

8:1-4

1 Moreover, brethren, Since I “have confidence in you in everything” (7:16)... we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:

1. It fits in Acts 20; we’re just not told about it.
2. It begins with a backtrack from Troas to Macedonia—looking for Titus (2 Corinthians 2:12-14).
3. While Paul and Timothy are in Macedonia awaiting Titus [concerned about the Corinthian church’s reaction to his 3rd letter (which we do not have)], they spend time around Macedonians believers (8:1-4).
4. Paul already mentioned (1 Corinthians 16) that on one of his journeys through Macedonia he would like to collect an offering for the Saints in Jerusalem.
5. Just as Titus carried the 3rd letter (which we do not have), Titus will carry this 4th letter (which we call “2nd Corinthians”). See 8:6, 16-18.

1. The Right Kind of Giving is Usually Instantaneous.¹

2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. This is simple benevolence giving. One can see that this is an opportunity-driven offering (gift), and as both 8:10 and 9:2 point out, begun a year ago. This gives us the relative amount of time elapsed since the writing of 1 Corinthians—particularly chapter 16:1-6: one year. One might even notice the talk of “Macedonia” in that passage as well as this one (7:5). So this trip about which we are to read may have been considered an opportunity that was supposed to happen 2nd hand instead of an actual trip from Paul. Consider 8:13-15 as more information is given about this instance:

2 Corinthians 8:13 13 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; 14 but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack—that there may be equality. 15 As it is written, “*He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.*”

This is not “class welfare,” but rather corporate care. This is an instance-driven love offering. This was not meant to be a protracted arrangement over years and even generations of time where a church does nothing, moves nowhere, and in decades still expects offerings from Corinth through the Apostle.

2. The Right Kind of Giving is Gospel-Driven.

8:8-9

8 I speak not by commandment, This is not compulsory. but I am testing the sincerity of your love Contextually, the reader is drawn back to 5:14 and the lasting influence of Gospel love. **by the diligence of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.** Once again, Paul appeals to the Gospel² to drive home his request. Paul knows that His greatest joy is to see Gospel-reflective, abundant sacrifice in the lives of the believers (9:6) which will produce fruit that coincides that of the Christ Who gave of His life in that very same Gospel (9:11-14). The Gospel preaching was that which made particular people credentialed in the lives of fellow churches (8:18). This is not something that occurs once in the life of the believer.

BUT...if you’re motive isn’t right...follow through anyway

8:11-12

¹We are not saying “spontaneous.” That would give the idea that no thought was long given to the giving project.

²Just as he did in the previous chapter for the restoration of the disciplined brother.

11 but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have. 12 For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have. We have two things happening here: 1. Paul doesn't care what your motive was a year ago. If you made a commitment, follow through (**complete the doing of it**); 2. This is supposed to be, after all is said and done, a rational decision (**willing mind**).

3. The Right Kind of Giving is Transparently Managed.

8:19-21

and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches Is that a fact? Another proof-text of congregational action? This was not democratic republic where the elders chose. No, we had the precedence of individuals within the congregation giving a collective forgiveness to an offender (see notes on 7:11). **to travel with us with this gift**, talk about a tremendous spiritual gift in light of 1 Corinthians 12-14. **which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind**, It seems like this means the safeguarding and distribution of the offerings was performed in part, by Titus, because the churches said so.

20 avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us—

21 providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. It's probably not possible to be dogmatic here, but it seems that Paul is going out of his way to say that they are including many witnesses in the form of Titus and the man who accompanied him (8:18-19) along with Timothy to be sure that there is financial transparency and integrity. They would not have minded you seeing an elaborate budget if this were a church business meeting.

8:22-23

22 And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, The best commentary I can add here is that of somebody else's:

“The person referred to has been variously identified with Titus' brother, Barnabas, Mark, Luke, and Epaenetus, mentioned in Rom. 16:5. The reference to Epaenetus has been urged on the ground of a supposed play upon the word *praise*, *epainos*; Epaenetus meaning *praiseworthy*...”³

but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which we have in you. 23 If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, See note on 8:19. Incidentally, Titus and his fellow traveler are the “advance party” so to speak to keep the Corinthian church from being embarrassed when Paul shows up to receive their offering (9:3-5). **the glory of Christ.**

messengers of the churches See this rendering “Whether as regards Titus, he is my companion and fellow-labourer in your behalf; or our brethren, they are deputed messengers of assemblies, Christ's glory.” (1890 Darby Bible)⁴ Perhaps this is a proof-text for “missionaries going on deputation” as many independent churches exercise. When they go and do work among other peoples, they should be deputies of many churches? Perhaps this is an application by extension, but certainly we are not dealing with evangelistic work

8:24-9:1

9:1 Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; “There's precious little more that I should need to say about this...”

9:15

³Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 332.

⁴John Nelson Darby, *The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation from the Original Languages* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1996), 2 Co 8:23.

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! So let's talk a minute about the **gift** of giving. Contextually, the reason it is an **indescribable gift** to give is because it is a foretaste of Gospel glory to be experienced after this life: The joy of abandoned generosity and sacrifice, and the joy of knowing you are really a part of a family—which would mean nothing if we didn't know that's what we started as in the Garden.

Talk:

Gideons

Lottie Moon offering (IMB)

With all of this talk of “apostles calling for opportunity-driven love offerings,” one must at least mention three differences from today's church economy:

1. We have pastors, not apostles. The bottom line here is that since I am not a multi-church authority who happens to do miracles and write Scriptures, but rather have but one church I am leading and am limited to the influence of the Holy Spirit in my own life through the pages of the Scripture, you get me and not Paul.
2. We practice tithing, not offerings only;
 - a. So if you are hoping to get a message on tithing; it's not here. You'll need another passage of Scripture. In this passage it stresses to give in proportion to what you have been given (9:6). The neat thing is that a “proportion” is a percentage. Moreover, this is volunteer giving (8:8).
 - b. If you're hoping for a message on faith giving; it's not here. You'll need another passage of Scripture. In this passage it stresses to give of what you have; not of what you hope to have (8:2; 8:12)
3. We budget, not simply offer or pressure giving opportunities.

Why, then, do we give tithes to the church on a regular, predictable basis?

- a. Because this is both free-will and percentage-driven giving. I guess that's why we talk about tithing so much. A “tithe” is a percentage, 10%.
- b. Because we call this our church home, and we take care of our home, and pay our bills.
 - i. Members
 - ii. Regulars
- c. Because our bills are predictable.
 - i. Mortgages (FLC)
 - ii. Utilities
 - iii. Services (copier; cleaning)
 - iv. Supplies (office supplies; nursery supplies; curriculum)
 - v. Salaries
 1. Staff
 - a. Pastoral
 - b. Office
 2. Missionaries/Missionary Organizations

I guess we could bring a stack of bills to each monthly business meeting and vote on them, but instead we budget them. We even vote on our budget.