

- ***Read II Corinthians 9*** Paul's second letter to the Corinthians followed up with many of the exhortations and teachings from the first. Paul encouraged the brethren to receive back the penitent brother who had been caught up in immorality with his father's wife. **(2:8)** He reaffirms his confidence in Christ alone, and his willingness to give it all for Him. **(ch.3&4)** He encourages them to remember that they are new creatures in Christ and they are to remain free from the sins of the world. **(ch. 5-7)** Then we come to chapters 8 & 9 which are a follow up to the end of his first letter concerning the aid of the needy brethren in Jerusalem.
- Chapters 8 & 9 give us great insights into our Lord's expectations for us concerning the helping of needy saints. Chapter 9, specifically, shows us the means, mindset, and purpose of our ministry to the Saints. I'd would like for us to consider these two chapters from last weeks Daily Bible Reading so that we can be reminded of why it is that we willfully give as a church to assist those among us who are in need from time to time.

I. The Means of the Ministry (vv.1-5)

A. Aid is collected corporately on the Lord's Day.

1. This command goes back to the first letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning this duty of assisting the needy saints of Jerusalem. **(I Corinthians 16:1,2)**
2. We understand this to be practical because the first day, Sunday, is the day that we see Christians assembling on in the New Testament. **(Acts 20:7)**
3. Historical writers also give evidence to this meeting on the first day. Pliny references the fact that the Christians in the 1st & 2nd centuries met on "an appointed day".
4. The Didache (The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles, 90AD) confirms this first day meeting. "But every Lord's Day do ye gather yourselves together and break bread..."
5. The pattern of the Apostle's seems quite clear and since we are to follow their teachings and traditions, we follow suit. **(II Thess. 2:15)**
6. This pattern allows for the support of evangelism, edification and then this support of the saints. We do our best to give a good explanation for those who might not be familiar with this type of monetary supporting of the church.
7. While this giving is a responsibility of Christians, I think it also good for us to let our guests know that if they do wish to give that their offering will be used in a manner to please and glorify God. And one of those ways is to support needy Christians.

B. Aid is given to those saints who are in need.

1. There was a need for the church that was in Jerusalem.
2. **Acts 11 & Romans 15** both speak of famines that took place around the area of Jerusalem and Judea, so there was great need for the brethren in that area do gather relief from others.
3. Paul makes mention that the churches of Macedonia (Berea, Thessalonica, and Phillipi) **(8:1)** had already offered their aid to the Jerusalem brethren, further establishing **the simple truth that Christians help Christians.**
4. Christians are part of a huge family in Christ and we are to take care of our own. There is no need for a Christian to ever go hungry or without because of the support that brethren ought to give.

II. The Mindset of the Ministry (vv.6,7)

A. God's people are to be purposeful and cheerful givers.

1. Paul's words in **vv.6 & 7** should lead us to understand that the process of giving begins far before the collection plate is passed around.
2. Paul says that each one should give as he has "purposed in his heart". This means that thought and consideration has been put into this action of giving to the church. This act is not an afterthought.
3. When we consider what these funds are going to be used for then we should be more than happy to give in the collection. The money is used for the work of this local church and those it supports.
4. With these thoughts in mind we should be cheerful to give and look to opportunities to give even more. Notice the mindset of the Christians in Macedonia and Corinth. **(II Cor. 8:1-7)**
5. They were overjoyed to help their brethren and that led them to have this purposeful and cheerful attitude towards their giving.

- B. God's people give according to their ability, and even beyond their ability.
1. The Macedonian brethren had this great attitude to give as they were able. They didn't do it out of necessity or compulsion, but they truly wanted to give and help out their brethren who were in need. **(v.2,3)**
 2. They were eager and even begged Paul for the opportunity to help in the support of the saints. **(v.4)**
 3. The Corinthians, as well, had this will to help out in this gracious work. They had made the pledge to give support to these brethren and now they had the opportunity to do so. **(vv.6,7)**
 4. But it wasn't just that they did what they could, the Macedonian brethren actually went above and beyond what they were able to do in regards to their giving. History and context clues **(v.2)** tell us that the churches of Macedonia had been hit really hard by persecution from the oppressive government. Because of this, they themselves were poor, but that did not stop them from giving more than they probably should have.
 5. This mindset is so noble, and it should inspire us to be willing to give much and then even more when there is the opportunity to aid our brethren who are in great need of assistance.

III. The Purpose of the Ministry (vv.8-15)

- A. We give to show our love for our brethren.
1. This point is very interesting when we consider the different groups that are involved in this particular situation.
 2. Remember back to **Acts 15**, some within the church in Jerusalem and some of the Christians in Judea were not exactly welcoming to the new Gentile converts. In fact, they were not willing to accept them into fellowship until they followed some of the Mosaic teachings. This issue of Law keeping was a constant thorn in the side of many of the early Gentile Christians and Paul addressed the issue in multiple letters.
 3. Regardless of this, the Christians in Macedonia and Corinth were, again, more than eager to show their great love, care, and concern for their Jewish brethren by extending aid to them, even when they themselves were struggling.
 4. What great love they had in their hearts for their brethren! Even for brethren who at one time rejected them as brethren and true believers!
 5. Paul mentions this great love 3 times in **8:7, 8, & 24**.
- B. We give to reflect God's Grace towards us.
1. Ministering to the needy saints isn't just about assistance and love, but it also about showing that we understand the great grace that has been given to us by our Great and Awesome God.
 2. Paul puts a great emphasis on the Grace of God as he concludes this section of teaching and admonishing to the Corinthians. **(vv.8ff)**
 3. God's Grace not only forgives of sins, but it also helps us as we strive to glorify God through our actions towards others. As we strive to serve the needs of our brothers and sisters, God will us in those deeds. **(vv.9,10)**
 4. Our ministry towards saints also shows our thanksgiving for God's many blessings. **(vv.11,12)** It is a showing of our appreciation for all of God's many blessings that He has given to us. We certainly recognize that every good gift is from above. **(James 1:17)**
 5. Our willingness to serve those who are needy will have a great impact on others as they will be encouraged to do the same. Through all of our efforts, Paul says that God will be glorified and His great Grace will be shown to all! **(v.13-15)**

For their many struggles, the Corinthians sure bounced back and they were greatly commended by the Apostle Paul. Their love for the brethren was contagious and it had an impact on others. Their love for the brethren and their appreciation for God's grace was evident by the writings of Paul. Do we have that same love for our brethren and appreciation for God's grace? If we do then it will show in our willingness to give and aid those of us who are struggling in this life. May God help us to show that heart of love and compassion for our brethren, and may He be gloried in that and in all that we do.