**2 CORINTHIANS 8**

**HOW SHOULD WE THEN GIVE**

These next two chapters are about money and giving. It was a sensitive issue and it STILL IS a sensitive issue today… As far as I am concerned. WHY? Because it was and still is an abused area of teaching for greedy and crooked ministers.

We are NOT fund raisers at Calvary Chapel. When we DO have fund raisers it is for one of two things: Missions and Youth Group.

Everything else we do is paid for out of the General fund. There are no fund raisers for My personal jet. I pay for that myself – which is why I don’t have one. 😊

SO…The Apostle treads lightly here and I am comfortable with that!

**MENTORED BY MACEDONIANS**

**2 Corinthians 8:1** Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:

2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

* The Macedonian church, a Gentile church, had been criticized by the Jewish Christians back in Jerusalem, BUT… when the Jerusalem church needed financial help the Macedonian Christians did not hesitate to dig deep and help out, even though they too were being persecuted. THAT… is generous giving! **PAUL CONTINUES**…

**FREE WILL GIVING**

3 For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, (Sacrificially) *they were* **freely willing**, (Which IS N.T. giving) 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

* The Macedonian Church did not need to be pressured or manipulated to give. They freely gave because they freely loved!
* Many foolish things have been done and said to raise money from Church and from Church people. It is embarrassing to me.
* Here is mine and Paul’s giving pitch: Love freely by giving the same way! I will do the same!
* No pledging… No giving charts… No thermometers that get colored in… NO PRESSURE! Just love and sacrifice.

**LOOK AT THE MACEDONIAN PATTERN**

5 And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God.

* **CEV** - They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, just as God wanted them to do.
* THAT is a great way to determine HOW MUCH to give… First give yourself to God! THEN give cheerfully.

**THE GRACE OF GIVING**

6 So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. **REMEMBER – TITUS WAS PAUL’S MAIL MAN**

7 But as you abound in everything—in **faith**, in **speech**, in **knowledge**, in all **diligence**, and in **your love** for us—*see* that you abound in this grace also.

* The report from Titus had been very good…
* The Corinthians had repented… They had accepted the once excommunicated leader back after HE repented… They had stayed loyal and true to the gospel that Paul had preached…
* NOW… Paul asks them to be faithful in gracious giving as well.

**DO WHAT JESUS DID…**

8 I speak not by commandment, (IE, I do not want to tell you how much to give…) but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.

* **CEV** - I am simply testing how real your love is by comparing it with the concern that others have shown.
* **To me –** This sounds like something a parent would say, right? Alexander… why can’t you be neat and clean like Elyse?

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty (Coming to Earth) might become rich.

* Imagine if we asked you to become a minister to the homeless people living down on skid row in L.A.? BEFORE you raise your hand I should tell you that IF you take the assignment you will have to give up your house and all of the stuff in it and move down there with nothing but a blanket… Well… Not as many hands would be raised I think. Mine wouldn’t.
* The Silent and Holy night we have created in Christmas pageants was far from as cozy as we have made it. It was poor parents having a poor baby in abject poverty.
* Jesus would live His life borrowing from others to live… He borrowed beds, pillows and even coins for sermon illustrations… And He would be buried in a borrowed tomb.
  + But He made it available again after only three days😊

**SOME GENTLE ADVICE… give.**

10 And in this I give **advice**: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; (IE, the offering for Jerusalem)

11 but now you also must complete the doing *of it;* that as *there was* a readiness to desire *it,* so *there* also *may be* a completion out of what *you* have.

**A WILLING HEART**

12 For if there is first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to what one has, *and* not according to what he does not have.

* **CEV** - It doesn't matter how much you have. What matters is how much you are willing to give from what you have.

**GOOD MANNAS**

13 For *I do* not *mean* that others should be eased and you burdened; 14 but by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may supply* their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack—that there may be equality. 15 As it is written, "HE WHO GATHERED MUCH HAD NOTHING LEFT OVER, AND HE WHO GATHERED LITTLE HAD NO LACK." **EXODUS 16**

**COURSON -** The Israelites were to gather just enough manna to last one day. Those who decided to "stock up" found their supply stinky and full of worms. So, too, the longer we walk with the Lord, the more we discover that those things that used to impress us quickly become wormy and stinky to us. Does this mean we're not to have anything? No. Abraham, the father of faith, was a very wealthy man. But he was completely ready to sacrifice Isaac—his only possession that meant anything to him.

When God is your only passion, He can trust you with anything He wants to send your way. That is why Paul could say, "I've learned both to abound and to be abased" (see Php\_4:12). It's not wrong for us to have things—but it's wrong for things to have us because God wants us to be free. It's an issue of the heart.

* THE LESSON – Give at the edge of your comfort zone… Maybe a little over… Not too much, but certainly NOT too little 😊

**COMMENDATION OF TITUS**

16 But thanks *be* to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. 17 For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord.

* Titus served with eagerness! He was an enthusiastic servant!
* Don’t you hate it when you are being served by someone who is rolling their eyes at you? I DO!
* Titus was NOT that kind of servant, AND… Neither should WE BE!

**THE MYSTERY MISSIONARY**

18 And we have sent with him the brother whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches, 19 and not only *that,* but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and *to show* your ready mind, 20 avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us—21 providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

* WHO is THIS Missionary?
* Paul never names him… It could be Luke… Could be Silas… Apollos… Timothy… Why doesn’t Paul name him?
* SMITH – God does these kinds of mysteries to keep Theologians busy 😊
* THE LESSON – Be willing to serve without recognition…
* I have heard that the true test of servanthood is how we react to being asked to serve.
  + I have heard that Pastor Jack Hayford gave his new Pastors on staff a janitor’s shirt with their name on it to wear the first few months on staff… Just to remind them that the ministry is about serving, NOT being served.
  + I don’t really like Coach Bill Belichick, but… he IS the winningest and probably smartest football coach in history, (Darn it.) He gives his quarterbacks practice jerseys with a Linesman’s number on it JUST to remind them that they are NOT the most important member of the team… Without the guys protecting him, he would be nothing.
* **John 15:5** "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

**QUESTION**: Do you know who will be the last people to leave here today?

* **Answer**: The people who were the first to arrive here today. WHY? Because they feel called to serve the rest of us.

SO… Serve whomever it is that YOU are called to serve with enthusiasm and diligence… and lots of love. **THEN this can be said of you…**

22 And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which *we have* in you.

23 If *anyone asks* about Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren *are inquired about, they are* messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. 24 Therefore show to them, and before the churches the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.

**CCSV, in this week of giving thanks and feasting and rest… (For us guys anyways) Remember to be diligent to tell others around you how thankful you are for them…**

**More than the turkey, the pies, AND the football… Let us be a grateful people, Amen?**