

The Ministry for the Saints; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9

I. Readiness

- A. 2 Corinthians 9:1–2 (ESV); ¹ Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, ² for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has stirred up most of them.
- B. The context of these Scriptures revolve around a gift that was taken up for the saints in Jerusalem affected by a famine
 - 1. Acts 11:27–30 (ESV); ²⁷ Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). ²⁹ So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. ³⁰ And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.
 - 2. Claudius was the Roman Emperor from AD 41-54
 - 3. This famine has been confirmed by multiple historians — Josephus (AD 37-100), Suetonius (AD 69-122), Tacitus (AD 56- 120); all of these chronicled the history of Rome
 - 4. The famine occurred around AD 46-47
- C. Agabus predicted the famine and the Churches got to work coordinating with one another to send their gifts to Jerusalem
- D. They saw the need (even though it had not happened yet) and responded
- E. Readiness — exceptional interest in being of service; eager enthusiasm
 - 1. How many of us are eagerly enthusiastic about helping those in need?
 - 2. How many of us have an exceptional interest in service those who cannot help themselves?
 - 3. Paul tells the Corinthians that the church(es) in Achaia had been ready since the previous year!
 - 4. This readiness (zeal) had influenced other congregations to send help
 - 5. Our zeal (readiness) can do the same
- F. Willingness vs. exaction
- G. 2 Corinthians 9:5 (ESV); So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an exaction.
 - 1. Our hearts must be in it
 - 2. Our desire must be to help those in need
 - 3. We must desire to imitate the savior (who helped those in need)
- H. We need to be a people who are eager to help those around us
- I. We need to be a people who are looking for ways to help those who are less fortunate
- J. We need to be a people who are willing to give (not under compulsion)

II. Cheerfulness

- A. 2 Corinthians 9:6–7 (ESV); ⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
- B. The law of sowing and reaping
- C. Galatians 6:6–10 (ESV); ⁶ Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. ⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows,

that will he also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

- D. "Give as he has decided" — we must have forethought in our offering
1. It is not a spur of the moment
 2. We don't look in our wallets and purses and find something (or not) and give whatever it is we have found
 3. We determine, purposefully, what we can give according to what God has given us
 4. 2 Corinthians 8:12–15 (ESV); ¹² For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³ For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴ your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. ¹⁵ As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack."

E. Forethought and willingness bring about cheerful giving

III. Confession

- A. 2 Corinthians 9:10–15 (ESV); ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, ¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!
- B. There is so much in the last part of our text
1. Giving increases righteousness
 2. Giving enriches the giver
 3. Giving causes thanksgiving to God
 4. Giving is submission to God
 5. Giving is a confession of the Gospel
 6. It is these last two that I want to focus on
- C. Giving is submission to God
1. We must understand that we serve something bigger than we are
 2. Our submission to the Gospel means we think of others needs before our own (both spiritual and physical needs)
 3. In submitting to God's will we pledge who we are and what we have in service to Him — and that service means giving to others who are in need
- D. Giving is confessing the Gospel
1. Confession is much more than words — it is actions
 2. Matthew 5:14–16 (ESV); ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

3. Philippians 4:16–18 (ESV); ¹⁶ Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. ¹⁸ I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.
4. Paul uses language that brings our minds back to sacrifices under the Mosaic Law
5. Exodus 25:1–8 (ESV); ¹ The Lord said to Moses, ² “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. ³ And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, ⁴ blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats’ hair, ⁵ tanned rams’ skins, goatskins, acacia wood, ⁶ oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, ⁷ onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. ⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.
6. Then entire tabernacle was made from an offering!

IV. Ministry

- A. Our offering is a ministry to those in need
- B. Our offering is a cheerful gift to God
- C. We reap what we sow
- D. Our offering is a confession of the Gospel — the good news of Jesus who is the Christ