

II Corinthians Lesson 09

II Cor. Chapter 9

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Memory verses for this week: *2 Pet 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:*

Introduction: Last week in Chapter 8, we saw the Corinthians being exhorted to match the generosity that the Christians in Macedonia had shown towards the poor saints in Jerusalem. The people did give with great dedication and sacrifice, and the church chose three men including Titus to take the money to Jerusalem much to the delight of Paul. This week we see the churches in Macedonia and Achaia choosing Paul to accompany others to administer the offering they had taken up.

He continues the matter of stirring the Corinthian church to fulfill their promise of financial assistance to the churches of Judea. He further touches upon the true spirit of giving and God's blessing upon it.

I. Advice Concerning Giving

2 Cor 9:1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: 2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

The collection we are discussing this week is the same one we covered in last week's study. We discussed how many had lost their jobs due to their stand for Christ, and these other churches which truly had branched out as missions from the Jerusalem church were coming to the people's aid. Some of the verses concerning these collections are in I Cor 16:1-4, II Cor 8:9, Romans 15:25-28, Acts 20:4, and Acts 24:17. Due to space and time, we will read just a couple of these.

*1 Corinthians 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.
2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him*

in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. 4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

Acts 20:4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

In the Roman letter, Paul gives the grounds of obligation to justify the collections by his Gentile converts when he told them: *Romans 15:27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.*

In verse 1, Paul says it is superfluous (meaning unnecessary) for him to write concerning the collection when he recalls how forward the Corinthians were a year ago in planning this offering. He had boasted of their willingness to help and to take up this offering.

From 1828 Noah Webster dictionary, we have the definition of SUPER'FLUOUS, a. [L. superfluus, overflowing; super and fluo, to flow.] 2. More than sufficient; unnecessary; useless; as a composition abounding with superfluous words. Superfluous epithets rather enfeeble than strengthen description. If what has been said will not convince, it would be superfluous to say more.

It is a great thing when the church gets behind others in need and respond to situations like what the church was facing there in Jerusalem. When we hear of a need, and we give to that cause, it both helps those in need and honors God that we have a heart of giving. A Christian should be known as one who is willing to help and to give when asked. Because the Corinthians had this great zeal, it stimulated others to do the same and to be involved. What you and I do will affect others. We should realize this and always be involved that others might see that example and be exhorted to greater service.

Col 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord,

and not unto men;

Col 3:24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Heb 6:10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

As in the preceding chapter, the Apostle continued to gently prod the Corinthian church to do what they had said they were going to do a year before. He complimented them upon their initial willingness (forwardness) to give. He in fact had boasted to the churches of Macedonia about their enthusiasm in this matter. Achaia was the southern region of Greece where Corinth was. He refers to them by their regional name rather than their local name.

His point is simple. He had told the Macedonian churches of the eagerness of the Corinthian church to take this special offering. That had stirred the churches of Macedonia to do the same. The irony of it all was that in the meantime, the Corinthian church had dropped the ball and not followed through on their original intention.

2 Cor 9:3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: 4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

Paul was putting the Corinthian church on the spot. He had boasted about their promised giving. They had not come through. He sent Titus ahead lest his boasting of them be in vain. When Paul arrived to formally receive their offering (entrusted through Titus and brethren from Macedonia), if they were unprepared Paul (not to mention them) would be thoroughly embarrassed. Indeed it would be an embarrassment if after all his boasting about Corinth's enthusiasm to give, they fell through.

Paul sent the brethren from Macedonia to Corinth before him so that his friends could see for themselves that what he had boasted of them was true. Of course if they all came and no offering was prepared, Paul would be greatly embarrassed. It is not good to have

trust in unfaithful men and women, but it is a great thing to be involved with those that love the Lord and always do what they promise they will.

2 Tim 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2 Tim 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Tim 2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2 Tim 2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

2 Tim 2:6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

2 Tim 2:7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

2 Cor 9:5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.

Consequently, Paul was sending this advanced party ahead of time to avoid such embarrassment for all.

BOUNTY, n. [L.bonitas, from bonus, good.] 1. Liberality in bestowing gifts and favors; generosity; munificence. The word includes the gift or favor and the kindness of disposition with which it is bestowed; or a favor bestowed with benevolent disposition.

This distinguishes it from a mere gift. It is also observed by Johnson, that it differs from charity, as a present from an alms, in not being bestowed upon persons absolutely necessitous. This is often the case; but bounty includes charity, as the genus comprehends the

species; charity however does not necessarily include bounty, for charity or an alms may be given with reluctance.

Paul used the word as a euphemism for the special offering in question. He sent Titus ahead to make sure the offering was taken before Paul arrived with the brethren from Macedonia. Inasmuch as the Corinthian church was well aware of this matter, he wanted them ready so that their offering would be a blessing and not the stinginess which results from covetousness. Or put more simply, he was sending Titus ahead to enable them to give generously and not covetously.

Paul wanted to make sure that they had the offering complete prior to his arrival. This would give him more time to deal with spiritual matters rather than to be involved in raising money that to them might seem covetous. When God's Church is functioning properly, the pastor will not have to be making ongoing appeals for money. The people will have a heart of giving, and the money will be there to meet the needs of the people.

I heard a story in 2012 of a church not far from our area that had hired several people to work full time as they prepared to build a church school and a new church. I personally know one of these families, and the man quit a full time job to work full time in the church. When payday came, there was no money, but the people were told that a grant was in the process, and just to keep working and it would all work out. After three months of working on faith, no money showed up and those families were forced into bankruptcy. Without some of the members stepping in, even the pastor would have lost his home.

None of this should have happened if things had been done God's way. The bible teaches us to do things decently and in order. If a grant was required for all of these things to happen, no work should have been begun and no people hired until that money was in hand. We certainly are to have faith, but we are to also have an effective business plan in place before we set out to do a work for the Lord. If we manage our personal lives and businesses with good common sense, we should be even more careful with the finances of the church lest we bring reproach upon the name of God.

Luke 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

Luke 14:29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

Luke 14:30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

1 Cor 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

II. The Happy Results of Liberality

2 Cor 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Paul moves on to the broader principle of giving in general. He begins by presenting a proverb. One planting a little seed will receive a small harvest. One planting much seed will receive a larger harvest.

Paul draws a definite link between our giving and returned blessing. Our Lord clearly taught the same in **Luke 6:38**, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

As we give to others, it will in due season be returned to us. Moreover, it is impossible to out-give God. To give abundantly is to receive an abundant harvest later. Giving is like planting seed. A harvest will return in proportion to the degree we gave.

The truth expressed in verse 6 has been called the “law of quantity.” The teaching here uses the example of how a farmer goes out and plants his crop. If he uses just a few seed, all he will expect to come

up after the rain is a few plants. But if he plants many seeds, he will no doubt have a bountiful stand. So if he wants to reap bountifully, he must sow bountifully. The same is true in the work of the Lord. If we half heartedly invite people to church or never go out on visitation, how will the lost be saved. In other words, unless we are effectively sowing, there will be no harvest.

Not all that we come in contact with will believe the Gospel, but if we never put it forth, we are guaranteed not to reap. We will reap in direct regards to how much we sow. What you feel right down in your heart you *ought* to give, *that* is what you should give. Verse 7 goes back to the fact that we ought to give out of a heart of love. Not of necessity, but because we love God.

I once heard a man ask his pastor if he should base his tithe off of his gross salary or off of his net check amount. The pastor smiled and said "I guess it depends on whether you want a "gross" blessing or a "net" blessing. Pretty good answer. Love, not algebraic expressions, should direct our giving.

Verse 7 speaks of the "law of quality." The widows two mites in the verses we read last week were judged by the Lord to be more than the vast sums put in by the rich. They gave a small percentage of what they had, but she gave her all. The amount is never as important as the way it is given. Some have to make a supreme sacrifice to give \$10, where another can give \$100 and it never phase them. God looks on the heart and knows if we are giving properly.

Speaking of gifts, we are talking about amounts above the tithe which is 10 per cent. Sometimes special needs arise, and that is when special gifts are needed. When a missionary writes of a sick child needing medical attention or the need for a better vehicle, that gives us the opportunity to give a special gift to meet those needs.

The Apostle applied the principle if the "law of quality" to the current need.

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Paul had frank advice for his Corinthian brethren. Give from your heart, not grudgingly, or because you have to. Moreover, God loves one who gives willingly (i.e., gladly).

In the Believers Study Bible, several comments were made about giving gifts.

9:5 “Generous gift” is a translation of *eulogian* (Gk.), which is variously translated “blessing,” “benediction,” or “benefit.” The idea here is that the Corinthians were to prepare their “blessing” or “generous gift” for the saints in Jerusalem. The gift was to be a result of willing generosity, not grudgingly given.

9:7 The Christian gift of giving ought to be exercised as an act of worship with preparation, purpose, and joy. Giving that is reluctant or coerced is not pleasing to God, “for God loves a cheerful [*hilaros*, Gk.] giver.”

2 Cor 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

Paul returns to one of the implicit excuses for their lack of giving:

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”

As we give, God is able to cause His grace to abound toward us so that all our needs are met. We may therefore abound in our giving for every good work. The greater point is that as we give, God will return to us at least as much as we gave and then some to meet our needs. We therefore will be able to give again for other needs. The principle remains as we mentioned earlier, one cannot out-give God. As we give, he supplies that we might be able to give again. It is the personification of living by faith.

Paul quotes from **Psalm 112:9**, **As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.**

God scatters His blessings freely even as a sower plants his seed. He provides for the poor because He is ever righteous.

The same God who loves a cheerful giver is able to “make all grace abound” toward us. We do not serve a limited God, but one who owns all the cattle on a thousand hills. When we need things, we need to come to God boldly, and when it is a true need, I believe God will provide for us.

Mat 7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Mat 7:9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Mat 7:10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

Mat 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

It is a rule that God generally supplies such givers with all their needs and a sufficiency to further assist others. To be faithful in much, we must first be faithful in that which is least.

J. Vernon McGee had this to say about giving:

I have never known anyone who has gone broke giving to the Lord's work. There may be some who have, but I have never met them in my ministry. I believe that God will bless you. I don't think the blessings He gives to you will always be material blessings. A great many folk think they can hold God to a promise of material blessings. I don't think you can. He does promise to bless us with all spiritual blessings.

2 Cor 9:10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) 11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

In verse 10, Paul invokes God's blessing upon the Corinthian brethren. He called on God who provides seed for the farmer to provide bread for them. He recalled that God would multiply the seed of their giving as well as increase the fruits of their righteousness.

In other words, Paul asked God to provide for their needs as they gave and then to multiply the harvest of their giving. In so doing, he asked God to increase the harvest of their righteousness.

Psa 58:11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

God is able to further bless us unto further giving. With that thought in view, Paul continues, *"Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God"*.

Not only will God bless us in a material way as we give, He also will enrich us to further generosity.

To those that bountifully sow, God is able to give more seed. I have never went out witnessing where I thought that I had used up all the ability God had given me to reach others with the Gospel. When someone is excited about hearing about Jesus Christ, it makes me even more excited about telling them. God will supply all our needs, particularly in this area, if we will be faithful to tell others about Christ. When we give the right way, it says we will demonstrate "thanksgiving to God."

2 Cor 9:12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; 13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;

Therefore, as the Corinthian church gave, the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God. The thought at hand is this. 'For the ministry of this gift not only will supply the need of God's people,

but also will stir many to thanksgiving to God.’ As the Corinthian church gave to meet the needs of their impoverished brethren, they also would be the catalyst provoking many to thank God on their behalf. Thus, their giving would provide not only monetary benefit, but spiritual as well.

The source of the Judaistic influence in the early church had come from the churches of Judea. Some questioned if the gentile churches really were of Christ and presumed gentile believers to be prejudiced against Jews.

Paul wrote further, Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men. More was at stake than just a monetary gift. Such giving would help diminish suspicions and divisions amongst the scattered churches of the day.

The gift these Corinthians were giving would accomplish several results. The needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem would be met, and they would give many “thanksgivings to God” as if receiving it directly from His hand. By this gift, they would bring glory to God, and those in Jerusalem would then pray for them. All of this would bring the churches closer together. And all of us as believers need good relationships with other Christians. We build up one another when we live for God and exhort one another.

Prov 27:17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

2 Cor 9:14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. 2Cor 9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Their giving would produce further spiritual benefits. And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. Their Judean brethren would come to further pray for them and long for God’s grace upon them. Only good would come from a generous offering from Corinth.

The Apostle ends this section with a benediction of praise to God appropriate to the preceding. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. The word translated as unspeakable essentially means 'indescribable.' That gift without question is "eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." God gave His best in Jesus.

Paul closes with a reminder of the greatest gift that has ever been given, and that was Jesus Christ on the cross to pay the penalty of our sins. This was the supreme gift that has ever or shall ever be given. If God so loved us while we were yet His enemies, how much should this encourage us to show liberality in our giving.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.