

- I) V1-4 INTRO: Now concerning the **collection for the saints** as I have given orders to Paul is closing his letter and moves from **the doctrinal** to **the practical**
- II) Paul closes by addressing a **collection for the poor saints** (in Jerusalem)
Collection: Gathering together finances (for poor saints and a **general offering**)
HOW HAD THEY BECOME POOR
- III) The church in Jerusalem became poor because of **persecution** and **famine**
A great persecution had arisen against the believers, also in Jerusalem
FIRST: PERSECUTION
- IV) After Stephen's death, **the Church** in Jerusalem became a target of hatred
Ac 8:1 **On that day** a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.
AT ONE TIME
- V) The Church at Jerusalem was able to care for its own members
This especially was true in the beginning of its history
Ac 2:44-45 All **the believers** were together and had everything in common. Selling their **possessions** (estates) and **goods**, they gave to anyone as he had need.
Ac 4:34-35 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were **possessors of lands or houses** sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and **laid them** at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each **as anyone had need**.
- VI) The church was taught that caring for believers was a way of life
Titus 3:14 let our people also learn to maintain good works, **to meet urgent needs**, that they may not be unfruitful.
SECOND: FAMINE
- VII) The famine is spoken of in Acts and prompted the need for the collection
Ac 11:28-30 Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples **each according to his ability**, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.
- VIII) The combination of persecution and famine severely effected the church
- IX) From the time persecution arose, believers began to suffer and some became poor
In response, Paul appealed to the church to meet the need of their brethren

- I) Heb 13:16 Do not neglect to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased
- II) The collection Paul is gathering basically had **two purposes**
This is important for us to see
FIRST
- III) It was intended to relieve the **physical needs** of the poor believers in Jerusalem
Jas 2:15-16 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?
1 Jn 3:18 Dear children, let's not merely **say** that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.
SECOND
- IV) It revealed the **spiritual unity** of the Body of Christ
1 Co 12:26 If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it
Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, **especially** to those who are of the **household of faith**.
- V) The Corinthians were aware of the need the Jerusalem church was in
The way he says **concerning the collection** makes it clear they knew of the need
He had mentioned this to them before and they were aware of it
- VI) V1b **As I have given orders** (directed) to the churches of Galatia, so you **must do**
This is not recorded in scripture but it's possible they were aware of it
- VII) Paul **ordered** the churches to contribute to the needs of these believers
He exercised his apostolic authority to issue a reasonable command
This was obviously something that they should do
- VIII) Briefly, this is something that reminds of something he wrote to the Galatians
Paul met with James (the Lord's brother), Peter, and John
- IX) When he met with them they requested him to do something
Gal 6:10 They desired only that **we should remember the poor**, the very thing which I also was eager to do
Paul desired the church to care for those in need in the church

- I) V2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside storing up a Paul now lays down principles for giving offerings **to the Lord**
KEY
- II) Financial gifts are always given to God first, and then distributed as needs arise
2 Co 8:5 they first gave themselves to the Lord and then to us by the will of God
- III) V2 On the **first day** of the week (Sunday, the day set apart from work to worship)
Jesus had risen from the dead on a Sunday and it became the day of worship
Ac 20:7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread...
- IV) This would be a good day for them to receive their offerings
Obviously it is appropriate to give regularly, but Sunday is an obvious time
- V) This shows us that **giving** is part of **regular worship to** God
Giving is done regularly as part of a Christian's worship to the Lord
ON A PRACTICAL LEVEL
- VI) Giving is one of the most tangible expressions of faith that a believer practices
It is done regularly, not just when you have extra money or feel generous
It is one of the most **tangible** acts of worship we practice
- VII) Jesus revealed this in something He observed and commented on
Mk 12:41-44 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything --all she had to live on."
INTERESTINGLY
- VIII) In this *one* simple story we have *two* very basic spiritual lessons
First: There is a rebuke to those who live well but **give little** to the Lord
Mt 6:19-20 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal
SECOND
- IX) It is a lesson to the poor who fail to *trust the Lord* and give Him *nothing at all*
Phil 4:19 My God shall supply **all your need** according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus

- I) **Quote:** If both the rich and the poor seriously consider this, one will learn **compassion** and the other will learn **generosity**, and **both** will be blessed by the Lord
THIRD
- II) Let *each one of you* (Each Christian cares for the need of other believers)
2 Co 8:13-14 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; 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.
FOURTH
- III) Paul writes *storing up* (Putting aside)
This actually speaks of a treasury, normally a Temple: *To the Church*
Ac 4:34-35 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, *And laid them down at the apostles' feet:* and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.
Mal 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into *the storehouse*, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.
- IV) This speaks of budgeting for the work of the Lord
It requires responsible stewardship and a proper priority of spending
IF I ASKED
- V) Who are the most effective evangelists, many would reply with a Christian leader
The greatest evangelists are corporations: ABC, CBS, NBC, cable, internet
- VI) The world has the **funds** and **physical** resources, and we help to support them
The world cup alone is projected to generate \$8.9 billion in revenue
- VII) Believers are to be good stewards and use our finances wisely
Contrary to what the world believes about us, money is not our God
- VIII) Financial faithfulness is basic to believers because we have an eternal perspective
We realize we don't take it with us, but we send it up ahead
1 Ti 6:6-8 Godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

- I) Concern for the care of others actually goes against our old nature
This is because our sinful nature is more inclined to receive, not to give
- II) By *giving*, I become more like the **God who gave** and **Who still gives**
This often will incur *sacrifice*, as in the case of the Macedonian churches
2 Co 8:1-3 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own
- III) We are stewards of all that God gives us, no matter how much or little we have
The giving of support is part of our stewardship responsibility
1 Co 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
FIFTH
- IV) V2 As he may *prosper* (Literally, to be led along a good road)
There is no **percentage** for giving in the NT
2 Co 8:12 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
- V) Giving is assumed to be part of the life of a believer in response to God's love
2 Co. 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
- VI) V2 That there be no collections when I come
He did not want them scrambling to collect an offering but should be prepared
2 Co 9:4-5 For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we -- not to say anything about you -- would be ashamed of having been so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift **you had promised**. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.
- VII) V3 And when I come whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your
Paul avoided involving himself in collecting the money and taking it to Jerusalem
He instructed them to select trusted men, which kept him blameless
- VIII) V4 But if it is fitting that I go also they will go with me

I) Titus was one who went, as well as two unnamed believers (2Co 8:16-22)

II) If my presence is demanded, then I will accompany them

2 Co 8:20-21 We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

KEY

III) It took some time for them to do this

2 Co 8:10-11 And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; but now you also must complete the doing of it; that there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have

III) They ultimately made good on their promise

Ro 15:25-27 I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. For *Macedonia* and *Achaia* were pleased to make a contribution for the poor *among* the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, *they owe it to the Jews* to share with them their material blessings.