

God's Gift

Giving in a world that lacks Godly understanding

Trinity Bible Church - Adult Sunday School Class

“Paul’s Letters to the Church at Corinth” – Lesson 17

Apr. 24th, 2022

2 Corinthians 8

- First time here today? This is not a church budget meeting
- First time speaking on the subject of giving
(Go easy on me please)
- The intent of this message is not to chide anyone into giving
- Intended to increase Christian discernment & convict us to follow the example of Christ

Foundational Biblical Principles

- The earth is Gods creation and He owns it (Genesis 1)
 - Everything we have is on trust from Him
 - We are managers or stewards of His earth
 - “God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:28)

Foundational Biblical Principles

- We belong to God, not ourselves, and God allows us to breathe (Romans 14)
- Christian believers are bought for a price by redemption through Christ (1 Cor 6:19)
- Christ condemned the pharisees for:
 - Being lovers of money (Luke 16:13)
 - The hypocrisy in their hearts (Luke 16:14)
 - Their elaborate form of idolatry

Foundational Biblical Principles

- “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”
- Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were ridiculing Him.” (Luke 16:14)
- Does giving indicate our spiritual health within Christianity?

2 Corinthians 8

- “And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she has not stopped kissing My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but the one who is forgiven little, loves little.” (Luke 7:44-47)

2 Corinthians 8

- Quick context for previous chapters in Paul's letter (2 Cor 1-7):
 - Introduction
 - Explanation to the Corinthians about Paul's ministry
 - Paul expresses relief to the Corinthians for their repentance
 - Paul is overjoyed that the time of broken fellowship with Corinth is over.

2 Corinthians 8

- At least one year earlier there is a pause in a collection due to the accusations towards Paul
- There was a collection for the poverty stricken, famine struck, and persecuted Christians in Jerusalem. (Romans 15)
- Titus initially encouraged the Corinthians to contribute to this collection for the saints in Jerusalem
 - “So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.” (2 Cor 8:6)

2 Corinthians 8

- Titus, at Paul's request, voluntarily went back to Corinth with the 2 Corinthians letter, to help ready the contribution
- Another brother is sent with Titus who is unnamed
 - “We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; and not only that, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;” (2 Cor 8:18-20)

2 Corinthians 8

- In this letter Paul informs Corinth of the Grace of God that the impoverished Macedonian church received for their giving in their affliction
- He urges the Corinthians to continue their contribution to the relief fund
 - “I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it. But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the willingness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability.” (2 Cor 8:10-11)

2 Corinthians 8

- The collection is a demonstration that in Christ, Jew and Gentile are one. Gentiles are grafted into the Kingdom (2 Cor 8:14-15)
 - Demonstrates equality between Gentiles and Jews in the faith through Christ
 - The sharing of Mana, a perishable food, is a great example of sharing resources to provide for a need, not the redistribution of wealth

2 Corinthians 8

- “At this present time your abundance will serve as assistance for their need, so that their abundance also may serve as assistance for your need, so that there may be equality; as it is written: “The one who had gathered much did not have too much, and the one who had gathered little did not have too little.” (2 Cor 8:14-15)

2 Corinthians 8

- Paul is informing the Corinthians that the giving from the Macedonian church in the midst of affliction brought abounding joy from their act of giving
- Where did this generosity come from?
- Their generosity was given to them through grace from God

Major Principals of Giving

- Giving **begins with a giving of ourselves first to God**
 - Paul commends the Macedonians that gave themselves first to Christ
 - Then the Macedonians gave themselves to giving (2 Cor 8:1-5)
 - Churches who do not begin here often disintegrate and focus on self preservation
 - People who do not give themselves first to Christ miss completely

Major Principals of Giving

“Now, brothers and sisters, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave voluntarily, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.” (2 Cor 8:1-5)

Major Principals of Giving

- Giving is **in response to Gods generosity**
 - “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 through His poverty might become rich.” (2 Cor 8:9)
 - This is the foundation for the giving of self
 - Christ gave everything
 - No sacrifice that we can make for Him can ever be too great

Major Principals of Giving

- Giving is to **be generous and not done unwillingly**
 - The motivation is to be overflowing with great generosity (2 Cor 9:6-9)
 - Willing desire to give
 - “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet He gave my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it. But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the willingness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability.”
(2 Cor 8:9-11)

Major Principals of Giving

- Giving is **biblically constrained and personally determined**
 - Giving is to be done voluntarily (2 Cor 9:7)
 - Personally determined in relation to the totality of scripture (2 Cor 9:7)
 - Old testament provides a basis for our planning and a guideline for our giving
 - Tithe on the nation of Israel was closer to 23-30% (Levites, national feast, help for the poor)
 - On top of 23-30% free will offerings are encouraged
 - The old testament tithing (10%) model is not a new testament mandate

Major Principals of Giving

- What is outlined under the new covenant?
- New Testament maintains an eloquent silence
- Never mentioned by Paul other than by perportionality to income in a vague way (1 Cor 16:2)
- We are not under the law, but through grace we are freed to give

Major Principals of Giving

- True giving is **regular, systematic, and without fanfare**
 - First day of every week
Every man is to set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income
Saving it up so that no collection will have to be made (1 Cor 16:2)
 - Giving is to be in secret as God knows about it and will reward you (Matt 6:2-4)

Major Principals of Giving

- True giving is **to be sacrificial and cheerful**
 - “I will not sacrifice to the Lord that which costs me nothing”
(2 Samuel 24:24)
 - God sees our hearts and knows where we are and meets us on our level
 - If your gift is giving, give with great generosity

2 Corinthians 8

- Does giving sit in a place of prominence in our hearts?