

## **2 Corinthians**

Leon L. Combs, Ph.D.

### **Chapter Nine**

Here is an example of an unfortunate chapter break for Paul is continuing his thoughts from the end of “chapter” eight.

**2Cor 9:1 For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints;  
2Cor 9:2 for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians,  
namely, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of  
them.  
2Cor 9:3 But I have sent the brethren, that our boasting about you may not be made empty  
in this case, that, as I was saying, you may be prepared;  
2Cor 9:4 lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to speak  
of you) should be put to shame by this confidence.**

In verse one he is saying that he knows he does not need to write to them about the ministry to the church at Jerusalem that he discussed in “chapter” eight. It was the original enthusiastic response of the Corinthians that inspired the churches in Macedonia to give sacrificially. However a year had passed and there had been some doubts raised about Paul’s ministry by the false teachers so Paul had to renew his efforts to prompt the Corinthians to finish their campaign to raise money for the Jerusalem church. Thus Paul sent Titus and the two unnamed workers to them so that they would have the offering prepared. Paul was concerned that if anyone from Macedonia came with him to Corinth and the offering was not ready that he and they would be embarrassed and shamed because of an apparent false confidence.

**2Cor 9:5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you  
and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, that the same might be  
ready as a bountiful gift, and not affected by covetousness.**

Paul sent Titus and the two workers to Corinth to make sure that the pledge was fulfilled. They apparently had pledged a significant sum of money to help the Jerusalem church. We do not know how much of it was collected before the false teachers caused troubles there but when a promised large pledge has been dormant for some time there may be a tendency for some people to wonder if perhaps they should keep it for themselves. We made a pledge to our church in Mississippi before we knew that we were going to spend a year in Sweden on reduced funding. We could have been tempted to not pay the pledge since our financial situation changed but we realized that our pledge to God, not the church, was important so we paid it and we were blessed with all that we needed – and more – while we lived in Sweden. I would not think that the Corinthians were insulted by the inference that covetousness might slip into their midst for they should have known the insidious nature of that sin:

*Mark 7:21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications,  
thefts, murders, adulteries,*

*Mark 7:22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.*

*Mark 7:23 "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."*

**2Cor 9:6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully.**

**2Cor 9:7 Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.**

**2Cor 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;**

These verses have been used by some pastors to entice people to give more to their churches. They say that "you cannot out give the Lord" or such statements. God does not promise that He will pour back worldly treasures to us when we give to Him for our treasures are in heaven:

*Matt 6:20 "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;*

The Word Faith and the Health and Wealth Gospel have done great damage to Christians by bringing a false teaching to people telling them that God wants His children to be wealthy by worldly standards. Some of God's people are wealthy but the NT does not lift up such an ideal. Paul and the other apostles had no earthly treasures and even Jesus did not even have a house:

*Luke 9:58 And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

As he said in verse seven, we should all give just as we have discovered in our heart is the correct amount of the gift and the correct recipient of the gift. Having proposed something in our heart means that we have given the matter careful thought and prayer. We should never feel that we are being compelled by someone else to give and we should never give in a grudging manner because such an attitude would reveal a covetous spirit. God loves a cheerful giver and such a giver never regrets his gift when he has carefully determined it. His grace will determine that we have our needs met and that we will even have abundance for all of our good deeds. Different people will probably have different estimates of what constitutes abundance. Most of us have abundance already for we have more than we need.

God will not give to satisfy our greed  
but he will give to satisfy our need.

His promise is that we will have plenty for every good deed. In other words, He will make sure that we have the resources to provide for the continuing needs of the Kingdom.

**2Cor 9:9 as it is written, "He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, His righteousness abides forever."**

**2Cor 9:10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness;**

**2Cor 9:11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.**

**2Cor 9:12 For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.**

All of this may sound like God is promising to make His generous children wealthy but remember the previous chapter:

*2Cor 8:13 For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality--  
2Cor 8:14 at this present time your abundance being a supply for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want, that there may be equality;*

The reason for God's children to have worldly goods is primarily for the work of the Kingdom of God and not for our individual "kingdoms". Note carefully verse eleven that states that we will be enriched in all things for all of our liberality. God promises that our cycle of giving will be continued. We give and God will provide so that we can give more. That giving will produce thanksgiving to God and not to us. We do receive some thanks but we should always make sure that God gets the glory and we should ensure that the peoples' thanksgiving goes to Him. In the last verse Paul reiterates that the services of giving will not only supply the needs of the saints but that there will be an overflowing of thanksgiving to God. We give to a ministry so that ministry can disciple more people in the Word of God and God will receive the thanks. So we need to be sure that our giving goes to organizations that glorify the name of God and not the name of some man.

**2Cor 9:13 Because of the proof given by this ministry they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all,**

**2Cor 9:14 while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you.**

**2Cor 9:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!**

Actions speak louder than words.

*James 1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

The church at Jerusalem was going to be the recipient of the money taken during this ministry and they would certainly give glory to God for the obedience of the church at Corinth to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Jewish Christians were suspicious of the reality of the confessions of faith by the Gentile Christians (Acts 11:4-18) and Corinth was widely known for its immorality so this gift would demonstrate the reality of their faith. Paul promised the Corinthians that the church at Jerusalem would pray for them all and also yearn to see them all. The church is unified by such generosity as Christians help Christians in need. Paul then gives a very rich benediction as he thanks God for the gift of His son so that many children of God throughout time would be one with Him just as Jesus is one with the Father.

*John 17:20 "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;*

*John 17:21 that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.*

Paul did get to visit the Corinthians again after writing this letter. He stayed there for about three months (Acts 20:1-3) where he wrote the book of Romans. In that letter he praised the offerings for more people to know about:

*Rom 15:25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints.*

*Rom 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.*

*Rom 15:27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.*

Two thousand years later we still praise these early Christians for their sacrificial giving to help brothers and sisters in Christ. Praise God!