

## 2Corinthians – Week 30

### I. Review (2Cor. 8:1-5)

- A. Paul appeals to the church to fulfill their pledge to give
  - i. He uses the Macedonian churches as examples
    - 1. By God's grace, despite their extreme suffering and poverty, they gave, even beyond their means.
  - ii. Three characteristics marked the given of these Macedonian brethren
    - 1. They gave sacrificially.
      - a. Paul did not tell them to give a certain amount nor a certain percentage.
      - b. Neither did they prosper, giving them the ability to give out of their surplus.
      - c. Instead, they gave out of their poverty more than what could be expected.
      - d. This was strictly the grace of God working in them!
    - 2. They gave on their own accord...
      - a. Paul emphasized this to show that he did not coerce them to give!
    - 3. They first gave themselves to the Lord
      - a. Their first and foremost love was Jesus!
      - b. Their love for Jesus manifested itself by their love for Paul

### II. Continuation

- A. 2Cor. 8:6 (ESV), "*Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace.*"
  - i. Paul now turns his attention to the Corinthians and capitalizes on their repentance by pleading with them to complete their promise to give:
    - 1. Titus had begun to lead the Corinthians in assembling their gift sometime before his recent visit to Corinth.
      - a. According to 2Cor. 8:10, Titus had made this earlier visit a year before the time Paul wrote this epistle.
      - b. The Corinthians were not facing severe persecution nor were they facing severe poverty, as the Macedonians were.
      - c. Nevertheless they had not yet assembled their offering even though Titus had been with them again recently.
    - 2. And being that Titus had been greatly encouraged by his recent visit to Corinth, he would be the ideal candidate to send back and help them finish this task.
    - 3. Paul calls the offering as an "*act of grace*" or literally, "*grace*," connecting the Corinthians to wonderful things he said about the Macedonian churches.
      - a. Their promise brought to completion would be a manifestation of God's grace working in and through them as well.
- B. 2Cor. 8:7 (ESV), "*But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.*"
  - i. Earlier, in 1Corinthians 1:5, Paul told them how they have been enriched in speech and knowledge.
  - ii. Here, Paul reiterates, in greater detail, how they excelled in spiritually imparted gifts:
    - 1. They had been endowed with miraculously imparted faith
      - a. This would include miraculous healing and powers (cf. 1Cor. 12:9-10)
    - 2. They had been endowed with miraculously imparted speech
      - a. This would include tongues and prophesying – cf. 1Cor. 12:10)
    - 3. They had been endowed with miraculously imparted knowledge
    - 4. This would include wisdom and the discerning of spirits. (cf. 1Cor. 12:8, 10)
  - iii. They even excelled in all earnestness, that is, their readiness to carry out Paul's command.
  - iv. Now, he wants to add to that list: he tells them to excel in all generosity.

- v. **Note: It brings joy to the Lord’s heart when His children express generosity!**
    - 1. Consider the example of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:8-9
      - a. After he was liberated of his sins, he expressed deep love and appreciation for the gospel by his generosity!
        - i. He gave half of his possessions to help the poor
        - ii. He wanted to richly pay back those whom he cheated.
  - vi. Some argue (ESV) that the phrase mentioning “love” ought to read “*in our love for you*”
    - 1. Reason:
      - a. Because Paul previously reproved them for squeezing him out of their hearts (cf. 6:12) and that they needed to make room in their hearts for him (cf. 7:2).
      - b. On the other hand, Paul does profess his deep love for them (cf. 6:11; 7:3).
      - c. Therefore, for Paul to say they were *excelling in love for him* would sound strange after rebuking them for their lack of affection towards him.
  - vii. Others argue (KJV, NIV) that the phrase mentioning “love” ought to read “*in your love for us*”
    - 1. Reason:
      - a. In 2Cor. 7:12, wrote the severe letter to them so that they might make their zeal for Paul known.
      - b. This zeal was momentarily obscured but not completely lost.
      - c. Their positive reaction towards Paul’s severe letter and to Titus’ visit permits him now to say that they love him.
      - d. In the next verse (vs. 8), Paul mentions about testing their love for him, so verse 7 must be speaking about their love for him as opposed to his love for them...
- C. 2Cor. 8:8 (ESV), “*I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine.*”
- i. Paul does not want to come across as if he is dominating or “lording over” their faith (cf. 2Cor. 1:24a).
    - 1. Paul later on explains how giving must be done willfully and cheerfully (cf. 2Cor. 9:5, 7).
  - ii. Instead of commanding them, he encourages them let their love for the Lord and His people be genuine by fulfilling their promise to give.
  - iii. Just as he praised the Macedonians for having a true love for Christ, Paul wants the Corinthians to manifest that same love towards the Lord and His people by their giving.
  - iv. Paul now uses the Lord Jesus Christ as the main and ultimate example of generosity...
- D. 2Cor. 8:9 (ESV), “*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 by his poverty might become rich.*”
- i. The sacrifice of the Macedonians for other Christians is one thing but the sacrifice of Christ for all mankind is quite another!
    - 1. The grace of our Lord Jesus shows the totally undeserved gift of God!
    - 2. The gospel sums up God’s overflowing mercy towards sinners!
    - 3. When one has become the beneficiaries of such undeserved grace...
      - a. How can he shut his heart or wallet towards his fellow Christian who is in dire need?
      - b. Or how can begrudge every penny they may share with others?

**ii. Paul briefly explains the example of Christ**

**1. Thought He was rich...**

- a. He pre-existence was presented as the glory He had with the Father before the world was made (John 17:5) but He gave that up to serve others!**
- b. He was in equal status with God but he gave up that status to serve others (cf. Phil. 2:6)**

**2. He became poor...**

- a. And even though He was poor in terms of the average Palestinian of his time, His poverty was in terms of voluntarily emptying Himself (Phil., 2:6) of His glory to be housed in a human body; of human parents and to become a servant.**

**3. So that you by His poverty might become rich**

- a. He did this so that you can the abundant life now and in the afterlife!**
- b. For the Corinthians, their appreciation for Christ's riches bestowed on them by way of spiritual gifts would have any effect on the way they share their riches with others.**

**4. As Paul said earlier in chapter 5:15, Christ died for all that those who lives should not live for themselves but for Christ who died and rose for their sake.**

- a. This should be the sole motivation for doing what is good.**

**iii. From the examples of the Macedonians and Christ, the Corinthians (and we ourselves) can learn the following:**

**1. True giving requires giving of oneself, not just giving money.**

- a. The gospel is not about what we can get from God, but what God has given to us so that we can give to others.**

**2. Giving is related to the grace of God experienced in Christ.**

- a. Even those who are extremely poor can give because of the grace of God working in them and through them.**