are fair.

14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

15 as it is written: "THE ONE WHO HAD GATHERED MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND THE ONE WHO HAD GATHERED LITTLE DID NOT HAVE TOO LITTLE."

15 as it is written, "He who *gathered* much did not have too much, and he who *gathered* little had no lack."

15 As it is written, "The person who had much did not have too much, and the person who had little did not have too little."

15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

Qualifications to Handle Money

Competent delegation is crucial. Three were appointed (v16,18,22): Titus and two others (traditionally, Luke and Apollos). Titus had previously visited Corinth and was known to them. He later became the bishop of the church of Crete.

(4) Delegates of the churches (8:16-24)

16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness in your behalf in the heart of Titus.

16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

16 But thanks be to God, who placed in the heart of Titus the same dedication to you that I have.

16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord.

17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord.

17 He welcomed my request and eagerly went to visit you by his own free will.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18 We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things of the gospel has spread* through all the churches;

18 We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things of the gospel has spread* through all the churches;

18 With him we have sent the brother who is praised in all the churches for spreading the gospel.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;

19 and not only *that*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show our readiness*,

19 and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show our readiness*,

19 More than that, he has also been selected by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this work of kindness for the glory of the Lord and as evidence of our eagerness to help.

19 And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:

- There is no such thing as "secular and sacred" or "business and ministry"

— The most spiritual thing a ministry can do is to use its money wisely for the Lord's ministry

20 taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;

20 taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;

20 We are trying to avoid any criticism of the way we are administering this great undertaking.

20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of *other* people.

21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

21 We intend to do what is right, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of people.

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

- Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men

22 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of *his* great confidence in you.

22 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of *his* great confidence in you.

22 We have also sent with them our brother whom we have often tested in many ways and found to be dedicated. At present he is more dedicated than ever because he has so much confidence in you.

22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you.

23 As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, *they* are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.

23 As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they* are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.

23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker on your behalf. Our brothers, emissaries from the churches, are bringing glory to the Messiah.

23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

24 Therefore, openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

24 Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

24 Therefore, demonstrate to the churches that you love them and show them publicly why we boast about you.

24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.