

2 Corinthians 8 - Great Generosity

Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.

3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, 5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. 6 So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. 8 I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.

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 through His poverty might become rich. 10 I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it.

11 But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability. 12 For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

13 For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality 14 at this present time your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality; 15 as it is written, "HE WHO gathered MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO gathered LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. 18 We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches;

19 and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, 20 taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; 21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

22 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.

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

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Pauls Observations and insights

1. What is it to make known to someone the grace of God?
2. Despite the suffering of affliction God's grace empowered these churches with joy.
3. God's joy empowers us to overcome affliction as joy brings us strength.
4. Paul makes mention of giving freely - how hard do you find it to give?
5. These Christians were crying out, 'what can we do to be part of this?'
6. Until you give yourself to the Lord you can't be part of what He is about.
7. Many start things, that's the easy part, but bringing it to completion is a different matter!
8. Do you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?
9. He gave up His Godhead for a season to bring us back to God.
10. To become 'rich in God', is to become empowered with His innocence.
11. Who do we listen to most - Paul or Jesus?
12. It seems they had made a promise of funds. Paul was giving them a practical structure to enable them not to be embarrassed if those funds were not available.
13. You can only give out of what you have - don't promise what you don't have!
14. The fact that you are giving a blessing isn't so you 'feel the pinch'!
15. The principle of giving right as a Christian is essential, as it underlines one of God's values.
16. You can't outgive God!
17. God is looking for you to trust Him to provide for your lack, when you give to serve His will.
18. Earnestness in the heart is a beautiful reflection of Gods love at work in serving.
19. For Titus to go of his own accord, is to say he has self-financed the trip to visit them.
20. Who might this mystery person be who went along with Titus?

21. It would seem he has a successful evangelistic ministry in bringing people to Christ.
22. Gods glory is seen when we are active in things relating to Kingdom values.
23. How do you show readiness?
24. The administration of this generous gift was important.
25. Abuse of God's money is an offence to God, those who do so will be held accountable.
26. Its fine to be transparent when it comes to giving - the charity commission ensures it.
27. What is it to be tested and found diligent?
28. Someone who can be trusted to do what they say they will do.
29. Someone who will not pilfer the funds.
30. Doing things as a team is better than doing things alone.
31. We, as the body of Christ, work better together.
32. In all we do as a Christians we must glorify God.