

2 Corinthians 8:7-15: In this passage, I believe (V9) to be a pause or parenthesis. Paul continued his thought in (V10 from V8):

The church at Corinth had matured and abounded spiritually in many ways, in faith, in utterance or preaching, in their knowledge of the scriptures, in their diligence as a church, and in their love of Paul; but Paul ALSO wanted them to "abound in the grace of giving".

He wanted the Church at Corinth to learn from the good example of the Churches of Macedonia, he wanted them to emulate them, and learn from their "example and eagerness" toward other churches, to the poor and needy brethren in Judea, in how they helped them. Paul's desire was:

"To prove the sincerity of (THEIR) love"; for their sakes before God, AND... that they would show the same compassion and love to the needy saints, like the churches of Macedonia.

We ought to help the needy saints, our brethren in their times of need... we were certainly helped by other churches in our need. Herein was Paul's desire...to prove the sincerity of their love through their giving!

And so last time we parked on 2 Corinthians 8:9; this one verse, which, I believe was a pause or parenthesis, was designed by Paul to make a powerful impact in the minds of the saints at Corinth:

I want you to learn (saith Paul), from the churches at Macedonia, I want you to mature in this grace of giving, I want you to learn from their example...BUT THEN... there is no example of giving like that of our Lord Jesus Christ! Paul paused here to make this powerful point to them, because IT WAS THE LORD JESUS...

WHO, "Though He was rich, YET, FOR YOUR SAKES, He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich"

Christ gave like no other...do you remember the poor widow who cast into the offering "all of her living", everything that she had? And THIS WOMAN'S "willing heart" in her offering got the full attention of Christ!

Her giving was Christ-Like! I'm not teaching this because you're not giving... this is where the Lord has us in our exposition of 2 Corinthians...

SO NOW, let us learn from God's revealed will...THAT... WHICH He would have us to learn... THAT, when we DO give an offering to the Lord, it would be from willing hearts, and so be accepted by Him! Paul was getting the attention of the saints at Corinth, and (with God's help and grace) he means to get our attention here as well! Christ, GAVE ALL THAT HE HAD, All of His life and soul for poor and helpless sinners!

If Christ had not become poor for our sakes, if He had not laid aside His riches, glory, and divinity to be robed in the rags of flesh, if He had not given Himself and His life, to suffer, be delivered into the hands of sinful men to die, to shed His blood for a world of sinners, NONE of us WOULD KNOW, NONE of us COULD

KNOW the riches of His grace and His kindness in the salvation of our souls! Learn from Christ, saith Paul!

That was Paul's powerful pause, parenthesis, teaching moment!

Paul picks up where he left off: Read 2 Corinthians 8:8 over to 8:10-11

What Paul is saying here is, "finish what you started". You began with good intentions a year ago... to take up offerings for the poor saints in Judea, now finish what you started, accomplish what you set out to do.

(V11): "Now therefore PERFORM THE DOING OF IT; (the doing of what? Sending help to the poor brethren), THAT AS THERE WAS A READINESS TO WILL, so there may be a performance also out of THAT WHICH YE HAVE".

DO WHAT YOU CAN DO: "Unaccomplished Good Intentions" don't do anyone any good...I WANT TO HELP is very different than, "I HELPED"!

Paul didn't want the saints @ Corinth TO BE spiritual procrastinators... DO what you set out to do "for the sake" of the poor saints at Jerusalem, and more than that, do it for the honor and glory of Christ!

Do you believe yourself to be a vessel and instrument of God, to be used by Him? Your answer Christian, MUST BE YES!

BUT how often do we STOP at good intentions? How often do we "almost" do what we ought to have done? How often do we "mean well" and "think about" what we should have done, but what we didn't do?

Remember what Paul wrote about Christ in (V9): "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, YET FOR YOUR SAKES He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich".

Christ did what He intended to do, Christ meant well and then, HE DID ALL THINGS WELL! The Lord Jesus was ready to do what His Father called Him to do, and then, He "performed" in doing it!

But consider if Christ ONLY had good intentions without accomplishing what His Father sent Him to do, "for our sakes" ...consider... If He did not accomplish and finish His Father's work..... In Luke 9:51:

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem"

John 4:34: "My meat is to do the will of Him that send me, and to finish His work". John 17:4: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do". John 19:30: "It is finished"

Beloved, Christ is our supreme example for doing what He intended to do for God... Christ is our example of performing, accomplishing, and finishing what God has called us to do in our lives, in obedience to His Word. AND THERE'S THIS... Christ DID NOT FAIL!

WE KNOW that this passage is about giving for the sake of needy brethren, BUT THIS is also God's instruction to us on HOW we are TO GIVE.

Remember, Paul taught us from the example of the Lord Jesus' when He laid aside His riches and became poor FOR OUR SAKES...BUT IS THIS what the Lord EXPECTS OF US? To become poor for the sake of others.

Beloved, God hasn't called any of us to go beyond our ability in the grace of giving. Acts 11:27-30, Ezra 2:68-69, 2 Corinthians 8:12

Note they were "determined to give", and their giving was to be "according to their ability", but then there was THIS key ingredient, there MUST FIRST be "a willing mind". Let THIS mind be in you, W.W.A.I.C.J!

You see, we SO OFTEN make "GIVING" about how much money we have, but the amount of money that you have, or that you give is not important...what God sees and what pleases Him, in your offerings, is the heart and mind that you gave it with.

If you don't FIRST have a willing mind, God doesn't want your offering. He doesn't ACCEPT it if not given to Him gladly and cheerfully. Read 2 Corinthians 8:12 again.

You see, we often think that WE NEED SO MUCH EXTRA before we can give, but what Paul teaches us here is, it's not a fat bank account that God is looking for, it's a WILLING HEART and MIND to give, that is what God accepts...

Paul goes on to say that our giving and our offerings are to be ACCORDING to what we have, not according to what we don't have or wish we had!

Oh, if I had millions, I would give so much....

To think like that is to think of giving from what you don't have, rather than from what you have! 8:12...read again!

I think we think if we don't give what we consider to be "a worthy amount" that the offering is not good enough... but as we just learned, the amount is not what matters to God, it's the heart that gave it.

Your offering should come from a "willing, and ready mind", it should not be as if you are paying a bill or your taxes.

Let's complete this thought in 2 Corinthians 8:13:

You will notice the words "eased and burdened". The design of your giving is NOT that you are now burdened; it is not that (after you have given) you don't have enough to sustain yourself and your family.

2 Corinthians 8:14: "But by an equality, that now AT THIS TIME your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also (when that time arises), may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality"

Paul is teaching us the principle of Christian Equality. THIS is how the saints/NT Church should function as the body of Christ... There will be times when God will use you, in your abundance to help other brethren in their time of need... conversely, in your time of need, God will use the abundance of other saints to supply

your needs. Paul solidified this lesson in the example of God giving the OT people of Israel....manna! 2 Corinthians 8:15. Look at the Words of this passage regarding the manna: To the one who had a large family, who "gathered much", he had "NOTHING OVER"; to the other one who had a smaller family and "gathered little", God blessed him so that there was "NO LACK", to he or his family. Remember, those who gathered TOO MUCH, who tried to hoard the manna, it bred worms and stank. In this example of how the manna was distributed by God, Paul teaches us about the equality that should exist among the saints...we should not be hoarders of what God has given us when others are in need.

FW Robertson "How well life teaches us that whatever us beyond enough breeds worms and becomes offensive". O let us be led by the Spirit of Christ in this, and then we shall be like Christ in our giving. 1 John 3:16-19, Proverbs 11:24-26, 28:27

In closing:

Remember that "unaccomplished good intentions" never helped anyone, don't stop at good intentions, always remember the testimony and example of Christ, which Paul wisely and skillfully taught us in 2 Corinthians 8:9.

And remember this beloved, God hasn't called any of you to go beyond your ability in the grace of giving, GIVE according to your ability... BUT don't forget the key ingredient in your giving, IT MUST BE that you gave from a willing heart unto the Lord! This is the kind of offering that is pleasing and acceptable to God! 2 Corinthians 9:7-