

**Ministry of The Holy Spirit**  
**How a Healthy Body Functions**  
**2 Corinthians 8:1 – 9:15**

Last time...repentance

Although you would not know it in much of the Church today, repentance is not a dirty word but a wonderful gift from our wonderful God whereby a sinner comes into a healthy spiritual relationship with God

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, paid for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2, John 3:16)) but the sinner must confess (agree with God) and repent (change in behavior) to receive Jesus' "payment" and be reconciled unto God Who is merciful and gracious, holy and just

This time...another topic – how a healthy Body functions

Being a ready and willing stewards of God's things for the benefit of others in need

The Royal Law in action

The Body of Christ acting in one accord with the Head of the Body

Context: The Church in Jerusalem is being persecuted and is suffering, having been cast out of the synagogue/congregation (John 9:22)

The Apostle Paul, at the time of this writing, is taking a love offering from the Gentile churches to them

Rom 15:25-27 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

**2 Cor 8**

v1-2 The Holy Spirit, thru Paul, wants the church at Corinth to know the grace of God given to the churches in Macedonia – Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea

Remember from Ch 6:1, "the grace of God" means

1. the Gospel
2. God's nature
3. God's gift to sinners – removal of sins and the stain of sin  
(goes hand-in-hand with the gift of repentance/Godly sorrow)
4. our service to the Lord, the Head of the Body of Christ

What is in view in 2 Cor 8-9 is that last meaning – our service unto the Head of the Body  
This is the grace of God that was given to the churches in Macedonia

In times of trials of great affliction,  
the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty  
(they were also in dire financial distress because of the name of Jesus)  
was evident by their generosity in helping others  
i.e. the persecuted Church in Jerusalem, for whom Paul is collecting a  
love offering from the Gentile churches

1 Thes 1:3-6

1 Thes 2:14

Foundation: Ps 24:1 and 1 Cor 6:19-20

Everything belongs to God, we own nothing,  
which makes us stewards of God's things He has entrusted with us  
The Head of the Body owns everything entrusted to all the parts of the Body,  
to be used at the direction of the Head for the good of the entire Body

v3-5 Paul bears testimony that their power to help was not natural (they were in affliction also)  
but supernatural  
power = *dunamis*, power from on High (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8)

In a “natural” sense, the calculation to help others in need would have resulted in  
“We are struggling, too; we cannot even cover our bills.  
It ‘doesn’t add up’ for us to help our brethren.”

But in a supernatural sense, the “calculation” to help resulted in  
“We are struggling, too; we cannot even cover our bills.  
It ‘doesn’t add up’ for us to help our brethren, but we want to help!  
We are willing to help by faith in God...we will trust the Lord.”

The power of God cannot be input into a calculator or a spreadsheet!

Arriving at their decision to, by faith help brethren in need, those churches pleaded with  
the Apostle Paul to take their love offering to Jerusalem  
They responded not as Paul expected, not as spiritually immature followers of Jesus but  
mature in faith as they were led by the Spirit

Rom 12:10-11 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;  
in honour preferring one another, Not slothful in business;  
fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.*

Note: In context, the help is financial  
But “help” does not equal “money” (sometimes money is NOT help)  
Help might be prayer, a word fitly spoken (Prov 25:11, Prov 15:23),  
other material goods, etc

v6-7 The Corinthian church had an excess in everything

- faith
- utterance...preaching and teaching
- knowledge...of God and the Word of God (Paul was there 18 months)
- diligence...earnestness
- love...*agape*...for Paul and the saints

Paul's desire, from the heart of God, is that the church at Corinth be given this grace of God also and serve the Lord in this way too

v8-9 Paul is not saying "Thus says the Lord – Give!"

But because of the earnest diligence of the other churches, he is calling on the church at Corinth to prove that their love for the Lord and His people is real  
Because God so loved them!

John 3:16

Jesus was rich

John 1:1, 4

Heb 1:2b-3a heir of all things, being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power

Col 2:9 in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Yet became poor...because He loved us

John 1:14

Phil 2:6-8 being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (lower than the angels) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

That we thru His poverty might be made rich

Heb 2:14-15 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

John 8:31-32, 36

John 10:10b I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

2 Cor 5:17-21

Eph 1:3, 7-8 hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ...In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;  
 Prov 13:7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet *hath* nothing: *there is* that maketh himself poor, yet *hath* great riches.

Therefore, Matt 10:8 *freely ye have received, freely give.*

v10-11 Therefore, this is Paul's advice (not commandment) to the church at Corinth:  
 It is to your advantage that you be ready and willing now to do what you were ready and willing to do a year ago  
 Don't just say you are willing to help...help, do what you are saying  
 Like the churches of Macedonia, by the will of God and the heart of God  
Deut 15:7-11

v12 If a willing mind is present...the mind of Christ, the Head of the Body...  
 the willingness is approved/acceptable

- by what a person has...  
 "I have enough to help others in need."

Faith-based reasoning, factoring God into the equation  
 Monica's mother (of 14 children) always helping/feeding others,  
 always more tortillas and another pot of beans;  
 her children never went hungry  
 My grandmother (of 10 children) always had food to give to  
 "hobos" during the Great Depression;  
 her children never went hungry  
 The hospitality of the saints in Egypt, Mexico, etc

- not by what a person does not have...  
 "I would help if I had more (for myself).  
 I need to put something away for a rainy day before I can help someone else."

Knowledge-based reasoning, "It doesn't add up, it doesn't make sense."

Deut 16:17 Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

And "able" includes being able to

- believe/trust God, apart from which it is impossible to please Him
- be faithful stewards, the "job description"

v13-15 Paul is not exhorting the saints in Corinth in order to burden them while letting other saints be relieved from helping the saints in Jerusalem

Q: The “burden” of helping the brethren in need lies on the brethren not in need?

No, the “burden” lies on the Head of the Body while the blessing lies on

- the parts of the Body in need depending on the Lord
- the parts of the Body not in need and willing to by faith obey the Head of the Body

With the mind of Christ the Head of the Body, the Body of Christ ministers to herself  
The parts of the Body of Christ serve the Head of the Body by serving other parts of the Body in need...which is fluid (what goes around comes around)

Right now, the saints in Jerusalem need help from saints not in need.  
Later, the “script” might be flipped

In times of our surplus, we help those in need  
Because in our time of need, those with surplus will help us

That is how a healthy Body functions

Personal testimonies:

1. medical expenses of Monica’s cancer treatment
2. when 4 major appliances all died at the same time

Both need/lack and surplus/abundance “flow” thru the Body...

Over time, all parts experience surplus AND lack (example cited: manna)  
so in time all parts of the Body can 2 Peter 3:18

**Phil 4:10-19**

Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Rom 15:1 the strong help the weak

Phil 2:3 *Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

v16-17 Thanks be to God...the fruit of a healthy Body – thanksgiving

Titus has taken to heart with earnest diligence this exhortation

In fact, moved by the heart of God and the mind of Christ, Titus, of his own volition, went to them...to help them in their time of need – to receive

- Paul’s heavy letter of correction and instruction in righteousness
- God’s gift of repentance
- the grace of God

v18-21 At the time of this writing, Paul and Co are in Philippi, headed toward Jerusalem with the gift of the Gentile churches in Macedonia and Achaia

Titus is with him, as is Luke

Accompanying Paul to Jerusalem were (Acts 20:4)

- Sopater of Berea and Thessalonica
- Aristarchus
- Secundas
- Gaius
- Timothy
- Tychicus
- Trophimus

What is the name of the brother sent with Titus?

Scripture does not say, so we will remain silent and not speculate

Besides, what is the only name that matters?

Acts 4:12...the Name of the Head of the Body

btw...reaction of “He Gets Us” ads during Super Bowl...

But what do we learn?

The brother is described as

- his commendation in all the churches is the Gospel
- being selected by the churches to travel with Paul and their gift to Jerusalem
- because he
  - abstained from all appearance of evil (1 Thes 5:22)
  - was above reproach in financial matters, not tempted by Mammon
  - honest in the sight of God and man

What we need to learn

v22-24 And what is the name of the brother sent with “them” (Titus and “Brother 1”)?

Again, Scripture is silent; if God wanted us to know He would have told us

Titus, Brother 1, and Brothers 2 have

- the confidence of the Apostle Paul
- a proven track record of faithfulness

Titus is Paul’s

- partner in the ministry/Gospel
- co-laborer in God’s work in Corinth

Brother 1 and Brother 2 are messengers/ambassadors of the churches and of Christ

Therefore, saints in Corinth, show them and all the churches the proof of

- your love for the Lord and for the saints
- all my boasting about you (Ch 7:16)

## 2 Cor 9

- v1-2 When it comes to exhorting the church at Corinth to minister to brethren in need  
(in Jerusalem now and who knows who later),  
Paul acknowledges that his writing about it is excessive because he knows they are  
predisposed to help those in need

He has already boasted of them in this regard to the churches in Macedonia...  
and many in Macedonia were stirred into action themselves

Heb 10:22-24 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,  
having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our  
bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of  
*our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised; And  
let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works

- v3-5 Nonetheless, excessive in writing this or not, he will send Titus, Brother 1, and Brother 2  
to make sure they are as ready and willing now as they were a year ago

Paul would hate to find them unprepared to help and for him to get “egg on his face”  
for boasts of them that turn out to be empty

Titus, Brother 1, and Brother 2 are going to Corinth to “work the soil” of the hearts there  
so the church at Corinth would

- “share the love” of God’s faithfulness to them
- be faithful stewards of God’s things for the benefit of others
- not be covetousness (self-centered and idolatry; Col 3:5)

- v6 The universal, unchanging, unchanged-able truth of the Law of Sowing and Reaping
- we reap what we sow
  - we reap later than we sow
  - we reap more than we sow
  - we reap as we sow – either stingily or generously

- v7 The Law of Sowing and Reaping applies to worshipping/serving God in our giving  
In the OT, giving was tithing (10%)  
But Rom 10:4  
So in the NT, giving is a matter of the heart  
And that matter is between the Lord and His servant/steward

What is God's heart?

Ready and willing and cheerful

Ex 35:4-5a And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded (always for our good), saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever *is* of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD

Deut 15:7-11 a helping hand open wide

Ps 81:10b open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

Matt 6:19-34

What should our heart be?

Ready and willing and cheerful

not grudging..."I wish I didn't have to do this, I don't want to do this."

not of necessity...out of obligation, "I have to do this." (legalism)

cheerfully..."This is something I get to do unto the Lord and His people!"

v8-10 Quoting the words of God in Ps 112:9 and Eccl 11:1-2, Paul declares that  
God is able to be that factor in the equation that cannot be entered into a  
calculator or a spreadsheet

God is able to care for all of His servants/stewards

God is ever-faithful!

God does not want for Himself the things that are already His (Ps 24:1) e.g. money  
He wants what is not His...that which must be willingly offered to Him – our hearts

Ps 50:7-15

Mal 3:8-10

God's faithfulness, our trust in Him Who is able to take care of His servants produces...

v11-14 fruit – thanksgiving unto God

His faithfulness to care for His people, the ability of the Head of the Body to bear the  
burden of all needs of all parts of the Body, leaves us proclaiming  
PTL!

Thank you, Jesus!

The functioning of a healthy Body whereby those in need are by faith in the Head helped  
by the generosity of others by faith in the Head

- meets the needs of all parts of the Body
- gives hyper-abundant praises of thanksgiving to the Head of the Body and to the Father, Who are abjectly worthy of ALL praise and honor and glory!

The Family of God, functioning as a healthy Body, is tight!

v15 Bottom line: Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift(s)

- Light
- Life
- Love
- Faith
- Grace
- Repentance
- Salvation from eternal death

Matt 10:8

The Lord is the Reason we are members of His Body and brethren in the Family of God  
He is the Reason we are to be ready and willing to share His gifts with others...  
the love of Christ compels us!

The Lord knows our needs and will meet them, as we seek first the Kingdom of God and  
His righteousness

We are stewards of God's wonderful gifts

Required of a steward:

faithfulness, diligence, honesty above reproach,  
willingness and readiness and cheerfulness to help others in need

Attributes that are proven over time in many different circumstances

The help we give to someone in need will be the help we get when we are in need  
Be prepared to help now...prepare our hearts and minds

Helping others is what we get to do!

Worshipping the Lord in our giving is what we get to do!

Serving the Lord and others is what we get to do...being a part of what God is doing

The lifeblood of a healthy Body is Love/*agape*...Matt 22:36-40

- Love of the Head for every part
- Love of every part for the Head and for every other part