

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

1. Detailing The Godly Grounds Of Giving (2 Corinthians 8:1-15)

I. Introduction

- A. When a person materially gives to God's ministry, many factors affect what and when he gives, not the least of which may be the challenges that arise if that ministry is severely opposed in ungodliness.
- B. Paul faced this test in 2 Corinthians, so he explained the grounds (2 Cor. 8:1-15), the practice (2 Cor. 8:16-9:5) and the promises (2 Cor. 9:6-15) of godly giving to lead the Corinthians to victory in the matter.
- C. We begin by viewing 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 for extensive Biblical insight on the grounds of giving:

II. Detailing The Godly Grounds Of Giving, 2 Corinthians 8:1-15.

- A. 2 Corinthians 8:6 suggests the good intent of Paul's readers to give to help others had not yet occurred.
- B. The reason for this giving delay was likely "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. Accordingly, having addressed the issue of the false teachers itself (2 Corinthians 1:12-7:16), Paul turned his attention to the unfinished matter of the collection for the saints starting at 2 Corinthians 8:1. He began by explaining the godly grounds of making material contributions in 2 Corinthians 8:1-15:
 - 1. Paul revealed godly giving of one's resources begins with the giving of one's self to God, 2 Cor. 8:1-6:
 - a. To help motivate the Corinthians to complete their initial godly intent of taking up a collection for other needy saints (most likely the believers in Jerusalem who were notoriously poor), Paul testified of the great giving ministry of the Christians in the Macedonian churches, 2 Corinthians 8:1-2.
 - b. That testimony told of the abundant joy these folk expressed in giving even in their financial hardships to give in great liberality, 2 Corinthians 8:1-2.
 - c. Indeed, they gave beyond their true capacity to give, giving sacrificially even of themselves in the process (2 Corinthians 8:3-4), pleading with Paul's team to take their offering.
 - d. Such a moving testimony of sacrificial giving arose from the fact that these believers had first given themselves to the Lord in devotion, and that had led to such sacrificial giving, 2 Corinthians 8:5.
 - 2. Paul revealed godly giving of one's resources follows the example of Christ's great gift, 2 Cor. 8:6-10:
 - a. Spurred by this great testimony, Paul's team thought it good to have Titus go to Corinth to encourage the believers there to practice the same kind of giving, 2 Corinthians 8:6.
 - b. Accordingly, Paul urged them to follow the Macedonian example (2 Cor. 8:7), not out of Paul's manipulation, but that they have opportunity to prove the sincerity of their love, 2 Corinthians 8:8.
 - c. Paul then referred to Christ's ultimate example of love: though He was greatly wealthy in heaven's glory, He subjected Himself to the "poverty" of the cross that we might become "rich," 2 Cor. 8:9.
 - d. Paul then called his readers to fulfill their initial plan to give, following Christ's lead, 2 Cor. 8:10.
 - 3. Paul revealed godly giving involves realistically managing what resources we have, 2 Cor. 8:11-15:
 - a. Aware his call to liberality in giving could lead immature believers at Corinth (1 Cor. 3:3) to give under implied legalistic pressure from him, Paul noted that godly giving arises from what a person has, not from pressure to give what he has to have for his own livelihood, 2 Cor. 8:11-13 NIV.
 - b. Paul illustrated this point from Israel's handling of God's provision of the manna in the wilderness: those who could gather in excess shared with those who could not gather as much as they needed to eat, so no one faced livelihood shortage hardship, 2 Corinthians 8:14-15 with Exodus 16:16-18.
 - c. Thus, godly giving involves managing resources best to alleviate livelihood hardships all around!

Lesson: Paul explained the grounds for godly giving involved (1) giving of one's self to God before giving of his resources to His ministry, (2) heeding Christ's supreme selfless giving example on the cross and (3) realistically managing one's resources best to alleviate livelihood hardship all around.

Application: May we follow these principles for the grounds of godly giving, and encourage believers who have been discouraged in giving due to ungodly challenges to give based upon these godly terms.