

"Investing in Eternity"

Part 5

2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15

Introduction: Last week in our study of 2 Corinthians we were looking at chapter 8:16-24 but we only stepped into verses 16 and 17. It was in these verses that we were able to see that God had placed within the heart of Titus a burden for the saints at Corinth. This burden placed there by God combined with Paul's encouragement to Titus caused him to be diligent in ministering to the saints at Corinth.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:16-17

He did not suppress the burden which God placed within his heart but instead he accepted it as an opportunity to serve the Lord.

Application:

As I read through the New Testament I can see within the early church believers a diligence that is difficult to find today. Let me show you a passage from Philippians.

Philippians 2:19-28

¹⁹ *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.*

²⁰ *For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.*

²¹ **For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.**

²² *But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.*

²³ *Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.*

²⁴ *But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.*

²⁵ *Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.*

²⁶ *For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.*

²⁷ *For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.*

²⁸ *I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.*

²⁹ *Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:*

³⁰ **Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.**

Here in this text Paul writes concerning 2 men Timothy and Epaphroditus. Both of these men had a heart that sought the riches of our Lord. As I look into the lives of these men I see they had something which we also need to have and that is a willingness to fight for the church of Jesus Christ. Titus also possessed the same concern. These men understood that the church was the Lighthouse of their day. Therefore the TRUTH needed to be guarded, preserved, proclaimed and sought after. Without the church the darkness would consume the towns, cities, and the people.

This is the very thing which we need to grasp right now. There is a battle raging around us and it is a battle over the Truth. We need to pray that God would burden our hearts for the preservation of the Truth and purity of the church. We as the body are the light of the world today and Satan desires to put out the light. He cannot kill us so he does all he can to distort the Truth of the Word and to fill the lives of God's people with the cares of this world so that we have no time to fight in the battle.

Now let us get to where we are going this evening.

As these saints at Corinth gave their finances to meet the needs at Jerusalem there would have been the concern about who was going to gather the money and were they men of integrity? Paul addresses this concern in the passage before us and he also gives great instruction as to how a church is to handle finances.

I. **The Faithful Servants**

Part 2

1. Titus

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:16-17

Titus was chosen to gather the money because he had within his heart a burden for the saints at Corinth and for all who were in Christ. His integrity was evident in the way in which he responded to the care which God had placed within his heart. Titus was walking in the Spirit and therefore Paul knew he was a man whom he could trust with the finances gathered at Corinth.

2. The 1st unnamed disciple.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:18

Here Paul points to a man whom he chooses not to name and this man's reputation is known throughout all the churches.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:19a

This unnamed man was CHOSEN which actually means VOTED into this ministry.

Let us stop here for a moment and consider some practical application from the choosing of this unnamed man and Titus.

Both the unnamed man and Titus had established reputations within the churches. Therefore they were not "new" believers whom they hoped would be people of integrity.

This reminds me that when it comes to handling finances within the church the people who are entrusted with the responsibility are to be people who have established a good reputation within the body. The words of Paul to Timothy come to my mind here.

1 Timothy 5:22a

²² *Lay hands suddenly on no man...*

When Paul wrote concerning the office of the bishop and the deacons and the qualifications he penned these words:

1 Timothy 3:6-10

⁶ **Not a novice**, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

⁷ *Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

⁸ *Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;*

⁹ *Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

¹⁰ **And let these also first be proved**; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

They were not to be NOVICES which referred to new converts and they were to be proved which means "deemed worthy". These same two qualifications also apply to those who are entrusted with the finances within the body of Christ. There is yet another qualification which I believe needs to be in seen in the lives of those who handle the finances. This can be seen in the choosing of the first deacons.

Acts 6:1-3

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

² *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.*

³ *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

They deacons were to be men of honest report and men who were controlled by the Holy Spirit and who showed forth wisdom. Those who watch over the finances within the church must be people who are controlled by the Spirit. There would be far too much temptation for a believer who was controlled by the flesh.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:19

This was all done for the glory of the Lord. The giving by the saints at Corinth would build up their reputation and as that happened it was all for the glory of God.

Application:

I am reminded here in this verse that whatever we do it must be for the glory of our Lord.

Colossians 3:17-24

¹⁷ *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

¹⁸ *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

¹⁹ *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

²⁰ *Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

²¹ *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

²² *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;*

²³ *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*

²⁴ *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:20-21

Here are the 2 key verses of handling finances within the church.

Finances MUST BE HANDLED in a way that no one has any ground to stand on to blame the church of mishandling the money. This is why there must be 2 or more people who are present when the money is counted and when it is put away safely. There should never be an occasion where anyone is alone to handle the finances of the church. No matter how much the person is trusted it can still give the appearance of wrong doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

²² Abstain from all appearance of evil.

To place someone in a situation where there is no accountability is setting them up for a fall. Let me remind you of what Paul wrote to Timothy concerning money.

1 Timothy 6:8-10

⁸ And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

⁹ But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

3. **The 2nd unnamed disciple.**

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:22

Here is the mention of another believer who was sent with Titus and the 1st unnamed disciple. This man also had proved himself and therefore he was no novice in the faith.

So Paul sent 3 men to gather the finances at Corinth, Titus and 2 men who were not named. They were all men who had proven they were faithful but that did not mean they could be sent alone. Since there were 3 they were accountable to each other and to God. Paul was very careful not to send just one man or to just send two. But he sent three men to gather what the saints at Corinth had given.

Now I want to pause here for a moment and consider why 2 of these men were not named. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write this letter and so it was God's intent to not name these men. Let me tell you why I believe God did this.

There are many people within the church who serve but they never get any attention as far as being out front in the spotlight. If that is you then this text is for the purpose of making known to you that God is very aware of your service for Him. You may not be in the

spotlight of the people but you are in the spotlight of God. Your integrity and your faithfulness is known by God and there will come a day when you will be rewarded for all you do behind the scenes.

1 Corinthians 3:11-14

¹¹ *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

¹² *Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

¹³ *Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

¹⁴ *If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:23

There may have been some in the church who did not know Titus or the two other disciples so Paul placed his commendation on these men as men who had been proven to be faithful.

I just want to say that if any did enquire about the men gathering the gift of finances that would be a good thing. There is nothing wrong with someone seeking to know the integrity of those who handle the money.

There have been many times when someone should have asked some questions but didn't and the end result was a disaster.

Notice 2 Corinthians 8:24

Here in this verse Paul encourages the Corinthians to show the proof of their love by giving to the need at Jerusalem.

Conclusion:

These are the cautions which are to be taken when handling the finances at the church.

1. Those who handle the finances of the church should not be placed in the position just to fill the spot.
2. The people who handle the money must be proven.
3. No one is ever to be placed in a situation where they are alone when counting or handling the money.
4. There must be accountability among those who handle the money.

December 3, 2017

2 Corinthians Study #56

5. It is good to ask questions when choosing people to handle the finances of the church.