

2 CORINTHIANS: DEFENDING GOD'S SERVANT TO HIS CRITICS

Part XV: The Godly Ministry Of Giving, 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15

A. Giving With Liberty Modified By Fairness

(2 Corinthians 8:1-15)

I. Introduction

- A. 2 Corinthians was written "to defend the authenticity of" Paul's "apostleship and his message" to a church of believers who were susceptible to heeding false teachers who critiqued him, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552.
- B. One of the problems created by this crisis may have been that the false teachers had taught Paul's readers to divert some moneys they initially planned to give to needy Jerusalem saints to go to themselves, Ibid., p. 572.
- C. If so, Paul had to give careful instruction to counter errant thinking produced by false teaching on giving, and 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 begins that instruction, teaching believers to give with liberality modified by fairness:

II. Giving With Liberty Modified By Fairness, 2 Corinthians 8:1-15.

- A. Paul encouraged his Corinthian readers to give with an attitude of liberality, 2 Corinthians 8:1-10:
 - 1. He began his discussion on giving by sharing the testimony of the Macedonian churches who joyfully gave out of great affliction and poverty to meet the needs of poor Christians in Jerusalem, 2 Corinthians 8:1-4.
 - 2. Such liberality had risen from an initial commitment to the Lord followed by a commitment to Paul's ministry team to make the donation as they requested, 2 Cor. 8:5. Thus, liberality flows from the heart of a believer who is initially right with God, making him willing in turn to give of his bounty to others.
 - 3. Having shared this testimony of the Macedonian believers, Paul reported how he had urged Titus who had begun to seek a donation from his readers to complete the effort, encouraging the Corinthians to donate of their financial resources for the needy Jerusalem saints, 2 Corinthians 8:6.
 - 4. Paul urged his readers to excel in this ministry of giving as they excelled in other areas of ministry, not making this directive a command, but seeking to elicit an expression of loving liberality from the Corinthians' hearts akin to the liberality that had been expressed by other believers, 2 Corinthians 8:7-8.
 - 5. Indeed, the Jesus Himself was the ultimate Example of liberality, leaving His great wealth in heaven to become poor that through His poverty of the cross the Corinthians might be spiritually wealthy, 2 Cor. 8:9.
 - 6. Accordingly, Paul summed that he willed that the Corinthians complete their donation that they had begun to give a year before for their own spiritual benefit before the Lord, 2 Corinthians 8:10.
- B. However, Paul then taught his readers to modify their liberality by practical fairness, 2 Corinthians 8:11-15:
 - 1. In urging his readers to complete the donation they had first wanted to make the previous year (2 Cor. 8:11), Paul noted that such a donation would be acceptable according to what the donor had, not according to what he did not possess, 2 Corinthians 8:12.
 - 2. To explain, he claimed he did not intend that others to whom they gave should be eased and they as donors be burdened by their giving too much, but that the giving be done as a matter of "fairness," isotes, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 636; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 307; 2 Cor. 8:13.
 - 3. Paul added that the financial bounty of his donors should supply what the materially needy Jerusalem saints needed so that in turn their bounty might supply what the Corinthians needed, 2 Cor. 8:14. Paul clarified what this meant by alluding to Exodus 16:18 where the people of Israel in the wilderness gathered up the manna God had placed on the ground so that he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have to little, 2 Corinthians 8:15.
 - 4. Viewing the Hebrew text at Exodus 16:18b reveals that this did **not** mean *equal portions* of manna for each person, but **fairness** as to the dietary *needs* of *each individual* (as follows):
 - a. The last phrase of this verse literally reads, "Each man gathered according to the mouth of his eating," Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 103; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 37-38.
 - b. Everyone had a different dietary need, so there would have been a wide variation in the **amounts** that people ate, but there was "fairness" in that each person could eat what he *personally NEEDED* to eat!

Lesson: *In giving to others, God wants us to commit ourselves to Him first that we might then commit ourselves to minister of our material goods to others with a spirit of liberality patterned after the great liberality of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. However, such liberality is to be modified by the principle of fairness, that we give with an awareness of our own material needs as well as the material needs of the recipient, that we give liberally but fairly.*

Application: *May we give ourselves to God, then liberally give of our resources to the needy tempered by fairness.*