

"Investing in Eternity"

Part 4

2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15

Introduction: Last week in our study of 2 Corinthians we looked at 8:10-15. I want to back up and touch on briefly on these verses again before we move on tonight. It was in these verses that Paul instructed the Corinthians about giving with a willing mind and giving out of what they had and not out of what they did not have.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:11-12

Last week we looked at the possibility that when Paul first presented the need of the saints in Jerusalem there was a great readiness to give in the hearts of the Corinthians. Possibly some of them were caught up in their emotions and they pledged more than they were really able to give. Paul was not about to hold them to their pledge because if they did not have the money they could not give it. Therefore, Paul instructed them to give what they could give with a willing mind and he encouraged them that it would be accepted by God.

Application:

This is what God desires of us also when we give. We are to give with willing hearts. If we give grudgingly then it is not counted as an investment for eternity. It must be given willingly. That is exactly why people are NOT to be pushed or pressured into giving. If you give out of pressure or because someone has "pushed" you into giving then God will NOT accept your gift. Let me show you what God told Moses about Israel giving their gifts for the building of the Tabernacle.

Exodus 25:1, 3-8

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

³ *And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass,*

⁴ *And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair,*

⁵ *And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood,*

⁶ *Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense,*

⁷ *Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate.*

⁸ *And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.*

This is what they were to give for the building of the Tabernacle. Now I left one verse out from this text and it is the key to what we are talking about.

Exodus 25:2

² Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.

What was Israel's response to God's Words?

Exodus 35:21-29

²¹ And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.

²² And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD.

²³ And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them.

²⁴ Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD's offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it.

²⁵ And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen.

²⁶ And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair.

²⁷ And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate;

²⁸ And spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense.

²⁹ The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.

The offerings were of many different varieties but because they were given with willing hearts it was all accepted by God.

The point we need to grasp which we looked at last week is, it is not about how much we give but it is about our attitude of the heart. If it is given out of willing hearts it is an investment in eternity.

This now brings us to where we are in our study tonight. Now Paul fully expects them to continue what they purposed to do a year ago.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:7, 11

But the question may have come up in the minds of some about who would gather the money and could they be people who could be trusted?

I. **The Faithful Servants**

Part 1

In 8:16-24 Paul is going to point to the integrity of those whom he will send to gather the gifts for the saints at Jerusalem.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:16

Here Paul praises God because God had placed within Titus the same earnest care for the Corinthians which Paul had. The word "earnest" means "to strive after something". The idea is that Titus had such a care for these people that he was willing to make sacrifices for their wellbeing.

This earnest care not doubt came as Titus spent time with the Corinthians. The engaged in fellowship and discussions. They no doubt showed hospitality toward Titus when he was there and so Titus became very close to these people. But here is the point which we need to see, it was God who placed in the heart of Titus the earnest care for these believers. Now let me show you what he did with that which God placed in his heart along with the exhortation from Paul.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:17

Titus ACCEPTED the exhortation.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:6

Paul had exhorted Titus to go to the church at Corinth and because of what god had placed in his heart Titus accepted the exhortation.

Application:

It is important for us to stop here and see something which we all need to grasp onto. God places within our hearts desires and concerns and when He does it is so very important that we do not suppress them.

Now we must learn to discern between what are our desires and what are God's desires within us. Let me show you something from the life of David.

2 Samuel 7:1-3

And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies;

² *That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.*

³ *And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee.*

David came up with an idea to build God a house/Temple and he shared his desire with Nathan. Nathan then encouraged David to build the Temple and to follow through with his heart's desire. This was an honorable desire. Now let me show you what God said to Nathan.

2 Samuel 7:4-5

⁴ *And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,*

⁵ *Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?*

¹² *And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.*

¹³ *He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.*

David's desire was great but it was not God's will for David to build the Temple but it was God's will for Solomon to build the Temple.

The point I am making is that we must be sure the desires of our heart are the desires of God. When they are and we act upon them God will give us the desires of our heart.

Psalms 37:3-5

³ *Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

⁴ *Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

⁵ *Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

The question then is, "How do we discern God's will from ours?"

First of all we must be walking in fellowship with Him in order for the Holy Spirit to control our thoughts and our hearts. Along with that we must pray for discernment.

James 1:5

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

1 John 5:14-15

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Now let me show you what happens when God places a burden in the heart of one of His people.

Nehemiah 1:1-4

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

² That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

³ And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

⁴ And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

Nehemiah's heart was broken when he heard what the conditions were like in Jerusalem. When God places within us a desire to minister to people that desire can often break our hearts. Let me show you yet another way to know if the desire is from God.

Nehemiah 2:1-6

And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

² Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

³ *And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?*

⁴ *Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.*

⁵ *And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.*

⁶ *And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.*

Here we see that God opened the door for Nehemiah therefore we can see that open doors are a sign of the will of God. Let me give you one more way to know it is of God.

Nehemiah 2:7-9

⁷ *Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;*

⁸ *And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.*

⁹ *Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.*

Not only did God open the door for Nehemiah but he also provided what was needed for the journey and the project.

Conclusion:

When God places a burden or a desire within our hearts it is so important that we act upon it. There are blessings which await us and if we refuse to move we can be sure we will miss the blessings.

Nehemiah 6:15-16

¹⁵ *So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.*

¹⁶ *And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.*

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