

The Parish of Wellow

4 Guidelines for Giving

2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 9:2-15

Passage, Sermon Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these sermon notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during next weeks to consider the questions below.

1. Sermon Passage

2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 9:2-15

1 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

2 For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.

3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be.

4 For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we-- not to say anything about you-- would be ashamed of having been so confident.

5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2. Sermon Notes

2.1 In 2 Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9 the Apostle Paul shares with the Corinthian church four guidelines for giving:

- i. Giving should be planned
- ii. Giving should be according to what one has
- iii. Giving should be based on a decision of the heart
- iv. Giving should be in proportion to what God has given us.

2.2 Giving should be planned

- The Corinthian believers excelled in everything: they had faith, good preaching, much knowledge, much earnestness, and much love.
- The Apostle Paul also wanted them to lead in the area of giving as well.
- The Corinthian church clearly had money, and they had planned to collect money for the Jerusalem churches, who were poor as a result of famine.
- In Corinthians 2:9 verse 2 Paul states 'For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.'
- The Apostle Paul challenges the Corinthian church to act on its plans.

2.3 Giving should be according to what one has

- In 2 Corinthians 8 verse 12 Paul states: 'For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.'
- In 2 Corinthians 9 verse 6 Paul reminds the Corinthian Church that: 'Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously'.
- Paul was therefore challenging the rich and successful Corinthian church to give of its financial resources generously.

2.4 Giving should be based on a decision of the heart

- 'Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.' 2 Corinthians 9 verse 7.
- Giving must come from the heart
- It must be done willingly.
- It must not be entered into out of a sense of duty or coercion.

2.5 Giving should be in proportion to what God has given us.

- 'He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness'. 2 Corinthians 9 verse 10
- Our motivation for giving should be in proportion to what God has given us.
- We can never out give God - he has given us so much all he encourages us to do is to respond to his generosity.

3. Questions to consider back at home

3.1 In what ways does the Apostle Paul challenge the Corinthian Church about their giving?

3.2 What was so special about the Macedonian churches?

3.3 From these verses what do we learn about Paul's opinion on 'tithing'?

3.4 Does the Apostle Paul imply in these verses that all Christians should be 'giving'?

3.5 'Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.' What does Paul mean here? How do we 'sow generously'?

3.6 If the apostle Paul was around today what would he have to say about the giving of St Julian's Church? What would he have to say about your giving?

3.7 Somebody says to you one day that they are fed up with the way that the church is always asking for money. How would you respond?

3.8 A close friend confides in you that she doesn't know exactly how much she should give to the church. What principles would you suggest that she follows to help her make her decision?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293

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