

2Corinthians – Week 35

I. Review

A. Paul begins to use a figure of speech called “*paraleipsis*”

- i. This is when one says they will ignore something but actually mentions it as a subtle form of emphasis.

B. Paul felt it unnecessary to write to them regarding the importance of helping the Christian because they already showed a desire to help as 2Cor. 8:10 says.

- i. It was their willingness that caused Paul to boast about the Corinthians to the Macedonians, stirring most of them to participate in the collection as well.
- ii. Although they were ready to start collecting a year ago, something happened that stopped the work.

II. Since Paul had boasted about the Corinthians in regards to their willingness to give, he sends three brothers ahead of him so that his boasting may not prove empty...

A. 2Cor. 9:3-4 (ESV), “*But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴ Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated—to say nothing of you—for being so confident.*”

- i. Paul gives a reason as to why he is sending the brothers before he comes to them...

1. Honor!

a. Honor is not sinful pride.

- i. The opposite of sinful pride is humility.
- ii. The opposite of honor is shame.

b. As Christians, we are to do what is honorable before God and man...

- i. 2Cor. 8:24 (ESV), “*for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.*”

c. Example:

i. Children are supposed to bring honor to their parents.

1. One way they bring honor to their parents is by living with integrity.
2. When a child (an adult, let's say) commits a crime and goes to prison (let's suppose), he brings shame on his parents.
3. You see this a lot in the news – parents are being put to shame every day!
4. Such parents cannot say “Look how encouraging my son is!”

ii. I can think of personal examples of “honor” turning to “dishonor” in my own family.

d. Paul had confidence in the Corinthians to do the right thing, but he knew they needed his prodding.

e. If the Corinthians fail to have the contribution ready, they would bring dishonor to Paul and themselves in the eyes of the Macedonians.

B. Cor. 9:5 (ESV), “So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift (i.e., bounty; blessing) you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift (i.e., bounty; blessing), not as an exaction.”

i. Paul gives another reason as to why he is sending the brothers to them...

1. So that their giving would not come across as something forced, but something that comes from LOVE.

a. The Greek translation for “*gift*” is “*bounty; blessing*”

i. The blessing or bounty refers to their contribution, which is meant to bring a blessing on others; that is, fitted to produce happiness.

b. Exaction is the act of demanding a fee or contribution by force.

i. We might consider rate increases or fare hikes as an exaction – something we reluctantly pay.

c. The Greek word used for “*exaction*” involves covetousness or stinginess, as seen in a person who does not excel in the grace of giving.

d. Willing Gift vs. Forced Gift

i. Let’s say a man was walking down the street with a sandwich:

1. He sees a homeless man that obviously looks hungry.

2. He gives his sandwich to the man.

3. The outcome:

a. Since it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35), the man is happy knowing he has made a difference.

b. The hungry man is blessed too. He is no longer hungry.

ii. Let’s change the scenario:

1. The man with a sandwich sees the homeless man but a man with a gun tells him to give the sandwich to the homeless man or else he will pull the trigger.

2. The man hands over the sandwich.

3. The outcome:

a. Almost the same:

i. He gives up the sandwich; the poor man has something to eat.

b. The difference is the man in the first scenario gave willingly while the man in the second scenario was forced to give the sandwich.

c. The gunman removed the moral quality from the act of giving.

iii. Paul didn’t want their contribution to appear as something done in shame and forcibly as opposed to it being done in love and good will.

1. Like the gunman in the second scenario, Paul did not want his presence or his apostolic authority to remove the moral quality from the act of giving.

2. Therefore, he sends the brothers ahead of him so that the contribution would be ready when he and the Macedonian brothers arrive to collect the funds.

2. Paul further explains bounty vs. covetousness by using an agricultural analogy...

C. 2Cor. 9:6 (ESV), *“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully”*

i. One of the great spiritual principles of life is that God blesses people in proportion to their blessing others:

1. Proverbs 11:24-25 (ESV), *“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. ²⁵ Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”*

2. Luke 6:38 (ESV) *“give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you”*

ii. Paul reminded his readers of this here by citing the example of the farmer:

1. If he plants little, he harvests little; but if he plants much, he will harvest much.

a. Giving to meet the needs of others is like sowing seed:

i. The seed is planted and hidden, giving an appearance of fruitlessness.

ii. But in due season, it will yield a great crop with more seeds for a greater harvest the next time around!

b. In other words, the phrase *“will also reap bountifully”* is explained in verses 8-11

i. That is, to the one who sows generously to help the poor, God will provide more material good, not so that one can spend it on oneself, but so that one can give more to others.

iii. Ultimately, the one who is rich in good works, stores up treasure in the future world...

1. 1Timothy 6:18-19 (ESV), *“They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”*

iv. Yet, it is important to remember that, as the whole context shows, Paul is speaking of the quality of giving, not the quantity of giving.