

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 of 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)

Grace

- ▶ 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