

2Corinthians – Week 38

I. Review: 2Cor. 9:8-11

- A. God will bless the bountiful giver so that he may abound in every good work.
- B. God will make the bountiful giver content.
- C. Psalm 112 describes the God-fearing man
 - i. He freely gives to the poor.
 - ii. His righteousness (i.e., good works) will be remembered forever (cf. Ps. 112:6, 9)
- D. Paul did not teach prosperity theology!
 - i. Paul did not say that if members give up their wealth, God will give them greater wealth for themselves.
 - ii. Paul taught that God blesses the cheerful giver so that he can continue to practice generosity, producing thanksgiving to God.
- E. In verses 12-15, Paul shares with the Corinthians the good effects their generosity will have on others...

II. Continuation

- A. 2Cor. 9:12 (ESV), *“For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.”*
 - i. The word *“ministry”* in this context of 8:4 and 9:1 points towards the collection.
 - ii. But in this context, it denotes the rendering or execution of something.
 - 1. KJV translates it as *“administration”*
 - 2. In essence, the term *“ministry”* has to do with the distribution of the funds.
 - iii. The word *“service”* denotes a public service or function.
 - 1. In Paul’s day, the wealthy would spend a portion of their money to promote the common good, thus becoming patrons of that particular city.
 - a. A patron is someone who supports someone or something, like an institution or event.
 - b. For argument’s sake, we will refer to the Corinthians as *“patrons.”*
 - 2. Paul tells the Corinthians that not only will their public service (i.e., their patronage) supply the needs of the saints, but it will also touch the hearts of many, causing them to praise God.
- B. 2Cor. 9:13 (ESV), *“By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others,”*
 - i. *“By their approval of this service, they will glorify God...”*
 - 1. The literal translation of this phrase is, *“through the proof of this ministry glorifying God”*
 - a. Since the pronouns *“you – the patrons”* or *“they – the recipients”* are missing, some translations, like the ESV, interprets this as saying that the recipients will glorify God by their acceptance of the gift.
 - b. NIV interprets this as saying that as they (the patrons) prove themselves as genuine followers of Christ, expressed by their generous contribution, others will glorify God.
 - c. GWT interprets this phrase as entirely speaking about the patrons (the Corinthians) as honoring God by showing their true commitment of the gospel of Christ by their generosity.
 - d. KJV leaves the first part neutral, while understanding *“glorifying God”* as coming from the recipients.
 - ii. In other words, Paul is saying to the Corinthians that their contribution will show them to be Christ’s disciples, not mere talkers!

iii. It is good to note that this public service on behalf of the Gentile churches would not only show unity among the Jewish and Gentile Christians, it would show unity among all the churches.

1. Ephesians 2:11-15 – Christ came to destroy the barrier between Jew and Gentile, making them one in Him!

C. 2Cor. 9:14 (ESV), *“while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.”*

1. Not only will the execution of their public service produces thanksgiving, it will produce two other effects:

a. It will create deep friendship bonds, that is, it will stir up a desire in the recipients to meet and know the patrons.

b. It will lead them to pray for the patrons.

i. Intercessory prayer is very beneficial!

1. Moses' intercession for the people of Israel held back the hand of God from consuming the nation in His wrath (Ex. 32:7-14; Ps. 106:23).

2. The apostle Peter was led out of the prison because the church steadily prayed for his release (Acts 12:5-12).

3. James 5:14-16 instructs disciples to pray on behalf of the sick and wayward.

4. Paul understood the power of intercessory prayers:

a. He asked the Ephesians to pray for him so that he would speak boldly the gospel (Eph. 6:19).

b. He asked the Corinthians to pray for him so that he would be delivered from deadly perils (2Cor. 1:10-11).

ii. The patrons (in this case, the Corinthians) will benefit having many godly people praying for their spiritual welfare.

2. All these effects -- the thanksgiving, the longing and the intercessory prayers -- are made possible because of God's grace expressed in generosity!

a. Earlier, Paul mentioned that it was the grace of God that gave the Macedonians to give abundantly, even in the midst of severe trials and poverty (cf. 2Cor. 8:1-2).

b. Now, he sees the same grace of God working in the Corinthians as they prepare to give generously towards this project.

D. 2Cor. 9:15 (ESV), *“Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!”*

i. Paul ends this section on a note of confidence that the Corinthians will indeed comply with a doxology.

1. A doxology is an expression of praise to God.

ii. The Greek word *“charis,”* which usually translates to *“grace,”* means in this context *“Thanks.”*

1. Here, Paul is not thanking the Corinthians for opening their purses to others.

2. It is instead offered to God; the author of all good gifts.

3. What *“inexpressible gift”* is Paul referring?

a. Mostly likely Paul is referring to Christ's sacrifice!

i. 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.”*

b. The inexpressible gift, the gospel of Jesus Christ, establishes the whole framework of Christian living, including giving freely to the poor (cf. Ps. 112:9).