

## Paul's Fourth Letter to the Corinthians – Part 3 (Fall 54)

### 2 Corinthians 8–9

#### The Generosity of the Macedonians

8:1 Now we make known to you, brothers and sisters, the grace of God given to the churches of Macedonia,  
 2 that during a severe ordeal of suffering, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in the wealth of their generosity.  
 3 For I testify, they gave according to their means and beyond their means. They did so voluntarily,  
 4 begging us with great earnestness for the blessing and fellowship of helping the saints.  
 5 And they did this not just as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and to us by the will of God.  
 6 Thus we urged Titus that, just as he had previously begun this work, so also he should complete this act of kindness for you.

#### Paul Urges the Corinthians to Give Liberally

7 But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, and in all eagerness and in the love from us that is in you—make sure that you excel in this act of kindness too.  
 8 I am not saying this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love by comparison with the eagerness of others.  
 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that although he was rich, he became poor for your sakes, so that you by his poverty could become rich.  
 10 So here is my opinion on this matter: It is to your advantage, since you made a good start last year both in your giving and your desire to give,  
 11 to finish what you started, so that just as you wanted to do it eagerly, you can also complete it according to your means.  
 12 For if the eagerness is present, the gift itself is acceptable according to whatever one has, not according to what he does not have.

#### Paul's Desire for Equality

13 For I do not say this so there would be relief for others and suffering for you, but as a matter of equality.  
 14 At the present time, your abundance will meet their need, so that one day their abundance may also meet your need, and thus there may be equality,  
 15 as it is written: *"The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."* [[Exod 16:18](#)]

#### The Delegates and Their Credentials

16 But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same devotion I have for you,  
 17 because he not only accepted our request, but since he was very eager, he is coming to you of his own accord.  
 18 And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his work in spreading the gospel.  
 19 In addition, this brother has also been chosen by the churches as our traveling companion as we administer this generous gift to the glory of the Lord himself and to show our readiness to help.  
 20 We did this as a precaution so that no one should blame us in regard to this generous gift we are administering.  
 21 For we are *concerned about what is right not only before the Lord but also before men.* [cf. [Prov 3:4](#)]  
 22 And we are sending with them our brother whom we have tested many times and found eager in many matters, but who now is much more eager than ever because of the great confidence he has in you.  
 23 If there is any question about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; if there is any question about our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.  
 24 Therefore show them openly before the churches the proof of your love and of our pride in you.

#### The Need for Readiness

9:1 For it is not necessary for me to write you about this service to the saints,  
 2 because I know your eagerness to help. I keep boasting to the Macedonians about this eagerness of yours, that Achaia has been ready to give since last year, and your zeal to participate has stirred up most of them.  
 3 But I am sending these brothers so that our boasting about you may not be empty in this case, so that you may be ready just as I kept telling them.  
 4 For if any of the Macedonians should come with me and find that you are not ready to give, we would be humiliated (not to mention you) by this confidence we had in you.  
 5 Therefore I thought it necessary to urge these brothers to go to you in advance and to arrange ahead of time the generous contribution you had promised, so this may be ready as a generous gift and not as something you feel forced to do.

#### Divine Principles of Giving

6 My point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously.

7 Each one of you should give just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, because God loves a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace overflow to you so that because you have enough of everything in every way at all times, you will overflow in every good work.

9 Just as it is written, “*He has scattered widely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness remains forever.*” [[Ps 112:9](#)]

10 Now God who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your supply of seed and will cause the harvest of your righteousness to grow.

11 You will be enriched in every way so that you may be generous on every occasion, which is producing through us thanksgiving to God,

12 because the service of this ministry is not only providing for the needs of the saints but is also overflowing with many thanks to God.

13 Through the evidence of this service they will glorify God because of your obedience to your confession in the gospel of Christ and the generosity of your sharing with them and with everyone.

14 And in their prayers on your behalf they long for you because of the extraordinary grace God has shown to you.

15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

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