

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 7TH-8TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

RESPONSIBILITY (2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-9)

SHARING SOME GOOD NEWS

Paul wanted the Corinthians to know about the "grace of God that was given to the churches of Macedonia."

- The "grace given" to the Christians in northern Greece was that even in "afflictions" and "poverty" they had joy and generously gave to help others in need.

THE CORINTHIANS HADN'T SUFFERED LIKE THIS

The Christians in Corinth had probably never had an economic crisis. So, it wasn't that they didn't care about others, but that they just hadn't been exposed to such a need.

- **We're not evil if we've lived comfortably, but we do need to be aware of others' suffering and do our part to help.**

"FIRST TO THE LORD AND THEN TO [OTHERS]"

Christians should understand that everything good in our lives comes from God (James 1:17).

This means that we give our best to God in everything we do.

- **Part of giving God our best is loving others in a way that blesses them and honors the principles of the Bible.**

"BEGGED US EARNESTLY FOR THE PRIVILEGE"

Not only did the Macedonians beg to contribute to helping others, they did so "according to their ability, and even beyond."

- It is very important to prioritize things in our life. **We often say we're incapable of giving and helping others, but it is really a problem with our priorities.**

IT ALL BELONGS TO HIM ANYWAYS

As Christians, we should know that **we are just temporary stewards of things that ultimately belong to Him and our lives should reflect gratitude to Jesus and servitude to Him and others.**

- Do we hold on to things too tightly? Are we thankful for our blessings?

"HE WAS RICH, FOR YOUR SAKE HE BECAME POOR"

Christ is God incarnate. This means everything was made through Him (John 1). In His great "rich[ness]," He willingly became a poor man to live, die, and resurrect for us.

- This knowledge should invoke **a sense of responsibility to honor our sacrificial God by sacrificing for others.**

A STATE OF THE HEART (2 CORINTHIANS 8:10-15)

WISDOM AND PRACTICALITY

Paul wanted to use wisdom in presenting the subject of giving because the conversation of money and the church is always sensitive.

- Practically speaking, **if we don't give our time, talent, and money, people will starve, they will not hear the gospel, and they will die literally and spiritually (1 Peter 4:10).**

"NOW ALSO FINISH THE TASK"

The Corinthians wanted to give, but troubles in the church distracted them. It was not enough for them to say they cared about others, **they had to put their faith into action and give.**

- We can always find a reason not to do something, but **if we claim to love others we must go beyond words and act.**

THIS ISN'T ABOUT TITHING

Many people use v. 12, "give according to what a person has," as a standard for how much we're to give to the church, but this chapter isn't about tithing, it is about giving specifically to help people during a time of need.

- **The goal is to have sacrificial hearts that go beyond our "obligations."**

THE OTHER GOAL IS "EQUALITY"

Paul didn't want the Corinthians to suffer because they helped others in their suffering. That would defeat the point. The aim was to teach us that **if we have a lot and others don't have enough, we should want to level that playing field a little.**

- We often take our quality of life for granted.

THERE WILL NEVER BE COMPLETE EQUALITY

The Bible never indicates that we will all live in equal socio-economic status this side of heaven. This is impossible because greed, laziness, and irresponsibility will always exist.

- Christians are to **"work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith"** (Galatians 6:10).

CLEAR & ACCOUNTABLE (2 CORINTHIANS 8:16-24)

A GOOD REPUTATION AND LIVING ABOVE REPROACH

Paul sent Titus and a "brother who is praised among all the churches" to oversee the collecting and distributing of the financial gift from Corinth.

- Notice it wasn't done alone, it was done by reputable people, and there was clear instruction as to where the money was going.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP MUST BE RESPONSIBLE

V. 20 says they took "this precaution so that no one will criticize us about this large sum that we are administering."

- Christians are called to give and **leaders are called to live above reproach by stewarding money well** (1 Corinthians 4:2) **and giving clarity on where it goes.**

RUNNING THIS LIKE A BUSINESS?

People often criticize churches because they employ HR, accounting practices, and other business principles inside the organization.

- We do this to **follow the law, be transparent, live above reproach**, and have **accountability**. We also want to be **orderly and excellent in all things** (1 Corinthians 14:40).

"GIVING CAREFUL THOUGHT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT"

Christianity will always be under intense scrutiny. So, **we all must live in a way that honors God and gives others little to no substantial reason to call our character into question (1 Peter 3:16).**

- This doesn't require perfection, but **humility and honesty.**

"PROOF" OF OUR LOVE

Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). God knows that money is one of the hardest things for us to let go of.

- **If we truly love others, we will not just bless them with words, but also with our time, talent, and money.**
- **James 2:14-17**

RESPONSIBILITY

- Salvation should lead to a deeper sense of **responsibility** because we know that God sacrificially gave His Son for our redemption. This knowledge should invoke **gratitude and servitude to God, and part of that servitude is loving, serving, and giving to others so their needs are met.**

HOW MUCH DO WE REALLY CARE?

- **Anything good we have is because of God. Are we open-handed with our blessings?**
- Do we see giving as a "privilege" and honor because we genuinely love people?
- Do we have a heart that wants to do all we can to make sure others have their basic needs met?

FAITH WITHOUT ACTION ISN'T FAITH

- If we say we love God, we're also saying that we're **striving to love people as we love ourselves** (Mark 12).
- If we claim to love people but are unwilling to give for basic needs and the gospel to be spread, we're professing **a faith with no action, and James 2 tells us that isn't faith.**