

"Investing in Eternity"

Part 2

2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15

Introduction:

Last week in our study of 2 Corinthians 8 we started into a section in which Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to give financially to help the saints in Jerusalem who were experiencing deep poverty. The situation at Jerusalem was something which weighed heavy upon Paul's heart. He therefore presented the opportunity to give to all the churches. He had encouraged the Corinthians to give in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 16:1-3

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

² *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

³ *And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.*

This topic was set aside while Paul addressed the problem of sin within the church at Corinth. But now that the sin was confessed and fellowship was restored Paul brought it up again.

As he opened this section Paul was very careful as to how he presented this subject again. So he opens by pointing to the example of the Macedonian churches and how by the grace of God they were able to give while they were under a great test of their faith as they themselves faced deep poverty.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:1-2

The giving of the Macedonians was done **WILLINGLY**. They pleaded with Paul to allow them to be a part of this ministry of giving to those who had such a great need.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:3-5

These people went far beyond Paul's expectations. Before they gave of their finances they gave of themselves to the Lord. These believers in Macedonia were a living example of Jesus Words in Matthew 22.

Matthew 22:15-21

¹⁵ Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

¹⁶ And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

¹⁷ Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

¹⁸ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

¹⁹ Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

²⁰ And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

²¹ They say unto him, Caesar's. **Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.**

Jesus explained that because Caesar's image was stamped upon the coin then the coin belonged to Caesar. In the same way God's image is "stamped" upon us as therefore they were to give to Caesar what belonged to Caesar we are to give to God what belongs to God and that would be ALL of ourselves.

Because the saints at Macedonia understood this concept they were not afraid to give away all they had because they understood that it all belonged to God anyway. They understood that they were stewards of what God had entrusted to them.

There are a few thoughts from within the churches of Macedonia which can be seen within these verses that we need to grasp.

1. They were not so consumed with their own trial that they were blinded to the needs of others and to the opportunity to serve out of the midst of their trial.

How many times do we tend to block out everything but what it is that we are facing? In the midst of trials we often get "TUNNEL VISION" and we refuse to look beyond what it is that we are facing. The Macedonians were in the midst of a GREAT trial and yet they were willing to minister to the needs of the saints at Jerusalem.

2. It was through the GREAT trial that the Macedonians learned of the riches of God's grace. It was in the trial where they were able to see that no matter what the situation is, God is able to meet the need.

I will give you one verse on this thought and then we will move on in our study.

Romans 8:32

³² *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

I. **The Example of Jesus Christ**

Now Paul is going to give to them another example of giving and it will be an example which they themselves were the beneficiary of.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:7

Here Paul points to his expectation of their spiritual growth. They had been saved for some 5 or 6 years and because of sin they had not grown spiritually.

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

² *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*

³ *For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*

⁴ *For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*

This was all behind them and so Paul anticipated their spiritual growth. He expected that they would abound in everything.

Application:

I just need to stop here for a moment and point out the fact that spiritual growth should be happening in our lives also. There is not one of us who has reached full spiritual maturity and for that reason we should be growing in our walk.

Paul expected the believers at Corinth to grow in:

- a. Faith
- b. Speech
- c. Knowledge
- d. Diligence
- e. Love to Paul

Then at the end of the verse he gets back to the subject of giving when he tells them he expects them to grow in:

f. This grace also.

"This grace" points back to 8:1 where Paul had pointed to the churches of Macedonia and the grace of God which moved them to give.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:8

Here we see Paul's carefulness again because he is not commanding them to give to the need. But the diligence of the Macedonians was proof of their love and so Paul tells these believers that he is presenting this opportunity before them as a test of their love. This verse runs parallel with what James wrote.

James 2:14-18

¹⁴ *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?*

¹⁵ *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,*

¹⁶ *And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*

¹⁷ *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

¹⁸ *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*

James is saying, "If you have true saving faith then it will be manifest through your works". Paul is saying, "I know you have saving faith so let it show it to the world through your generosity".

Paul knew that LOVE was a trade mark of the Christian life.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

³⁵ *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

John 15:12

¹² *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

1 John 4:7-9

⁷*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

⁸*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

⁹*In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

Just from these verses we can see that love for other believers is a trade mark of true Christianity. Now we come to the ultimate Example of giving.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:9

There is so much to consider within this verse.

Jesus gave up all the riches of heaven and He became poor by choice so that we could become rich.

In this verse Paul is writing in a different way that which he wrote to the Philippians.

Philippians 2:5-8

⁵*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

⁶*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery [something which He needed to cling to] to be equal with God:*

⁷*But made himself of no reputation [He emptied Himself in the sense that He, as God in human flesh, He took on the limitations of humanity], and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

⁸*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Jesus did all of this so that we could be rich.

Now let me remind us all just how rich we are and I want to do it was some negative statements.

1. Can you imagine living without the sense that all your sins have been forgiven?
2. Can you imagine living with a sense of guilt for your sins?
3. Can you imagine living without the peace of God?
4. Can you imagine living without peace with God?

5. Can you imagine living knowing that when you die you would be plunged into the fires of hell?
6. Can you imagine living with God to strengthen you for the trials?
7. Can you imagine living and facing storms without Romans 8:28 to use as an anchor?
8. Can you imagine living with no hope of ever seeing your loved ones who have died again?
9. Can you imagine living without the hope of the rapture?
10. Can you imagine living without the protection of God from the demonic world?

These are just some of the riches which we have in Christ. These are all possible because Jesus Christ chose to walk away from the riches of heaven and become poor for our benefit.

Jesus gave up the glory which He once had and became a poor homely man.

Isaiah 53:2

² For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Jesus walked away from the praise of heaven to come to a world where He was despised and rejected.

Isaiah 53:3

³ He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Psalms 22:6-8

⁶ But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

⁷ All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

⁸ He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

John 1:10-11

¹⁰ *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

¹¹ *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

Conclusion:

These are just a few of the verses which speak of how Jesus became poor. But the point is it was all for our benefit. We are now spiritually rich because of His choice to become poor. He is the Example we are to follow when it comes to giving. It is ok to give away what we have here because there will be a day when we will have it all over there.

1 Peter 1:3-5

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

⁴ *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

⁵ *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*