

Last Week: 8:1-15 Paul Gave the Example of the Macedonians' Generosity

1. Macedonians gave as an expression of God's Grace
2. They gave when they themselves were already struggling
3. They gave according to their ability and beyond
4. They were very eager to give
5. They gave as part of their commitment to the Lord.

## **I. 16-24 You Can Trust Us That Gifts Will Be Used For Their Intended Purpose**

Read 8:16-24

### **First - Why Did Paul Feel A Need to Mention or Even Include These Men?**

- Some implications of false teachers challenging Paul's collection for the saints.
- They accused Paul of not behaving in the typical manner that other orators exercised.

#### **1. The character of these guys is important because they are expected to be stewards of God's gifts.**

- Vs. 19b *".....collection of an offering is a ministry performed by men, but ultimately brings glory to God."*
- Collection is taken up by human hands, but brings glory to God when it is given to those in need.
- Vs. 8:1 *"giving is an expression of God's grace."*
- We should likewise have a proper perspective of our giving. We are stewards.

#### **2. The character of these guys is important because it rejects false claims that Paul is stealing the gifts.**

- Vs. 20 *"taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift."*
- To make accusations against Paul is to make accusations against all of these men
- Paul clearly reminds of their reputation and good standing in the body of Christ

#### **3. The character of these guys is important because their goal is to act honorably before God & men.**

- Vs 21 *"for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."*
- 4:2 *"We renounce the hidden things of shame, we do not compromise the Word of God, and we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."*
- Paul knows that the Corinthians need to trust him with their gifts.

**Illustration:** Bill Hybels / If you're putting yourself in situations where its plausible, that's already too far.

## Second – Who Are These Men, And Why Have They Been Chosen?

### • Vs. 16-17, 23 **Titus**

- We know that Titus was a very trusted fellow worker of Paul
- We know that Titus has been instrumental in dealing w/ Corinth
- He helped deliver Paul's letters and became a liaison between them.
- Vs. 16 *"Same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus."*
- Vs. 23 *"Titus is my partner and fellow worker among you."*

\*Titus has the same passion for the Corinthians that Paul himself has\*

- When they see & hear Titus speak he speaks w/ a consistent heart of Paul.
- **II Cor. 5:20 We are ambassadors for Christ**
- This DOES NOT mean we claim diplomatic immunity wherever we go.
- We are to represent the heart & mind of Christ as if He was present saying the same things.
- A foreign ambassador is to represent the exact position of its leadership.
- He does NOT speak whatever he wants. He does not go off script as a rogue or loose canon.

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### • Vs. 18 **Another Brother #1**

- *"his fame in the things of the Gospel has spread through all the churches."*
- One commentary notes: Eventhough this was a ministry of financial nature, Paul chose to identify this man in regards to his work in the Gospel. The Author contends that for Paul, there is no higher honor of commendation.
- Vs. 19 *"He has also been appointed by the churches to deliver the gifts w/ Paul to those in Jerusalem"*
- Other Churches have entrusted their gifts with him.
- When someone you trust speaks highly of another you consider that a good reference.
- These churches helped commission this brother to go with Paul for this collection for the saints.

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### • Vs. 22 **Another Brother #2**

- *"He has been tested, he has been found diligent in many things."*
- *"He is now even more diligent because of his great confidence in you (Corinthians)."*
- He also showed great CONFIDENCE in the Corinthians.
  - Maybe it was confidence in their faith
  - Maybe it was confidence in their ability to give
  - Maybe it was confidence in their change of heart after receiving this letter.

**Luke 16:10-12** *"He who has been trusted with a little can be trusted with much...."*

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### Vs. 24 *"Therefore openly before the churches show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you."*

- A more literal translation would be  
*"In the face of the churches, show the proof for us boasting about you."*

**Illustration:** Bert called me Friday about upcoming meeting on Tuesday.  
"I have been boasting about you to my client. Don't let me down."

### **Here At Renew Bible Church**

- We do not exercise a single leader top-down model of operations.
- We have a collective board of people who consider how we should move forward as a church body.
- We prayerfully consider financial decisions. We ask tough questions of each other.
- Hopefully we exhibit characteristics of these men.
- Earnestness for the church, handle the Word properly, trusted with many things including finances.

## **II. 9:1-5 Paul Encourages Corinthians to Make Good on Original Promise**

### **Read 9:1-5**

#### **Vs. 1-2 I Shouldn't Really Have to Write This But I'm Going to Write It Anyway**

*“For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them.”*

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#### **Vs 3-4 I've Been Bragging About You.....Don't Embarrass Me or Yourselves When I Come**

*“But I have sent the brethren that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to speak of you) should be put to shame by this confidence.”*

- Paul is reminding the Corinthians they had previously committed to provide assistance for the Saints in Jerusalem.
  - Yet, he has also caught wind of their change of heart toward Paul.
  - The last thing he wants to do is show up and an offering is not ready as he had promised the Macedonians and others
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**Vs. 5** *“So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, that the same might be ready as a bountiful gift, and not affected by covetousness.”*

#### **Paul Reveals Why He Is Sending the Brethren On Ahead of Himself**

1. They are to facilitate the preparation of this bountiful gift that had already been promised.
  2. So that the bountiful gift that had been promised by Corinth would be exactly that.
  3. The arrival of brethren ahead will ensure that the offering will be a blessing and NOT a burden.
- If they have time in advance to get it ready it is done from the heart.
  - 8:4 Macedonians gave joyfully and willingly. The begged to be a part of this blessing to others
  - If Corinth is forced to produce a generous offering upon Paul's arrival it may be done in haste and begrudgingly.

**Illustration:** Some Ministries and Denominations Proceed Before Whole Church To Collect Offering  
Once you know understand the protocol it is not a big deal because you're ready  
But the first time can really catch you off guard

#### **Application:**

You all are extremely faithful with your contributions to the ministry.

We are very blessed to be able to meet needs within our congregation as they arise.

We have a very nice savings that the Elder board constantly evaluates its purpose.

- We often ask “What is our savings for?” (This is not “why do we even have a savings”)
  - This is an evaluative question to vet whether something we are considering is in accordance with what we believe as a church body and what we believe is a biblical model.
- Participating in gifts for those in need is a blessing to all believers who give willingly and joyfully.
  - Paul understood this and so he was encouraging Corinth NOT to sell themselves short on the commitment they had already made.

Next week we'll look at Paul's statements about Giving As It Relates to God.