

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

2 Corinthians: God's Pattern For Victory Over Severe Ministry Opposition

Part XI: Responding Well To Severely Curtailed Giving Due To Godless Opposition, 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15

2. Detailing The Godly Procedures Of Giving

(2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5)

I. Introduction

- A. The history of the Church is so full of stories about the mismanagement of congregational offerings that it has become a common theme touted by critics of the Christian faith.
- B. For this reason, Paul's 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5 description on the proper procedures of managing offerings in the context of his epistle is very instructive in guiding us to be above reproach in the issue (as follows):

II. Detailing The Godly Procedures Of Giving, 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5.

- A. The initial decision of Paul's readers to give to the Jerusalem saints had failed to come true, 2 Cor. 8:6.
- B. This failure was likely due to "the presence of false apostles who received support from the church and may have diverted to themselves some of the moneys intended for that collection (cf. 2:17; 11:20," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 572.
- C. Paul had dealt with the false teacher issue in 2 Corinthians 1:12-7:16 so he could address the sensitive subject of the offering collection itself. So, after laying the groundwork for godly giving in 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, he described the godly procedures for giving in 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5 (as follows):
 - 1. In the matter of handling the collections, Paul taught the need for multiple, diverse, reputable auditors properly to handle the collections, and to protect the reputations of all involved, 2 Corinthians 8:16-24:
 - a. Paul's trusted coworker, Titus, had been sent by Paul to Corinth to obtain their offerings for the needy Jerusalem believers with the collections already taken in Macedonia, 2 Corinthian 8:16-17.
 - b. To protect the integrity of Titus, another believer, one not part of Paul's ministry team, and who was praised for his integrity as a powerful gospel preacher in all of the area churches, had been sent with Titus as a co-handler of the collected funds, 2 Corinthians 8:18-21.
 - c. Yet, to protect the reputation of both men, a third Christian brother, one chosen by the churches who had made the actual contributions themselves, was accompanying Titus and this other reputable believer as a third auditor of the collections, 2 Corinthians 8:22-24.
 - d. Thus, Paul's ministry team, together with a reputable gospel preacher in all of the churches, together with a man chosen by the giving churches of Macedonia that represented them, had made up the team that handled the transfer of the collections from the churches to the Jerusalem saints. This guarded the reputations of all, and erased fears the givers might have on the handling of the moneys!
 - 2. In the matter of approaching donors for the collections, Paul taught the need promote the attitude of liberality while avoiding legalistically pressuring the donors to give, 2 Corinthians 9:1-5:
 - a. Paul wrote that he knew the Corinthians had initially been highly motivated to give for the needs of the poor Jerusalem saints, and that he had already testified in glowing terms of that motivation to the believers in Macedonia and Achaia, 2 Corinthians 9:1-2.
 - b. Thus, he had decided to send on ahead of himself the men with the collections of the other churches, Titus, the gospel-preaching brother and the auditor chosen by the other giving churches, to take up the collection of the Corinthians themselves, 2 Corinthians 9:3.
 - c. This move would give the Corinthian believers time and opportunity to take up a collection with a minimal amount of pressure due to Paul's personal absence: he did not want to arrive with these auditors and he and the Corinthians be mutually ashamed at their failure to be able to give at that time in a cheerful attitude free of unedifying pressure, 2 Corinthians 9:4-5 NIV, ESV.

Lesson: Paul taught believers should be encouraged to give not out of false pressure, but in an attitude of liberality, and that collections be handled by multiple, diverse, reputable representatives of the givers to erase distrust by the donors and protect the reputations of the handlers themselves.

Application: May we uphold giving not out of false pressure to give, but out of an attitude of cheerful liberality, and may we use multiple, diverse, reputable representatives of the givers to ease the givers' concerns and best protect the reputations of the money handlers themselves.