

2Corinthians – Week 33

I. Review

A. 2Cor. 8:16-21

- i. Paul plans to send a delegation to Corinth to collect the funds.
 1. Titus: A man whom God had placed an earnest care in his heart for the Corinthians.
 - a. It is good for us to ask God to put into our hearts an earnest care for His people and for the lost!
 - b. Having an earnest care for others prompts us to act.
 2. A famous brother: known among the churches for his service in / preaching of the gospel.
- ii. Paul's aim was to do what is honorable in the sight of God and man.
 1. Therefore, a delegation of respectable men to collect the funds will prevent any suspicions regarding Paul's handling of the funds.
 2. As disciples, everything we do should be seen as honorable before God and man.
 - a. Too many times we may say, "God knows my heart" and disregard what others may think.
 - b. However, we are called to imitate Paul as he imitates Christ (cf. 1Cor. 11:1), and strive to be above reproach in all we do.
 - c. Don't do anything that would appear scandalous or inappropriate.
 - d. Live your life according to Proverbs 3:3-4 (ESV), "*Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴ So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man.*"

II. Continuation

A. 2Cor. 8:22 (ESV), "*And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you.*"

- i. Paul mentions a third brother in the delegation:
 1. This man is personally known by Paul and his companions.
 - a. He has been "*often tested*" implies that this brother has demonstrated to Paul, innumerable times, his service in the Lord despite many kinds of trying situation.
 - b. As Paul and Titus, this disciple had great confidence in the Corinthians, believing that they will come through with their pledge in shining colors.
 2. This passage gives spiritual leaders insight as to whom to appoint the work of the church:
 - a. Just as Paul and his fellow workers tested this brother, so must God's servant-leaders test those who would be given great responsibilities.
 - i. In 2Timothy 2:2, Paul told Timothy, the preacher, to entrust the ministry of teaching to faithful men, who will be able to teach others.
 - ii. Even those who minister to the physical needs of the church (deacons) were to be tested before installed as deacons (1Tim. 3:10).
 1. Here, a candidate passes the test when no one has concerns with his spiritual integrity.
 2. The first deacons chosen were 7 men known by the church as being men having a good reputation, known to be filled with the Spirit and wisdom (cf. Acts 6:3)
 - b. Any man appointed to a public ministry of the church should be proven to be steadfast and loyal to many matters of the church.

III. Paul now finishes this paragraph with a final reference to Titus and the two brothers and their qualifications...

A. 2Cor. 8:23 (ESV), “*As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.*”

i. Regarding Titus:

1. You will notice that the KJV says:

a. “**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.***” (2Cor. 8:23 KJV)

i. The italicized words mean they have been added there.

ii. Therefore, it literally reads, “**Whether Titus, my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren, the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.**”

iii. For this reason, translations such as the ESV, understand this passage as Paul furthering his description of Titus and the other two brothers.

2. Although Paul often referred to his associates as his “*fellow workers*,” he addresses Titus uniquely as his “*partner*” in addition to being a “*fellow worker*.”

a. Titus has proved himself in dealing successfully with the Corinthians

i. He got them to begin the work of the collection for the saints (2Cor. 8:6)

ii. In the aftermath of Paul’s painful visit, not only did Titus deliver the severe letter to the Corinthians, he also brought most of them around to Paul’s side.

iii. Therefore, Paul viewed Titus more than just a fellow worker; he viewed him as an apostolic equal – although Titus was not an apostle of Christ.

ii. Regarding the other two brothers:

1. They were messengers, representatives (NIV), or literally, in the Greek, “*apostles*” of the churches.

a. It is good to note that the reason why the Greek word was not translated “*apostle*” was to avoid the confusion into thinking that these men were apostles appointed by Christ.

i. This reasoning is seen in Mark, where the translators refer to John the Baptist as a “*messenger*” as opposed to an “*angel*” (cf. Mark 1:2).

b. If the word “*apostle*” were to be used, it is good to note that these brothers were “*apostles of the church*” – that is, sent out by the churches, as opposed to “*apostles of Christ.*”

2. They were also the glory of Christ!

a. These were men whose lives reflected Christ, making Him known wherever they went: In word and deed!

b. Again, men appointed to public ministry are to be men whose lives radiate the glory of Christ in all situations.

B. Paul concludes his remarks by saying to them...

i. 2Cor. 8:24 (ESV), “*So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.*”

1. Paul reemphasizes the appeal in 8:7-15 to fulfill their commitment, showing the proof of their love for Christ and his people to the other congregations.

2. Again, Paul believes in his heart that his boasting about them would prove true not only when these men experience a warm reception of the Corinthians, but as they leave with the contribution in hand.