

CHAPTER EIGHT

Analysis

- A. Paul told about the gracious privilege God had given the Macedonian churches, permitting them to share in helping the saints in Judea (1-6).
1. The result of God's grace (1-2).
 - a) The gracious privilege of sharing had been given by God and was still operating in the churches of Macedonia (1).
 - b) Their great joy over this gift, even though they were being put to the test by much affliction and deep poverty, resulted in single-minded devotion expressed in the overflowing wealth of their liberality (2).
 2. Paul's testimony as to their response to God's grace (3-5).
 - a) It was according to their ability, even beyond their ability.
 - b) It was of their own accord—they chose to do it.
 - c) It was with great urgency that they begged for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints.
 - d) It was a response beyond anything Paul had hoped for.
 - e) It was the result of having first given themselves to the Lord and to Paul by the will of God.
 3. Paul's exhortation to Titus to complete the task he had already begun at Corinth (6).
- B. He gave instruction to enable them to determine the amount of their giving (7-15).
1. Giving in relation to other gracious privileges in which they had abounded (7).
 - a) The principle: They abounded in (1) faith, (2) utterance, (3) knowledge, (4) earnestness, and (5) love.
 - b) The exhortation: Abound in this gracious privilege also.
 2. Love as the motivating force in giving (8-9).
 - a) Paul did not issue a command for them to be generous, but appealed to them to show the sincerity of their love (8).
 - b) He reminded them of the example of Christ who, although he was rich, became poor for their sakes that they might become rich (9).

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3. Advice about completing the work which they had already begun (10-15).
 - a) The advice: Since they were the first to begin, Paul's opinion was that they should complete the task according to their ability (10-11).
 - b) The measure:
 - (1) Willingness to give makes the gift acceptable, not the amount (12).
 - (2) Equality (13-15).
 - (a) Not that one should be distressed and another eased (13).
 - (b) Equality that balances want and abundance (14).
 - (c) Example: Scriptural reference to the manna (15).
- C. Paul told them of the mission of Titus and his associates whom he had urged to go to Corinth to assist in this gracious privilege of giving (16-24).
 1. His thanks to God for the concern of Titus for them (16-17).
 - a) God had put the same earnest care in the heart of Titus (16).
 - b) Titus had accepted the task because of his earnest desire to help them (17).
 2. His commendation of Titus and his associates (18-23).
 - a) The first brother (18-21).
 - (1) He had been praised for his work in the gospel throughout all the churches (18).
 - (2) He had been appointed by the churches to go on this mission (19).
 - (3) Paul was thus avoiding any criticism of his handling of the funds (20-21).
 - b) The other brother: With Titus and the first associate, Paul also sent another proven brother who had great confidence in the Corinthians (22).
 - c) Paul's commendation of Titus and the others (23).
 - (1) Titus was his partner and fellow-worker.
 - (2) The other brethren were ones who had been sent by the churches to do a work for the glory of Christ!
 3. His plea for them to give a demonstration of the love and justification of his boasting about them (24).

*The Privilege of Giving**Scripture*

8:1-6. Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; 2 how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, 4 beseeching us with much entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the saints: 5 and this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God. 6 Inasmuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also.

Comments

Moreover, brethren.—Paul had written with utmost frankness in defense of his ministry in behalf of the Corinthians and of his deep affection for them. He had reminded them of his unbounded joy in learning from Titus that they had complied with the directions which he had given them in First Corinthians for the correction of certain sinful practices which they had allowed to go on in their congregation.

He was now prepared to take up another matter which he had barely mentioned in the first letter. He had called attention to the "collection for the saints" and had given them the order, as he had also done to the churches in Galatia, to begin gathering the funds. See I Cor. 16:1-2. Chapters eight and nine complete his instruction on the matter. They constitute a logical progression of thought when the background of First Corinthians is taken into consideration. The deep emotional tone of the first section of Second Corinthians is in perfect harmony with the subject matter with which he dealt. He had spent so much time with the church at Corinth for it was a strategic post in the campaign to spread the gospel through the known world. The threat against the very life of that church occasioned by the sinful practices about which he wrote in First Corinthians was a serious threat to the progress of the gospel in that whole area. This plus his deep love for those people led him naturally to write in the deep emotional tone that characterizes so much of the first seven chapters of the epistle. The mood naturally changes when he reaches a less personal and far more encouraging situation in

connection with the offering for the saints in Judea, for he knew that the Corinthians had already made a beginning in this matter following the instruction which he had given them. His mood changes again with the defense of his apostleship against the false claims and unfair charges being made by false teachers. They had come to Corinth and were seeking to establish themselves in the life and affection of the people of God whose very existence as Christians had depended upon the ministry of Paul who was the first to bring the gospel to them.

the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia.—In the various shades of meaning of the term "grace" the central idea is unmerited favor. The thought that this is some mystical power from God producing unusual liberality in giving is not in harmony with the principles of giving which Paul set forth in these two chapters. But God had been gracious in giving the Macedonian churches the privilege of sharing with those who were in need despite their own deep poverty.

God had miraculously fed the children of Israel on manna from heaven while they were on the wilderness journey. Jesus had miraculously fed the multitudes on the loaves and fishes. In His providence God continually causes the earth to produce an abundance of food, despite the fact that famine has always been common in some areas. Rather than miraculously supplying the needs of the saints in Judea God gave the Gentile Christians the privilege of demonstrating their love for Him by sharing with the saints in Judea.

The earth today produces abundantly. There are many economic and political factors that affect distribution of food in areas where famine strikes. But if men everywhere would respond to the gospel of Christ and recognize the privilege which God had given to men to share with others, the abundance of food which He continually provides could be distributed to the needy by intelligent, Christian people.

This is in no way to suggest any sort of communism or socialism. It is the grace of God functioning in the hearts of men who appreciate the privilege of demonstrating their love for Him by helping the needy. This principle was clearly seen in the church at Jerusalem where the members "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need" (Acts 2:45). The key word in this passage is "need," for there isn't the slightest indication that this action was taken so that every member in the church might be equal in the possession of material things. No where is this

made clearer than in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. See Acts 5:1-11. Swift punishment came upon them because Satan filled their heart and caused them to lie to the Holy Spirit about the price of the land which they had sold. But Peter said to them "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" Very clearly, then, the right of private ownership was upheld by the inspired apostle. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was not the lack of generosity but of their attempt to lie to the Holy Spirit as they misrepresented their giving before the apostle Peter. It was the widows in the church who were in need of assistance (Acts 6:1). Because some of them were being neglected, the apostles instructed the church to seek out seven men who were given the responsibility of taking care of this ministry. At one time, Agabus, a prophet, speaking under the direction of the Holy Spirit foretold the coming of a famine over all the world. It came to pass in the days of Claudius. The disciples, each one of them according to his ability, decided to send relief to those who dwelt in Judea. They selected Barnabas and Saul—later to be known as the apostle Paul—to carry this relief to the elders in Jerusalem. Acts 11:27-30.

Sometime later when Paul met with the apostles in Jerusalem, he was asked to remember the poor in Judea and he continued his ministry among the Gentiles. But this had always been a matter of deep concern to him. Gal. 2:1-10. His concern that Macedonia and Achaia help the saints in Judea was in accord with his long-standing practice. According to Acts, these churches were Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. See Acts 16:12; 17:1, 10.

in much proof of affliction.—The many hardships which Macedonia had endured proved beyond doubt that they understood the situation of the saints in Judea. This and the overflowing of their grace despite their own deep poverty resulted in the wealth of their singleminded devotion and love for God as seen in their liberal contribution to this important cause.

Famines, economic depressions and political oppressions were the common lot of many of the colonies of the Roman Empire. Macedonia's situation was not only known to Paul but, in all probability, to their neighboring province of Achaia also.

Too frequently in this day, Christian people, fall back on their own limited means as an excuse for not sharing with others less fortunate than they. This robs themselves of sharing in the grace of God. Lest Paul be misunderstood, he adds several significant statements govern-

ing the thinking and action of those whom he directed to participate in this privilege of sharing with others.

Paul did not hesitate to recognize the poverty of the brethren in Macedonia. It was their single-minded devotion to Christ that made their giving look like a river at floodtide spreading even as far as Judea. Our word "liberality" seems to lose something of its power to describe Paul's view of the generosity of the Macedonian Christians. *according to their power.*—The Macedonians had given according to their ability and, paradoxically, even beyond their ability. Single-minded devotion to God and trust in Him were the underlying causes of this astonishing affect.

their own accord.—Thus Paul makes it clear that the generous giving of the Macedonian Christians was their own gracious response to the favor which God had extended to them to have a share in helping the needy.

beseeking us with much entreaty.—These dedicated Christian people actually had been begging Paul for the privilege of graciously sharing in this ministry to the saints of God.

Too frequently this principle is reversed. Those in charge of the financial program of the church resort to begging the people to give for the support of the work of the church. They often appeal to the legal aspect of giving to break loose portions of the lump with which the supposed parsimonious people grudgingly part. The love of God in the hearts of His people is the most powerful force known in producing generous participation in the program of the church.

the fellowship in the ministering to the saints.—One of the basic issues of Christianity is fellowship or sharing. The apostle John who was an eye-witness of the evidence that established the basic facts of Christianity wrote his first epistle that others might share with him this foundation of their faith, saying, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." See I John 1:1-4. Since Christianity is rooted deeply in fellowship, it should naturally find expression through Christian sharing in service to the saints of God. *not as we had hoped.*—Paul, knowing of the deep poverty of the Macedonians, had not hoped for the response which came from them. The secret of their generous response was their dedication to the Lord.

first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God.—What they did was through the will of God. Paul had made known through his preaching the will of God that had given them the privilege of dedicating themselves to the Lord and of sharing

with Him in the propagation of the gospel and the care of His saints. Without such dedication churches most likely will always be struggling to raise the budget. They limp along half-heartedly carrying "the load," but seldom knowing the real joy of generous giving that springs from devotion to the Lord.

and to us.—Paul did not say that they first gave themselves to the Lord and then money to him. Rather, they gave themselves to the Lord and they also gave themselves to Paul. Evidently they volunteered to go with Paul on this mission in behalf of the saints. Luke gives the list of some who were with Paul on the trip to Jerusalem. Among them were Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus who were Thessalonians. See Acts 20:4. Paul also mentions the brother who was selected by the churches to go with him on this mission. See II Cor. 8:18-19.

we exhorted Titus.—Titus had been Paul's messenger to Corinth to learn their response to his first letter. Now he reminds them, after having learned from Titus what their response was, that Titus was being sent to them again in connection with this ministry to the saints. Just what Titus at this time had already done in getting them started on this project is not stated, but Paul indicated that he was the logical man to help them since he had already begun to do so.

Principles Regulating Giving

Scripture

8:7-15. But as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us see that ye abound in this grace also. 8 I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love. 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. 10 And herein I give my judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. 11 But now complete the doing also; that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the completion also out of your ability. 12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not. 13 For I say not this that others may be eased and ye distressed; 14 but by equality: your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality:

15 as it is written, He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.

Comments

But as ye abound in everything.—Having commended the Macedonians for their abundant response to the gracious privilege that God had given them to share in the service for His saints, Paul urged the Corinthians to abound in this grace also. He placed this privilege which God had graciously given them on a par with other manifestations of God's grace which they enjoyed and to which they had responded.

faith, and utterance, and knowledge.—Paul had reminded the Corinthians of the grace of God that had been given to them in their relationship to Jesus Christ for they had been enriched in Him in everything and lacked in no gift that would help them as they patiently waited for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:4-8). Among those gifts, he mentions utterance and knowledge. He also gave a list of nine spiritual powers through the laying on of the apostles' hands that enabled the church to function effectively in the absence of the completed New Testament (I Cor. 12:8-10).

Since Paul lists faith with utterance and knowledge he is in all probability using it in its relationship to the performance of miracles, rather than in its usual sense as belief in the gospel or belief in the Lord Jesus Christ or trust in God. On the other hand, faith in connection with miracles was a tangible demonstration of God's gracious bestowal of power on those on whom the apostles laid their hands. The word of wisdom enabled them to utter the message which God revealed through them. The word of knowledge enabled them to understand this divinely revealed message which we now have in the New Testament.

Paul urged the Corinthians that just as they had an abundant supply of these gracious gifts—faith and utterance and knowledge—so they were to “abound in this grace also.”

I speak not by way of commandment.—Paul had reminded the Corinthians that as he had given order for the churches of Galatia so he was also ordering the Corinthians to prepare themselves to make the collection for the relief of the saints. Why does he now say that this was not by way of commandment? The answer seems to lie in the fact that he is here discussing the issue of generosity in giving. As an apostle he did issue the order for the churches to give, but

liberality or generosity cannot be ordered; it springs from the single-minded devotion to the Lord of those who first dedicate themselves to Him. He had cited the eagerness of the Macedonians as a standard by which to test the sincerity of the love of the Corinthians. Thus the example of sincere, earnest response to the order to give becomes a strong motivating force to help others to do likewise. Those who fear lest others learn about their giving usually have cause to be ashamed of it themselves. On the other hand, those who give simply to appear generous violate the basic teaching of Our Lord (Matt. 6:2-4; 15:3-9; Luke 21:1-4).

The difference between the command and the motivating force that brings it to reality is seen in the words of Our Lord when He said, "If you love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Those who really love the Lord have only to be told of the need. They have proven their awareness of the command to give by their own dedication to the Lord. How much giving is pointless because of some vague, general appeal! Paul reminded the Macedonians and the Corinthians that what they were giving was to help the poor in Judea. Those who give to the local budget should also be informed as to the items of that budget. Support of missionary projects is lifted to a higher level when the congregation knows the missionary to whom they are giving.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.—The sincere expression of their love for which Paul was calling found an example in that which had been graciously done by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, yet became poor. No better comment can be found on this issue than Paul's in Phil. 2:5-11. He existed in the form of God and was on equality with God. He emptied Himself, took the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man. He was found in the fashion as a man and humbled Himself, obediently submitting to the death of the cross. He was crucified through weakness, yet lived through the power of God. See II Cor. 13:4. This does not imply that He lost His deity during His earthly ministry, for there are many examples in the Gospels clearly showing both His deity and His humanity. See *Studies in Luke*, pp. 58-59. The saints are made rich in Him through the salvation which He has so graciously provided. See Eph. 2:1-10; Titus 2:11-14.

And herein I give my judgement.—Another strong motivating force in this matter of giving is the expressed opinion of the inspired apostle. Since the Corinthians were the first to make a beginning in this project,

thus showing their willingness to have a share in it Paul urged them to complete the task according to their ability.

if the readiness is there.—God knows the heart of man as well as the size of his bank account. He looks upon the readiness of those whose love leads them to share in relieving the needs of the saints. If this eagerness is present, the amount given is acceptable according to one's ability. It is not determined by what he does not have.

This verse is as much a part of the inspired teaching about giving as the order to give or the appeal based on dedication and love for the Lord. Public appeals overlooking this fact embarrass and often discourage those present who may not be able to give. It was not Paul's intention to do such a thing at Corinth. Jesus' comment about the widow who gave all her living does have some bearing on this issue. See Luke 21:1-4. But it in no way excuses the parsimonious person whose love for money outweighs his love for God.

not that others may be eased.—Paul was not intending to place a burden on the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Achaia in order that the churches in Judea with Jewish background might live in ease. The saints in Judea were in real need. Paul with his Jewish background labored among the Gentiles as the apostle of Christ and everywhere taught that in Christ such distinctions as Jew and Gentile had been removed. But he also recognized the debt which he had to preach the gospel to both Jew and Gentile. He also recognized an obligation toward his Jewish kinsmen, for the faithful among them he said "are Israelites: whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. 9:4-5). Not all Jews could claim this honor but only those who, following in the footsteps of Abraham, had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. See Rom. 9:6-7; 4:23-25.

but by equality.—The gifts of the Gentile Christians would ease the distress of the saints of Judea.

In the reference to equality, some assume that Paul is indicating that Gentiles who then had the ability to contribute to the relief of the saints of Judea might at some future time suffer distress and be relieved by the saints in Judea, thus bring about equality.

Paul, however, had written to the Corinthians about another phase of equality. He had balanced spiritual things when he had sown for their benefit with his right to reap from their material things. See

I Cor. 9:11. Remembering that the gospel had originated in Judea and that the faithful among the nation of the Jews from Abraham on were like the root out of which the true faith of the gospel had grown, we might also ask whether or not Paul is thinking of that equality that now balanced material things with spiritual things. Paul wrote to the Romans about this trip to Jerusalem on which he was to minister to the saints in connection with the contribution which Macedonia and Achaia were making for the poor in Jerusalem. He said, "Yea, it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things" (Rom. 15:25-27).

He that gathered much.—Paul quoted from Ex. 16:18, a reference to the giving of the manna, as an example of the equality about which he was writing. The manna, just as our blessings whether material or spiritual, came from God. God saw to it that no one was able to hoard the manna and thus made everyone equal in that respect. But it is His love and earnest care for others in the hearts of His people that will produce equality in things both spiritual and material.

The Mission of Titus and His Associates

Scripture

8:16-24. But thanks be to God, who putteth the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. 17 For he accepted indeed our exhortation; but being himself very earnest, he went forth unto you of his own accord. 18 And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches; 19 and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord, and to show our readiness: 20 avoiding this that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us: 21 for we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men. 22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have many times proved earnest in many things, but now much more earnest, by reason of the great confidence which he hath in you. 23 Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and my fellow-worker to you-ward; or our brethren, they are the messengers of the churches, they

are the glory of Christ. 24 Show ye therefore unto them in the face of the churches the proof of your love, and of our glorying on your behalf.

Comments

thanks be to God.—The writings of Paul are full of praise and thanksgiving to God. He was aware that everything that he had been able to accomplish or ever hoped to accomplish had been made possible because God had given him the gracious privilege of serving as the apostle of Christ. He praised God for His comforting care in affliction; he thanked God for leading him in triumph in Christ and making it possible for the gospel to be made known through his efforts. It was God who comforted him through the coming of Titus with the report of improved conditions in Corinth. He thanked God who motivated such men as Titus and his associates to share in the task of assisting the churches to gather funds for the relief of the saints in Judea.

who putteth the same earnest care for you in the heart of Titus.—God made man with the capacity to respond to appeals to relieve the needs of others. He had used Paul to stir up this interest in the heart of Titus. More than that, Titus had seen for himself the desire of the Corinthians to relieve the suffering saints in Judea. People do respond to the cry of their fellowmen for help, for God created them with the capacity to do so. But information about the specific needs must be given if this capacity is to become effective. More than that, this capacity can and should be trained that it might be developed to its fullest extent. Training should begin with children. It should be carried on by the leaders of the church through instruction and example so that the whole family of God might have a wholesome concern for the needs of others. The basic root of all this concern is God's own love for the world demonstrated by the fact that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. The Lord exhorted men to love their enemies and do good to those who persecuted them.

he accepted indeed our exhortation.—Titus' heart had been stirred by what he had seen in Corinth. They had begun to carry out the order which Paul had given them. He willingly accepted Paul's appeal to continue his assistance to them, for it was in perfect accord with his own decision.

It is a rare thing when effective work in the church is accomplished by those who respond to undue pressure to teach a class,

to serve as deacons, or to do the many other things necessary to carry out the total work of the congregation. Unless a man's heart is in it, as in the case of Titus, in all probability it would be better for him not to attempt the task.

with him the brother.—Two others who are designated brothers were to accompany Titus and assist him in this ministry. Their names are not given. Speculation as to their identity has been indulged in through centuries to no profit. Had it been important surely Paul would have given the names. But he does commend them highly. Paul never hesitated to commend his fellow-workers such as Timothy, Titus, Apollos and the many others who had proven themselves worthy of such commendation.

This brother had received the commendation throughout all the churches because of his work in the gospel. Paul did not hesitate to pass this information along to the Corinthians. This same principle if followed carefully would save many a church from those whose reputations elsewhere are not good. The leaders of the churches should insist on looking into the reputation of new teachers who come into their midst. Indeed, the Corinthian church could have been saved much grief had they investigated the reputations of the "super-apostles" who had come into their midst attacking the reputation and ministry of Paul. The brethren at Antioch could have been spared a severe split in the church if they had looked into the reputation of those who "came from James." See Gal. 2:11-21.

appointed by the churches.—How these men were selected is not indicated. A good example of how it might have been done is given in Acts 6:1-6. The apostles set forth the qualifications and urged the church to select the men to fit these qualifications. Just how the church went about selecting the men is not indicated but when they had completed the task they brought the men before the apostles who put them in charge of the task. Another example is given in Acts 14:23. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church. The word "appoint" could mean and probably did indicate that this was done with the approval of the church. Titus was given the task of appointing elders in every city in Crete, probably with the approval of the churches as they followed the qualification which Paul had given them. See Titus 1:5-9.

Those selected to travel with Paul and the others in this gracious ministry for the glory of the Lord were men of good reputation among the churches. Paul was eager to have such assistance.

It should be pointed out that these men were selected for a specific task and represented the churches only in the task for which they were selected. In no sense did they become representatives to make decision for the congregations. The New Testament indicates that the congregations were interdependent as well as independent.

avoiding this, that any man should blame us.—Paul was aware of the fact that there were those who would assume that the collections were being made for his own benefit. False charges easily arise making it necessary for those who handle the funds of the congregation to be above reproach in every regard and to be able to prove their honesty against any false charge. Judas even stole from the treasury of Jesus and the apostles. See John 12:6. Why allow the treasurer of a church to be put into a position where he might be accused of such a thing? He should have someone to check his work; his books should be audited and every precaution should be taken for his sake and for the protection of those who contribute to the fund. Paul avoided the possibility of any improper handling of money entrusted to his care. He took "thought for things honorable not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

this bounty which is ministered by us.—The term "bounty" comes from the word which means thickness or fullness and was used to describe a plant that had reached its full development or its fruit that had become ripe. It aptly describes the generous giving of the church that had been preparing for this effort and were soon to bring it to completion.

Just as time is needed for a plant to grow and produce fruit, so a congregation should be given time to (1) to be adequately informed regarding financial projects and (2) to let their contributions grow to the point where they are adequate for the needs for which they are being given.

we have sent with them our brother.—Paul had urged Titus to undertake this mission, the churches had selected the brother with a good reputation in the gospel to accompany him, and Paul had sent still another proven man on this mission. His earnestness had been proven on many occasions and heightened at this time because of his great confidence in the willingness of the Corinthians to respond generously to this appeal.

Whether any inquire about Titus.—Paul had already written a great deal about Titus, but to make sure that any question about him could be fully answered, he adds, "He is my partner and fellow-worker

to you-ward." This is characteristic of Paul's attitude toward those who labored with him. See, for example, his attitude toward Apollos in I Cor. 3:4-9. For his attitude toward Timothy see Phil. 2:19-24.

the messengers of the churches.—As the footnote in some Bibles indicates, the word "messenger" is actually "apostle." It means one who is sent on a mission. It is not to be assumed that they had equal authority with the apostles of Christ, for those men were commissioned by Him and equipped for their task by being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Since the term was one in common use designating anyone being sent on a mission, it becomes absolutely necessary to study each context to learn who the sender is in order to avoid confusion over the use of the term. Here, for that very purpose, it is rendered "messengers"—a word which comes from Latin but means the same thing.

Long usage has accustomed us to use "apostle" to refer to those sent by Christ, but to use "missionary" to designate those who are sent out by churches to proclaim the gospel.

the glory of Christ.—All this—the selection, the commendation, and the sending of the men to protect the reputation of the apostle and the others—was for the glory of the Lord.

Too often this basic principle is forgotten. Many assume that the tasks that they may be performing in connection with the work of the gospel are for their own glory. Evidently there were such in Corinth, for Paul had to write the last section of this epistle to show that such people were in reality servants of Satan.

in the face of the churches the proof of your love.—Paul had not hesitated to remind Corinth of the generosity of the Macedonian churches. Now he urged them to respond in like manner demonstrating before the churches their love for the Lord. This was not to be some hypocritical display (Matt. 6:2-4). It was to be the sincere response of Christian love, the example of which would motivate others to respond in the same manner.

our glorying on your behalf.—Paul had been boasting both to Titus and the Macedonians about the preparation that Achaia had made for this task.

Summary

The collection for the saints in Jerusalem is discussed in chapters eight and nine. The order to make such a collection had been given

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in the first epistle. The second epistle gave more detailed instruction about that offering.

Paul lifted giving above the level of begging by showing that it is a favor from God. The Macedonians had begged for the privilege of sharing in such a project. Rather than begin with the fact that Corinth was lagging in the matter, Paul told them about the thing that Macedonia was doing despite their affliction and deep poverty. How this must have stirred Corinth to action!

Paul spoke of the riches of Macedonian single-minded devotion to the Lord. This is what made their contribution a thing of liberality. They gave beyond their power; they gave of their own accord; they begged for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints. They gave even beyond the hopes of the apostle Paul. The secret? Macedonia had given themselves first, both to the Lord and to Paul. The latter was done by furnishing men to go with him on the trip to Jerusalem. All this was done through the will of God. Paul did not say that they gave themselves to the Lord and then gave money to him. The money was given for Jerusalem. Dedication to the Lord caused the Macedonians to give to the relief of His saints in Judea.

The Macedonian devotion to Paul stood in contrast to the Corinthian opposition to him. Because of the example of Macedonia, Paul urged Titus to complete the task of collecting funds for Jerusalem, since he had already begun the work, so that Corinth might share in this grace also.

Paul urged Corinth to abound in this favor just as they had in spiritual gifts and Christian character. Giving was commended, but the measure was regulated by love. In love, they were to follow the example of Christ who became poverty-stricken on the cross that he might enable men to share His heavenly riches.

Paul had boasted much about the Macedonians, but he also complimented the Corinthians: they were first to willingly undertake this task. It would be well for them to bring it to completion. When the readiness was present, the gift was acceptable according to one's ability, not according to what he did not have.

Another principle regulating the amount to be given is equality. Material help sent by Corinth would meet Jerusalem's need. What was Jerusalem's abundance that would fill Corinth's need? Some suggest that it was material need at some future date. But Paul's remarks in 9:12-15 may be to the point. Their gift had resulted in thanksgiving to God; they needed to respond to the gracious privi-

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lege of sharing as Macedonia had done. Thus material need was balanced by spiritual want. God's miraculous power produced equality in gathering the manna. God's grace produced equality for Jerusalem and Corinth as He met the needs of each.

Paul explained the mission of Titus and his associates. Titus responded to his appeal to complete the work at Corinth, since he had already become interested in it, for God had put it in his heart to do so. To avoid criticism about handling the funds, Paul sent the others to help Titus. One who had a good reputation in the gospel among the churches was selected by them for the task. New Testament churches did cooperate through individuals of good reputation in order to carry out the Lord's work. Paul sent still another brother whom he had tested and found to be earnest many times in many things. Titus, in case anyone inquired, was Paul's partner and fellow-worker. The brethren were sent by the churches. The work to be done was for the glory of Christ.

Paul urged Corinth to give a demonstration of their love before these brethren and a reason for his boasting about their being prepared to share in this task.

Questions

1. What are the three principal topics discussed in this epistle?
2. What chapters are given over to the discussion of the collections for the saints?
3. What characterizes Paul's mood as he wrote about the postponement of his visit to Corinth?
4. How account for the change of mood as he wrote about giving?
5. How did his mood change again as he took up the defense of his apostleship against the charges of false teachers?
6. What did Paul mean by the grace of God that had been given in the churches of Macedonia?
7. In what way does this differ from the usual approach to the subject of giving?
8. How did God provide for the children of Israel in the wilderness?
9. Why didn't He provide for the saints in Judea in the same way?
10. What was the basic principle in the distribution of material goods by the church in Jerusalem?
11. How was it abused by Ananias and Sapphira?

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12. Why was it necessary to appoint deacons in the church at Jerusalem?
13. What experience had Paul already had in famine relief in Judea?
14. What had he promised Peter and John with reference to helping the poor in Judea?
15. What does Acts reveal about the churches in Macedonia?
16. What is known about the hardship and poverty which Macedonia was enduring?
17. Is poverty an excuse for not participating in the privilege of sharing with others?
18. What did Paul mean by "liberality"?
19. What caused Macedonia to give even beyond their ability?
20. Who determined what they were to give?
21. What was their attitude toward the privilege of giving?
22. What about the begging approach to budget raising?
23. What is the place of fellowship in the matter of giving?
24. What had Paul hoped for from Macedonia? What happened?
25. What was the secret of their generous response?
26. What did Paul mean when he said that they gave themselves to the Lord by the will of God?
27. How had they given themselves to Paul also?
28. To whom was the money given?
29. What had Titus done to help the Corinthians in the matter of giving for the saints?
30. Why was Paul sending him back to Corinth?
31. What had the grace of God done for the Corinthians?
32. Define faith, utterance, and knowledge? What had these to do with the grace of giving?
33. Why did he say, "I speak not by way of commandment"?
34. How harmonize this with the fact that he had ordered the churches of Galatia to prepare for the relief of the saints?
35. What is the motivating force in generosity?
36. Why did he appeal to the example of the Lord?
37. Why did Paul express his opinion to the Corinthians instead of commanding them to act?
38. What does God look for in the hearts of those who are privileged to give?
39. What was Paul's motive in asking Gentile congregations to help the needy Christians in Judea?

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40. In what way were Gentile Christians indebted to those of Jewish background?
41. What are some of the ways in which the offering for the saints in Judea might bring about equality?
42. How does the reference to the giving of the manna explain the issue of equality.
43. What are some of the things for which Paul thanked God?
44. Why did he thank God for Titus?
45. How did God put earnest care for the Corinthians in the heart of Titus?
46. What does the attitude of Titus show as to the essential qualifications of those who may be asked to serve in the church?
47. What did Paul say about the two who were sent with Titus?
48. How can this serve as a guide to churches in selecting workers?
49. How did the churches appoint the brother to travel with Titus?
50. What does this show about cooperation between congregations?
51. What was Paul's concern in handling these funds?
52. What does it suggest to those who handle the funds of the church?
53. Why did Paul use the word "bounty" to describe the offering?
54. What do we know about Paul's attitude toward his fellow-workers? toward Titus? toward Appolos? toward Timothy?
55. What is the literal meaning of the word translated "messenger"?
56. Why not use the literal translation?
57. For whose glory were these messengers to work?
58. What demonstration did Paul want the churches to make?
59. To whom had Paul been boasting about Achaia?
60. What was his purpose in mentioning it at this point?

For Discussion

1. What factors affect the distribution of food to the hungry peoples of the world?
2. How would the evangelization of the world—that's what Jesus said to do—affect the problem of caring for the needy?