

September 18–24. 2 Corinthians 8–13: “God Loveth a Cheerful Giver”

Church Welfare

One purpose of Paul’s third missionary journey was to gather donations for the poor and needy members of the Church in Jerusalem

Paul tells the Corinthians about the willingness of the Saints in Macedonia to give liberally of their substance. How, despite their poverty and afflictions, they found great joy in being able to help other members of the church.

2Cor 8:1-5

[1] Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

[2] How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

[3] For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

[4] Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

[5] And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

How does Paul describe the Saints in Macedonia’s willingness to give?

(their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality)
(beyond their power they were willing of themselves)

Spencer W. Kimball

"We wish to remind all the Saints of the blessings that come from observing the regular fast and contributing as generous a fast offering as we can, and as we are in a position to give. Wherever we can, we should give many times the value of the meals from which we abstained.

"This principle of promise, when lived in the spirit thereof, greatly blesses both giver and receiver." (CR, April 1978)

What had they done first that had allowed them to rejoice in giving so liberally?

(first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God)
They had consecrated everything they had to God

Terence M. Vinson

“We can feel enduring joy when our Savior and His gospel become the framework around which we build our lives. However, it’s so easy for that framework to become, instead, the things of the world, where the gospel sits as an optional extra or as simply attending church for two hours on Sundays.

When this is the case, it is tantamount to putting our wages into ‘a bag with holes.’” (CR, Oct. 2019)

He talks about how you should feel about charitable giving

2 Cor 8:11-14

[11] Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

[12] For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

[13] For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

[14] But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

What is Paul counsel regarding our willingness to give and our ability to give?

(as there was *a readiness to will*, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have
if there be *first a willing mind*, it is accepted *according to that a man hath*
I mean not that other men be eased, *and ye burdened*: But by an equality)

Alexander B. Morrison

"Jesus proclaimed, 'Of a truth... this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.' Though the rich had given from their abundance, 'she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.' Jesus knew it is not the amount we give that matters. In the arithmetic of heaven, value is determined not by quantity but by quality. It is the intent of the willing heart and mind that is acceptable to God." (CR, Oct. 1999)

Paul teaches the importance of giving abundantly by using a metaphor

2Cor 9:6-7,12

[6] But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

[7] Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

[12] For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

Why is it important that we give of our substance cheerfully and bountifully?

(he which soweth bountifully shall *reap also bountifully*
God loveth a cheerful giver)

We not only help those in need but we also show love and gratitude to God

Franklin D. Richards

“We talk about making sacrifices to build the kingdom of God, but the word to me is a misnomer—to be able to participate in building the kingdom is a great privilege and blessing....

“Therefore, let us dispense the means which the Lord has given us to enrich the lives of others who are less fortunate than we are and to build the kingdom of God, that we may make of our life a good gift to God," (CR, April 1971)

False Teachers

Before he warns us about those who would lead us astray he speaks about some of his weaknesses – don't expect ministers of Christ to be articulate and charismatic

2Cor 10:7,10

[7] Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.

[10] For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

You are not suppose to consider the outward appearance of one who is of Christ. How does Paul describe his appearance and speech?

(his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible)

2Cor 11:6-7

[6] But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

[7] Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?

By what attribute should Paul be judged as a teacher?

Not appearance or ability to speak

But because he as abased (not exalted) himself for the cause of Christ

And the knowledge he brings is born witness of by the Holy Ghost

He warns them not to be deceived by the allure and craftiness of false teachers

2Cor 11:3-4,13-15

[3] But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

[4] For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye

have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

[13] For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

[14] And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

[15] Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

What warnings did Paul give the church about false teachers?

(your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ
deceitful workers... whose end shall be according to their works)

LeGrand Richards

"I tell you throughout the world the minds of men have been corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, and they have taught the commandments of men rather than the simple truths revealed in the Lord's holy word....

"Thank the Lord that, through the restoration of the gospel, those simple truths are a part of us and of our great work, and our minds are not corrupted." (CR, Oct. 1976)

Bruce R. McConkie

"There are two spiritual gifts in particular-the gifts of administration and of discernment-that the Lord has placed in his church to keep his people from being led astray. The saints need not fall heir to false doctrine; they have no need to accept false ordinances; they need not be led astray by false gifts; and their worship can be kept pure and perfect-as long as these two gifts are in active operation." (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, pg. 277)

Paul's Afflictions

Paul talks about some of the many afflictions he has had in his life because of his determination and boldness in teaching of Christ

2Cor 11:24-30

[24] Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

[25] Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

[26] In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

[27] In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

[28] Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

[29] Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

[30] If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

What can we learn from Paul about suffering afflictions and overcoming them?

(I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities)

Evan A. Schmutz

"The Apostle Paul, himself no stranger to affliction, drew from his own experience to teach with depth and beauty the eternal perspective that comes when we endure well and with patience. He said, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory' (2Cor 4:17). In other words, *we can know in the midst of our afflictions that God has provided an eternal compensating reward.*

"Paul's ability to speak of the trials, persecutions, and sorrows of his life as 'light' afflictions belies the severity of his suffering, which was for him swallowed up by the eternal perspective of the gospel. Paul's faith in Jesus Christ made all things bearable." (CR, Oct. 2016)

In addition to his afflictions Paul speaks of his weaknesses

2Cor 12:7-10

[7] And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

[8] For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

[9] And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

[10] Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

What lessons did Paul learn from his "thorn in the flesh"?

The Lord answered Paul's prayer but not the way he wanted
(My grace is sufficient for thee
my strength is made perfect in weakness
in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me
when I am weak, then am I strong)

Richard G. Scott

"Recognize that some challenges in life will not be resolved here on earth. Paul pled thrice that 'a thorn in the flesh' be removed. The Lord simply answered, 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' He gave Paul strength to compensate so he could live a most meaningful life. He wants you to learn how to be cured when that is His will

and how to obtain strength to live with your challenge when He intends it to be an instrument for growth. In either case the Redeemer will support you. That is why He said, Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me;... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light' (Matt 11:29–30).” (CR, April 1994)

Neal A. Maxwell

"Paul indicated that 'there was given to me a thorn in the flesh.' Use of the word 'given' suggests that Paul knew wherefrom this affliction came....

"God gives us a particular trial or simply declines to remove it. The outcome is obviously the same either way; God is willing for us to undergo that challenge. Yet He promises us that His grace is sufficient for us. He even indicates that some of the weaknesses and infirmities given to us can actually become a strength to us. It is in our weakness and extremity that God's power is fully felt. Only when, of ourselves, we are helpless is His help truly appreciated." (All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience, pg. 31)

Paul's Visions

Paul briefly speaks of visions he had of the afterlife

2Cor 12:1-4

[1] It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

[2] I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

[3] And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

[4] How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

He clearly saw the Celestial kingdom, as did Joseph Smith

D&C 137

1 The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell.

2 I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire;

3 Also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son.

4 I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold.

You could argue that the vision in verse 4 is the same as verse 2.

In verse 1 he states that he had visions (plural)
So his vision of paradise (the state of the righteous between death and resurrection) could have been similar to the one received by Joseph F Smith

D&C 138

11 As I pondered over these things which are written, the eyes of my understanding were opened, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I saw the hosts of the dead, both small and great.

12 And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality;

15 I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand.

16 They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death.