

2 Corinthians 8.1-15

Begging to Give More!

So glad U R HERE as Come to PAUL's Teaching about GIVING to GOD!

I HOPE You are GLAD you are HERE TOO!

MONEY was Sensitive Subject in 1st C and STILL IS in the 21st C
 AWKWARDNESS and OBLIGATION – Jealousy, Frustration, Disappointment

1 Sunday Mark Twain so Disappointed in LONG Appeal for Money in Church

Decided to PUT his MONEY Back in POCKET

And when the COLLECTION Plate passed by TOOK OUT Bill Out for Himself

1. Entanglement of Grubbing for Money

a. In Corinth

Corinth World without BANKS and LOAN Agencies > FAMILIES & Guilds

System of PATRONAGE that CONTROLS – FINANCES & FRIENDSHIPS

To accept a gift involved one in an inescapable train of obligations, but to refuse a gift was no easier, for one then incurred the burden of enmity. E.A. Judge

Paul makes DISCLAIMER that he is OPERATING in the OPEN LIGHT

vs. 20,21 We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.

ASK Many People WHY Don't Go to Church – Hear Something about Money!

b. In the Church

Paul reminds Corinthians he is APOSTLE – Not a PATRON

Relationship built on GRACE Not GREED > COLLEAGUES, Not CLIENTS

Do we not have the right to eat and drink?...Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?...If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?...Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ...the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel...What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

1 Corinthians 9.4-19

ONE of things Corinthians DISLIKED about Paul > NOT take their MONEY
Had the RIGHT as GOSPEL Worker – But did Not want RESTRICTIONS

An itinerant preacher like Paul could beg, like the Cynics, or accept personal patronage and become the in-house philosopher or rhetor of a wealthy person, or support himself by working in a trade. Paul sought to avoid accepting patronage in Corinth because it would commit him to a sort of reciprocity, bind him to a particular location, and place him in a socially inferior position that would make it very difficult for him to be ‘all things’ to people of varying social status. Such a relationship would also mean that he would be perceived as taking sides with one of the factions in Corinth...

Ben Witherington III

2. Extension of God’s Mission

a. Potential – Lots of GOSPEL Advance can HAPPEN when have Money...

Collection was NOT a NEW PROJECT...

Paul spent DECADE Organizing / Collecting OFFERING for Jewish Xtians

COMPACT with James, Peter, John > they focus on JEWS

Paul & Barnabas > FOCUS on the GENTILES > just ONE Condition

...when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. *Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.* Galatians 2.7-10

Expression of UNITY

Wanted GENTILES Xtians to RESPECT their Hebrew Bros/Sis > ONE Church

Couple YEARS later Paul writes Letter FROM Corinth to ROME...

But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.

Romans 15.23-27

Paul traveled 100's Miles by LAND & SEA – No Missionary DISCOUNTS!

Need PAY like all the Other PASSENGERS > No Money, No Funny

GIVING is part of GOSPEL Ministry – from 1st to FINAL Century

b. Pitfalls - COLLECTION been on PAUL'S Heart for a DECADE

He TOLD Corinthians over YEAR BEFORE to start GETTING READY

Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

1 Corinthians 16.1-2

Why wait 8 Chapters to GET to this IMPORTANT Issue?

God came to MAKE A NEW CREATION – NOT a CASH TRANSACTION

Luke 19: Jesus ENTERS Jericho > GREAT Crowd of Excited, People

ONE Man was VERY CURIOUS Named Zaccheus > Wealthy, Tax Collector

NOT want to Hear 3 Words: Wealthy, Tax Collector > RICH by Embezzlement

Jesus STOPPED Right in Front of Zaccheus > INVITES Himself to Z's House!

What a NIGHT that Must've Been > LIFE Transformed > Finances TANKED!

After NIGHT Opening his BOOKS to the AUDITOR of all ETERNITY...

Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Luke 19.8-10

Z made it THRU Eye of NEEDLE and LIVED to TELL About It

Z promised to GIVE 50% Wealth to POOR – Remaining 50% RESTITUTION

Pay back 4 X's Amount he EXTORTED in Tax SHAKE-DOWN

Don't you WISH Jesus SPEND NIGHT with More BILL COLLECTORS!

Exchanged CORRUPTION/LIES for COVENANT LOYALTY

We understand, theologically, that authentic salvation changes our orientation to wealth. If our professed salvation has not loosed our grip on material things so that we have become a giving people, we are not saved. Kent Hughes

RELATIONSHIP with God NOT Transactional, Not Merit Based, Money Driven

Wants them to BE RIGHT with God – Submitted to Jesus – Serving the Gospel

3. Example of Grace in Macedonia

a. Delighted in God

v. 1 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia,

Each of Macedonian churches – Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea – Born for Trouble Embroiled in PERSECUTION and Forced into POVERTY and LOSS

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere

1 Thessalonians 1.6-8

Macedonians discovered GOD is NEAR his Children during times of TROUBLE
 God gives MORE GRACE during those Especially DIFFICULT Times

v. 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

GRACE Giving > Shows LOVE to God, Church, GOSPEL, and Whole WORLD

When we know that our lives are not our own, neither will we think that our possessions are our own...Jesus can have our money and not have our hearts, but he cannot have our hearts without our money. Kent Hughes

b. Desperate to Give

vs. 2-4 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints

AFFLICTION & EXTREME POVERTY > word for DIRT POOR, Desperate!

SAD CONDITION > They were POOR and PICKED ON!

AMAZING > Struggling CHURCHES GUSHED Forth with JOY of Giving

“They did the begging, not Paul”

Chrysostom

Our RENEWED Devotion to GOD > Greater DEDICATION to LOVE Others

NOT Just their MONEY in Offering Plate > CLIMBED Right In – Heart & Soul

“...remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20.35

They acknowledged PAUL’s Apostolic Authority: Expression of COMPASSION

And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.
Philippians 4.15-16

c. Determines who is Genuine?

v. 6 Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace.

Paul asks Titus to carry on...He is careful here to make clear that he is neither collecting nor administering the money, in order not to give his detractors an excuse to berate him further.
Ben Witherington III

As RELATIONSHIP is being RESTORED > RESUME their Grace of GIVING
DELICATE, POLITE Discussion – 2 Chapters NEVER Uses Greek wd MONEY

v. 7 But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.

Corinthians are PROUD of their Grace Gifts – Paul wants them to have MORE
GRACE of GENEROUS GIVING out of GRATITUDE to GOD

Knowledge of God produces likeness to God – the giving God. Derek Prime

Grace not only frees us from our sins, but it frees us from ourselves. The grace of God will open your heart and your hand.
Warren Wiersbe

v. 8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine.

NOT a COMMAND – but it was COMPETITION – OutDO One Another!

TRUE Faith results in FREELY Giving > True LOVE shown in GENUINE Acts

v. 12 For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

During WORSHIP Service in Edinburgh > Worshipper made BIG MISTAKE
Accidentally put VALUABLE Crown Piece Coin in Offering instead of PENNY
Went to USHER and Asked if he could GET that EXPENSIVE Coin out of Bag

“In once, in forever” answered Usher

Accidental GIVER Groaned “Oh, Well, I’ll get CREDIT for it in HEAVEN”

NO! said the Usher “You will get CREDIT only for the PENNY!”

GOD sees the HEART – Not the COIN or how many 0’s BEHIND IT

God sees not the portion, but the proportion. If we could have given more, and did not God notes it. If we wanted to give more, and could not. God also notes that. When we give willingly, according to what we have, we are practicing grace giving.

Warren Wiersbe

Paul has 2 FINAL QUESTIONS for these Corinthians

Is your LOVE Genuine? You will give GRACIOUSLY, GENEROUSLY! 8-9

Is your FAITH Genuine? You will BELIEVE the True Apostolic Gospel – 10-13

4. Equality by God’s Measure

vs. 13,14 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness.

Told ELDERS this Verse BOTHERED Me for 30 yrs > See Needs around World
See CHURCHES My Homeland Spending so much Money on THEMSELVES

Paul expects those BETTER-OFF to help those who are WORSE-OFF
 Not that the WEALTHY become IMPOVERISHED > Fairness, Equality

JEWS have given SPIRITUAL Blessings > GENTILES give Material Blessings
 Gentile churches PROSPERING while JEWISH Believers were in POVERTY

Some of you are SURE this Sermon is for PERSON Next to You
 Cannot give to GOD until you Graduate, Marry, Have Kids, Retire, or DIE?

HEARD the Preacher say “Give until it HURTS!”

You say, “It HURTS Me just to THINK about GIVING!”

Not want TO GIVE Today – No Certainty YOU WILL do so TOMORROW
 Cannot GIVE when you have LITTLE Probably even Less Likely have A LOT!

v. 15 As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and
 whoever gathered little had no lack.”

ILLUSTRATION from the EXODUS Community > Equality of MANNA

NO Reason for HORDING – Only INVITING the MAGGOTS!

Wish the MODERN HORDERS would WAKE UP & See Maggots in HEARTS
 More Impt PILES of COLLECTABLES than PEOPLE receive COMPASSION

“the quantity of their giving will match the quality of their changed hearts”

Scott Hafemann

One man WATCHING his Favorite Television Preacher > MALACHI 3.10

“If you GIVE, God will PROSPER You!”

“You cannot OUTGIVE God!...If everyone watching gives \$67...our MINISTRY will have MONEY we need and God give back to You 5 X’s the 67!

Man wrote Preacher – Amen! Brother! I agree you cannot OUTGIVE God!

If you can send ME \$ 67 for MY NEEDS – then your Ministry will get 5 X’s!!

Man is still waiting for TV Preacher to send him \$ 67!

Paul tries to force the Corinthians to rethink social relationships in the light of Christ. His rejection of personal patronage in Christ is of a piece with his rejection of other status conventions of Greco-Roman antiquity. For the Corinthians to respond to what Paul says will involve them in seeing God in Christ as their ultimate patron or benefactor and Paul as the agent of that patron.

Ben Witherington III

Perhaps Equality only be REVEALED on the Day of the Lord

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Isaiah 2.2-4

5. Embrace God’s Messiah

a. He Paid

v. 9 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 by his poverty might become rich.

Despite RICHES, WISDOM, PRIDE > Corinthians NEED the Gospel, again...
 Look AGAIN at Jesus to UNDERSTAND True LOVE and GENEROSITY

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! 2 Corinthians 9.15

Jesus was NO POORER than Most First Century PALESTINIAN Jews
 In Fact he was BETTER OFF Materially than MANY in ISRAEL
 Paul is NOT talking about ECONOMIC Poverty > INCARNATION

“For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” John 1.16

He BECAME FLESH and DWELT Among Us
 BORN in the LIKENESS of SINFUL FLESH

It was ONLY by HIS Poverty that we can BECOME Rich > He PAID the Price

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might
 become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5.21

b. We Profit Our GOD is a GIVING, GRACIOUS God

God, who gives generously to all without reproach James 1.5

SACRIFICE of Jesus NOT begin at Cross > Began in HEAVEN

Jesus Personal Existence NOT Begin in Bethlehem in last years of Herod/Great
 Eternally RICH > Unlimited AND UNLIMITABLE Glorious Pre-Existence
 Leaving RICHES of HEAVEN > Emptying Himself of GLORY & MAJESTY

RICHES that have been EXTOLLED in this Letter so Far...

Down payment of the Spirit of God

Daily Renewal

An Eternal Weight of Glory

An Eternal House in Heaven

Unending Fellowship with Christ

New Creation

Reconciliation

Righteousness

It is not said that he became poor when he *was* rich. For he assumed poverty, yet did not lose his riches. Inwardly He was rich, outwardly poor. His deity was hidden in His riches, His manhood was apparent in His poverty. And so we have been enriched by His poverty, since in His blood, the sackcloth of our sins has been torn to shreds. Through that blood we have cast away the rags of iniquity in order that we may be invested with the robe of immortality. Lest therefore we should fear His riches, not daring in our beggarly state to approach Him, He showed Himself poor, that is, God deigned to be born as man, abasing the greatness of his power, so that He might make available to men the riches of his divinity and cause them to partake of the divine nature. Hervaeus Natalis

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4.10

2 Corinthians 8.¹We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ²for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.⁶Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. ⁷But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. ⁸I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. ¹⁰And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. ¹¹So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. ¹²For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.¹³For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. ¹⁵As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”