“Doing Our Part In The Ministry”

2 Corinthians 8:6-15
9/18/2011

Introduction: (vv.6-9)

I. **Do What You <u>SAY</u> You Will Do** (v.10-11)
(<u>Fulfill</u> your <u>promises</u> to the Lord’s ministry)

II. **Do What You Are <u>ABLE</u> to Do** (v.12)
(Give According to your <u>ability</u> to the Lord’s ministry)

III. **Do What Others <u>NEED</u> You to Do** (v.13-15)
(<u>Equally Share</u> the <u>Load</u> of the Lord’s ministry)

“Doing Our Part In The Ministry”

2 Corinthians 8:6-15
9/18/2011

Introduction: (vv.6-9)

I. **Do What You _____ You Will Do** (v.10-11)
(_____ your _____ to the Lord’s ministry)

II. **Do What You Are _____ to Do** (v.12)
(Give According to your _____ to the Lord’s ministry)

III. **Do What Others _____ You to Do** (v.13-15)
(_____ the _____ of the Lord’s ministry)

"Doing Our Part In The Ministry"

2 Corinthians 8:6-15
9/18/2011

Introduction: (vv.6-9)

A whole year had passed between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. A year prior, the Corinthians were exhorted to help the needy church at Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4). In response to that Epistle, they stated their eagerness to send a big offering to help the Lord's work and people. For some reason, the Corinthian believers were "dragging their heals" in keeping their promise to give. Now Paul admonishes them to follow through in their decision. To help motivate them, Paul lets them know of the Macedonian believers great sacrifice in giving toward the great need (8:1-5). He informs them of the Macedonian's giving while living themselves in deep poverty. They first gave themselves to the Lord and then gave of their substance.

Now it was the Corinthians turn to give. For this reason, Paul would send Titus to them so as to complete the opportunity for them to experience the grace to be a gracious blessing to others in need (v.6).

As noted above, the Corinthians' giving was not halted by apathy or selfishness, but by the rebellion against Paul incited by the false apostles. One of their most devious lies about him was that he was in the ministry for the money; that he was "walking in craftiness" (2 Cor. 4:2). But unlike the false apostles, Paul was not guilty of "peddling the word of God" (2:17). Nevertheless, the false accusations against him had raised doubts about his integrity among the Corinthians, effectively halting the collection. Nothing cripples people's willingness to give as much as a loss of confidence in their leaders. But since the relationship between the apostle and the Corinthians had been restored, it was time for them to complete what they had started." (MacArthur, p. 301).

v. 7
"As ye <u>abound</u>" - the Corinthians did nothing in moderation. They seemed to be so blessed, they overflowed in whatever they did. They had an overflowing abundance of: <u>faith</u> (they trusted God's promises); the <u>word</u> (they were skilled orators); <u>knowledge</u> (they were deep in theology); <u>diligence</u> (they were very earnest and had great zeal); <u>love</u> (they now loved Paul and his associates).

"See that ye abound in this grace also" - this grace of <u>giving</u>. It's one thing to overflow in skills; it's another to be an unselfish <u>giver</u>. Giving is the "measuring stick" or "barometer" of true spirituality. We are not to merely love in word but in deed (action) (1 Jn. 3:18).

v. 8

"I speak not by commandment" - Giving is something you cannot force out of people; you can't demand people to give you can only encourage it. And you can encourage it by giving others as a motivational example (as Paul does in this context); and Paul encourages giving as an opportunity for the Corinthians to demonstrate the genuineness of their love.

For giving certainly is the "acid test" of real love. You can give without loving (1 Cor. 13:1-3), but you cannot love without giving. True love always gives, as did God's love (Jn. 3:16).

v. 9

In verse 9, Paul gives the ultimate example of a love which gave. The measure of what Christ gave up for our benefit is the highest demonstration of love.

The Corinthians are <u>not</u> merely being encouraged to give, but to give to the Lord's work; to give to the ministry of the saints (v. 4). The greatest gift is the gift to the greatest cause; there is no cause as valuable as the Lord's cause.

I. Do What You <u>SAY</u> You Will Do (v.10-11)
(<u>Fulfill</u> your <u>promises</u> to the Lord's ministry)

v. 10

In the matter of giving, Paul now advises the Corinthians to keep their word, to do what they had promised.

"For this is expedient for you" - It is to your <u>profit</u> or <u>advantage</u> to not only make promises but to fulfill them.

How is it to one's advantage to keep one's word? God holds us accountable to our promises.

Satan is a liar and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Since he is the prince of this world's system, it is no wonder that lying is so much a part of our world. Credibility often seems to be non-existent. This "credibility gap is widened even further by popular novels, movies, television, music, and advertising--in which truth, fantasy, and outright falsehood are blended into mixtures impossible to unscramble. Truth is so scarce that nearly everyone is suspect. Business people, advertisers, commentators, clerks, salesmen, lawyers, doctors, tradesmen, teachers, writers, politicians, and even many, if not most, preachers are suspect. Our whole society is largely built on a network of fabrication, of manufactured "truth." We shade the truth, we cheat, we exaggerate, we misrepresent income tax deductions, we make promises we have no intention of keeping, we make up excuses, and betray confidences--all as a matter of normal, everyday living." (MacArthur, Matthew p. 320)

Be a man/woman of your word! Realize the sacredness of every promise you make!
Matthew 5:37
But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Thou "shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths."

Deut. 23:21-23 - "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill-offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth."

Scripture teaches that it is better not to vow than to vow and not pay (Eccl. 5:4-5). The reason is clear. A vow makes a person a debtor. The person is in debt to fulfill his vow or promise.

Num. 30:2 - "If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth."
Note: Interesting point in context - If a woman made a vow and her father or husband overheard it, she being under their authority, could have her vow annulled (Num. 30:4-5, 12-13)

Example of rash oaths: Joshua (Josh. 9:15); Jephthah (Jud. 11:30-31); Saul (I Sam. 14:24); and Herod (Mt. 14:7).

<u>Jephthah</u>

Judges 11:30
And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,

Judges 11:35
And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back.

Ecclesiastes 5:5
Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.

Wedding Vows:

_____, do you vow to take _____ to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, or for worse, for richer, or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love as Christ loved the Church, to cherish as you do your own flesh, and forsaking all others do you vow to keep yourself for Sarah only as long as you both shall live?

Reply: "I do"

FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH COVENANT

As a bond of unity among us, this Church accepts for its members the following covenant:

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and on profession of our faith in Him, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We promise that we will watch over each other, tend to each other's spiritual needs, and counsel one another in the spirit of brotherly love, that we will remember one another in our prayers, and that we will aid each other in sickness and distress.

We further agree, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines. As members of this church, we will strive to demonstrate the following attitudes and actions toward one another in the body of Christ: 1) Unity (Ephesians 4:3); 2) Kindness & Honor (Romans 12:10); 3) Love (Romans 13:8); 4) Christian Hospitality (Romans 15:7); Humble admonition (Romans 15:14); Loving Service (Galatians 5:13); Relief of burdens (Galatians 6:2); Forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32); Mutual Edification (I Thessalonians 5:11); and Exhortation (Hebrews 3:13). Every member should seek to use his or her gifts, talents and abilities in a ministry of Faith Baptist Church as God's Spirit leads. We the members of Faith Baptist Church will not pursue legal action or sue the pastor(s), deacons, or church staff in connection with the performance of their official duties, nor will we sue any member of the Church for any reason (I Cor. 6:1-8). We further agree to give our Church sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We further covenant to maintain family and private devotions; to educate our children in Biblical principles; to seek the salvation of our relatives and acquaintances; to live carefully in this present world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment.

> We agree to avoid all gossiping, back-biting and sinful anger; to abstain from the sale and use of all alcoholic beverages; to abstain from immorality and any sexual practice which is contrary to Biblical standards (I Thessalonians 4:3-8; Romans 1:26-32; Leviticus 18:22); to abstain from everything that will cause our brother to stumble or that will bring reproach upon the cause of Christ; and to strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, that amidst evil and good report we will humbly and earnestly seek to live to the honor and glory of Him who loves us and gave Himself for us.
>
> We moreover engage that if we relocate, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Why is it so important that Christians keep their word? Because God always keeps His word, and we are to be like Him.

v. 11

"Now therefore perform the doing of it" - Complete at this time what you promised a year ago.

Do it <u>now</u>! We are only on this earth for a brief time. Do whatever you planned to do for God <u>now</u>. Don't <u>procrastinate</u>!

II. Do What You Are <u>ABLE</u> to Do (v.12)
(Give According to your <u>ability</u> to the Lord's ministry)

"If there be first a willing mind" – Biblical giving (of anything – money, time, talents) always <u>begins</u> with a <u>willing mine</u> (an eager, fervent desire).

Before anything great flows out of our lives, it always begins with God stirring up the <u>desire</u>. God brings us out of ignorance to see a need; He transports us from apathy to a concern; He (by His Spirit) produces an inner motivation – a propelling incentive; He gives us the "want to."

This is why we pray for revival. We pray that god will stir the heart, because all ministry starts with God producing a "want to" – a willing mind.

Paul notes their "readiness" approvingly, because such readiness is an indication of the Corinthians' hearts being volitionally generous. During a Scottish worship service in Edinburgh, it is reports that one member of the congregation accidentally put in a crown piece instead of a penny, winced in the realization of what he'd done, and quietly asked for it back. But the usher was Scottish, too, and answered, "in once, in forever." "Oh well," groaned the giver, "I'll get credit for it in heaven." "No," said the usher, "you'll get credit for only a penny!" (Hughes, p. 160).

"It is accepted according to that a man hath" - Here, Paul refers to that which God accepts. God does <u>not</u> expect more from us than what He has given to us. To expect more would require us to extract more from the "flesh." God, who gives to every believer a proportion of faith (Ro. 12:6) or a divided portion (lot) of spiritual giftedness (1 Cor. 12:11) expects us to be faithful with what He has entrusted to us. To not bury our talent (Mt. 25:18) but to invest it (Mt. 25:27).

"Any ministry that attempts to pressure people to give beyond their resources is operating outside the bounds of biblical stewardship. So also are those who fail to give in proportion to their resources" (MacArthur, p. 302).

Believers who are in debt should not borrow and go further into debt in order to give, but should give of what they already possess. If we gave of what we possess now, we probably would avoid debts due to unfaithful stewardship.

Some people who didn't have much in this life will have the greatest rewards in Heaven. They perhaps were not the "brightest light"; they were certainly not themost well-known or famous of people. They didn't have much at all materially speaking, but they gave out of what they had to the Lord (and this is all God expected).

The widow who gave her last two mites (Lk. 21:2)
Or the woman of Zeraphath who gave her last drop of oil (1 Ki. 17:9ff)
Or the boy who gave his small lunch (Jn. 6:9)
--All received God's blessings!

What have you done with that which God has given you?

III. Do What Others NEED You to Do (v.13-15)
(Equally Share the Load of the Lord's ministry)

v. 13

Paul's desire in requesting the Corinthians to give was not so that others could be relived from giving and they be overly afflicted or pressured financially, but as he says in verse 14, that there could be an "equality" (v. 14) or a leveling out (where those who had more than they needed could be reduced while still maintaining their needs, and those who had less than they needed for survival could be increased so that they had their needs met).

v. 14
In verse 12, God teaches proportionate giving (giving in proportion to what God has given you). Now in verse 14, God teaches reciprocal giving (giving to one another of what God has given to us).

"Some of the Corinthians may also have been reluctant to give because of the charge of favoritism leveled against Paul by the false apostles. They accused him of being prejudiced in favor of the predominantly Jewish church at Jerusalem, since he also was Jewish. Thus, according to the anti-Paul faction, the apostle's goal in collecting the offering was to prejudicially enrich his countrymen at the expense of the Corinthians' deprivation.
"Anticipating that objection, Paul assured the Corinthians that the collection was **not for the ease of others.** His goal was not to raise the Jerusalem saints' comfort level by causing the Corinthians **affliction** and hardship. He was not out to make the rich poor and the poor rich. Instead, his goal was to oppose favoritism and instead to bring about some **equality** – not economic egalitarianism in a Marxist or sociality sense, but a balancing of resources." (MacArthur, p. 302).

Paul puts an interesting spin on his statement in verse 14. He says if you give, you will meet their needs, so that their abundance may someday come backt o meet <u>your needs</u>. Here the principle of "sowing and reaping" is implied.

The Law of "Sowing and Reaping" (Gal. 6:7) is applied to giving several times in Scripture.

Proverbs 3:9-10
Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:
So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Proverbs 11:25
The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

Luke 6:38
Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Remember: Whatever goes around, comes around. God keeps accurate records of what you give in His name (Mk. 9:41).

"Like me, you're probably weary of the pop-Christian motivations for giving – like "give and God will prosper you," misapplying Malachi 3:10 as is so often done by modern preachers. One preacher sent out an appeals letter that stated, "You can't out-give God. We have figured out that if everyone who hears our program sends $67.00, we'll have all the money we need, and god will give it back to you five times over." An astute listener wrote back, "I believe you can't out-give God. So here's my deal: you send me $67.00 and I'll have the money I need, and then God will give it back to you fives times over." Predictably, that was the last appeal he received." (Hughes, p. 161).

v. 15
Here, Paul is citing Exodus 16:18, where the Israelites were told together enough manna just for the day (an "omer" [2 quarts] for each person per day). Anything extra would rot away.

Most Americans today eat more than they need for energy (fuel), and the excess goes to fat. We also purchase more stuff than we need, which ends up in clutter collecting dust and eventually thrown out.

We would do well to streamline our lives so that we are not fat with extra stuff we really do not need. Give more away! Be a giver!