Paul’s Letters to the Church at Corinth

The Grace of Giving

2 Corinthians 8-9
Lesson 17

Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
April 28, 2013
2 Corinthians

▶ Introduction 1:1-11 – The God of all Comfort
  • Share Christ’s suffering
  • Comfort through blessing

▶ The apostle’s ministry – 1:12-7:16
  • Explanation of delay in visiting (1:12-2:17)
  • The nature of the New Covenant ministry (3-7)
    – Transformational – reconciliation and righteousness in Christ
    – Jars of clay – sharing the sufferings of Christ
    – A display of the power of God (4:7; 12:9)
  • Key text – (6:14-7:1) – Perfecting holiness in the fear of God
2 Corinthians

- The collection for the saints in Jerusalem (8-9)
  - The Macedonian example in giving
  - An appeal to the church at Corinth to finish their collection
  - Principles for giving
Why talk about giving?

- The comfort of God in Gospel success
- An example of Gospel success
- Giving is a recurring theme in Corinth
  - Titus started the collection before 1 Corinthians was written
  - Paul taught about the collection in 1 Corinthians 16:1
  - Titus sent by Paul to finish the collection
- Remembering the poor – Galatians 2:10
- Collection complete – Romans 15:25-32
The Macedonian Example (8:1-7)

- About the grace of God . . .
- Unmerited favor
- Favor in the face demerit

Lexham Bible Dictionary: Gracious or merciful behavior of a more powerful person toward another
- “Act of grace” (8:6, 7, 19)
- Titus was to complete the act of grace (6)
- Excel in this act of grace (7)
- Carry out this act of grace (19)

- My grace is My power (12:9)
God’s power exercised in blessing those who are weak, or unworthy, or hostile with emphasis on his power and our weakness.

- Eph. 2:8-10 – by grace saved . . . we are His workmanship
- 1 Peter 5:10 – God of all grace . . . will restore, confirm, strengthen, establish you
- Titus 2:11-13 – grace of God brings salvation
- Acts 20:32 – word of His grace is able to build you up and give you an inheritance
Grace

- Grace is exercised from apparent weakness
  - This act of grace (8:6, 7, 19) – act of the Corinthian church
  - Christ’s grace came through His weakness (8:9)
    - Christ was rich – became poor
    - We are enriched through His poverty

- Awesome power of God is concealed by the appearance of the opposite now. (WBC)
Macedonians – God’s Grace

› In a severe test of affliction and extreme poverty
› “Overflowed in a wealth of generosity . . . they gave”
  • According to their power
  • Beyond their power
› Begging for opportunity to give to needy saints
› Gave themselves to the Lord first
  • Romans 12:1-2 – a spiritual service of worship
  • Mk 8:34ff – deny self; lose life for My sake and the Gospel
  • 1 Cor 6:19 – you are not your own
Application to Corinthian Church

- Excellence in faith, speech, knowledge, zeal, love
- Show excellence in giving
- God’s grace is manifested through the saints in giving
The Appeal to Give (8:8-15)

- Not a command – display of genuine love (8:8, 24)
- The grace of Christ
  - John 3:16 – love of God in Christ
  - He became poor to make us rich
- The admonition – Finish the gift
  - Fairness
  - Context here is equality – share burden (Gal 6:2)
  - O.T. illustration – Exodus 16:18
Honorable Collection (8:16-24)

- Titus – earnest care for them (8:16, 23)
- Unknown brother – famous preacher of the gospel
- Second unknown brother – tested – earnest
- Proof of your love – this act of grace
- For the glory of the Lord
Exhortation to Give (9:1-5)

- A note of uncertainty in Paul?
  - Your readiness and your zeal, but . . .
  - Need aid in getting ready

- Realistic – the grace of God needs to be stirred up
  - Heb. 10:24 – stir up one another to love and good works
  - 2 Peter 1:13 – stir you up by way of reminder
  - 2 Peter 3:1 – 2nd letter to stir up your sincere mind by way of reminder

- Sent brothers ahead to arrange in advance for the gift
Principles for Giving (9:6-15)

- Sowing and reaping (9:6)
- A cheerful giver (9:7)
  
  “Let your alms be alms, and not traffic” (Chrysostom)
- The grace of God (9:8-10)
- The blessing of giving (9:11-14)
  
  • Enriched in every way
  • Thanksgiving to God
  • Glory to God
  • Prayers of the saints for you
Thanks Be to God for His Unspeakable Gift (9:15)

- A prayer
- Grace of God
- Jesus Christ
- Thanksgiving to God
- Romans 11:33-36