

The Book of 2nd Corinthians

Chapter 9:1-15

February 28, 1999

- **Outline of 2nd Corinthians:**

- Chapter 1 God equips His people through trial, comfort and perseverance.
- Chapter 2 Restore fellowship to the repentant; One aroma, two response.
- Chapter 3 The glorious covenants
- Chapter 4 The Light of the Glory of Christ
- Chapter 5 Longing to be further clothed; Christ died for the world
- Chapter 6 Faithfulness in persecution; Separation from the World
- Chapter 7 Godly sorrow leads to repentance.
- Chapter 8 Gracious giving abounds from grace received.
- Chapter 9 Sparse sowing yields sparse reaping.

- **Review & Introduction**

This chapter is a continuation of the topic that Paul began in chapter 8 where he instructs on the principles of charitable giving. Specifically, the church at Corinth had been the first to offer their support to the relief of the afflicted brethren in Jerusalem who were suffering from a famine. The connection to Jerusalem came through Paul who had become their spiritual father in the faith to them. However, despite the eagerness with which the offer of support came, Titus reported to Paul that the money had not yet been collected. Apparently this situation was not due to a lack of desire but rather a lack of organization.

- **Exposition of 2nd Corinthians 9:1 - 15**

Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you;² for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority.

- Although Paul is indeed writing to them, he wants to recognize the eagerness which the Corinthians and the other churches in Achaia had manifested a year ago. He is not writing to them to persuade them to give generously for that generosity had already been expressed in word although not yet in deed. Their enthusiastic response to the need also bolstered the response from other churches throughout the kingdom.

3 Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready;⁴ lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting.

- Despite the enthusiasm to give aid to the needy brethren in Jerusalem, the Corinthians had not yet completed the collection of the gift. Therefore, Paul, knowing that he will soon be visiting the church for the third time, sent ahead of him Titus and another brother to assist in the collection so that when Paul arrived there would be no last minute, forced collection. Paul wanted to spare the reputation of faithfulness of the Corinthians in this matter from damage.

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

- Paul is dealing forcefully with the church with regard to a free will offering. He is not making this a *mandatory* free will offering which would be a form of robbery. Paul is demonstrating the difference between *exhortation* and *extortion*. One trademark of the scandalous fund raising is the strong arming that accompanies the need. Because this kind of giving is not under direct command, Paul wants the givers to do so with the right motives.

6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

- This is a tremendously deep principle evident in the manner in which God has made the world. Because God is God, He sees generosity and sacrifice and causes fruit and grace to abound. But as Paul says in Galatians 6, God is not mocked. You cannot play Him like a slot machine because our God sees the heart of man. He knows our evil intentions which can be veiled as generosity.

7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

- This kind of giving is giving from the abundance of the heart. This is truly free will giving. But notice that generosity is not the primary issue of importance but rather the attitudes which undergird the gift. This giving is motivated by gratitude

to God for the bountiful blessings and for love of Him and the recipient.

- Because the church has been disobedient in rendering aid biblically, many in the church have been tempted to utilize ungodly techniques for fund raising. We also see these techniques used by the faithless thieves who see the church as an opportunity for financial gain. One common sign of faithless fundraising is the compulsion or demand for extemporaneous giving. The reason why this is a problem is because we must give with understanding. We are to be students of scriptures on how, where and why we give money. This is what it means to be a steward.
- Additionally, besides giving with understanding, we must also be giving with joy in our hearts. This joy comes from a recognition of the grace that God has shown to us and it overflows into thankfulness and generosity.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.⁹ As it is written:

"He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever."

- Notice here again, that Paul's motivation for firm instruction on free will offerings is because he seeks the blessing that will be given to them by our faithful God who Himself is the measure of generosity. One of the primary concerns we have when we give is that if we give this gift, we will no longer have it—it seems that it will disappear. But the implications here are that God will replenish it abundantly so that we will have the capacity to give again.

10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,¹¹ while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

- Paul uses an agrarian analogy to teach on giving. When we faithfully give, it is as though the gift is put in the ground and disappears. Our flesh thinks that it is gone and will never be seen again. But by faith, even though the seed does disappear, it is replaced by thousands new seeds. This fact is not just an accident—this is how God has made the world.
- Notice also the result of the gift. Even beyond the blessing that the gift is to the recipient, the giver is enriched by God greatly and thanksgiving abounds to God through the saints. These are two motivations that we should look for as foundations for Godly fund raising. Godly purposes will seek the blessings which will abound to the account of the generous giver and they will also seek the praise and glory given to God by this manifested faithfulness.

12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God,¹³ while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men,¹⁴ and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you.¹⁵ Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! NKJV

- Again, beyond the actual blessing to the needy (and it is a blessing indeed to them), when thankful givers are generous, God is glorified, thanksgiving abounds in the church at the faithfulness that God has granted and hearts are lifted and encouraged. This happens because God makes it so. This is fruit that He causes and as a result, thanks and glory belong to Him alone.
- Having concluded this instruction on giving we need to summarize different kinds of giving which may be categorized:
- **Corporate to Corporate.** As we have seen here, Paul and Titus are helping many churches organize a collection to give aid to many people and perhaps many congregations in Jerusalem. This is a type of macro giving which was prompted by the famine brought by God on the area.
- **Corporate to Family.** Examples of this kind of giving can be seen in the gifts given to Paul, (Phil. 4) and perhaps also to widows or tithing. However, supporting widows is very different than a free will offering—the church is commanded to provide support for widows who are truly widows. This is also true for those who labor in the church. Support for the leaders and widows is not optional because we are under command to do so. 1 Cor. 9, 1 Tim. 5.
- **Family to Corporate.** This is less common, but could be seen in fund raising for those things which may benefit a body of believers like a building or a school. But in this case, the church is simply helping to coordinate or administer the gift.
- **Family to Family.** The greatest amount of charitable giving is in this manner. This is the kind of giving where the giver knows who he is giving to, what the need is and how the gift will be used. Families giving to families in all manner of situations should be evident within the church. Obviously, this generosity may take a multitude of forms such as, hospitality, support of a missionary, labor, food, clothing etc. Romans 12:9-13; Galatians 2:10; 1 Tim 6:18; Hebrews 13:16