**The Grace Way of Giving, No. 7 – BD36-01**

We are coming to the end of 2 Corinthians 8, this first chapter of the two great chapters that deal with the grace concept of giving. This will be an explanation of a portion of Scripture from 2 Corinthians 8. We are going to seek to tell you what God the Holy Spirit meant when He had Paul write it in the first place. This explanation will not be limited by what you as a Christian may always have believed. It will not be limited by what you have always thought should be emphasized. Nor will it perhaps be expressed in the way you have always expressed yourself. We hope to deliver to you divine viewpoint which is free of emotional distortions and of emotional conceptions.

Some people approach the Word of god on the basis of discussing with one another. There is nothing so devastating and so useless and profitless as a group of people gathering together and sitting around a circle and sharing with each other what they think about a certain passage of Scripture, and proving to each other that they have a great deal of mutual ignorance out of which they create some emotional feeling that deludes them into thinking that they have some contact and some approach with God. Don’t ever fall into that trap. That’s why God has set up the local church. That’s why God has given gifted teachers who know something about the Word and know how to deliver it, and can bring it across to people who are willing to receive it. That’s His order, and there isn’t any other way that He operates.

But once you understand what is taught, once you understand what has been delivered here, you are at liberty to believe it or to reject it. That’s the privilege of your priesthood and that’s exactly what you are going to do. You’re going to sit there. You’re going to think this over. You’re going to respond to this. You will say, “Yes, I’ll be a doer of that word,” or you’ll say, “No, I will at this point be only a hearer. I have learned this but I will not accept this.” However, we do recognize that it is your right and it is your duty as a believer to take the Word of God, and when you don’t agree, you had better be sure you don’t agree on the basis of the fact that you have a better insight and a more exact interpretation of Scripture, and that’s why you don’t agree—not because this isn’t the way you feel it should be, the way you have always thought it should be, or the way you’ve always been instructed before.

Your subsequent conduct, of course, is going to be governed by your positive or negative response to the instruction that you receive. Don’t take comfort, just because you can find other people who may reject with you what you want to reject. God’s fullness of truth has historically been rejected by the majority. Someone has once put it quite shockingly that the majority is usually wrong. It is quite a shock to realize that God will never send a believer to attend a local church that is not explaining the Word of God through a passage of Scripture on a verse-by-verse basis, from the meaning of the original languages. You may just establish this as a principle. Every Christian has a right church, but God will never send you to a church which is not an expository preaching ministry. He will never send a believer to a church where the Word of God is not being delivered in understandable intelligible doctrinal terms.

This is very shocking. This is shocking to me because after I’ve said it, and I know it is true, I realize that what we have also said is that we are surrounded in a city by scores of churches to whom God would never send a single person because they are churches where the pulpit is not delivering an exposition of the Word of God, and where the Bible is not the core of what is being preached. What Christians are being given is inspiration. They’re being given somebody’s feelings about something. They’re being given false emotional motivations to do things which in themselves may be good but under those conditions are merely human good and rejected by God. God is never going to send believers to a church like that. Most of these churches God would never send people to. There are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people around us who are in the wrong place and don’t realize it. What a great ministry you have to those people along.

While that is a shocking thought, we are encouraged to realize that is true when we think historically through the Scriptures. In Noah’s day, eight people were right and a whole world was wrong. In the time of Abraham, there was one man that God could pick out and say, “To you I will give my revelation, and to your descendants.” And all the rest of the nations and societies around Abraham in his day were out and wrong and rejected by God.

In the time of Joshua and Caleb, two spies out of twelve stood with God. The result was that the whole nation was wrong, and the whole nation died in the wilderness. The Lord Jesus Christ came along. A handful of people ended up with Him when the day of Pentecost finally rolled around. The Old Testament prophets frequently stood alone as a man against a whole nation that was rejecting the warnings of the prophet, and finally they all went into captivity.

So don’t be frightened because you realize that you may be standing alone with the realities of what God has to deliver. This isn’t because you’re something special, but because in the providence and grace of god, you have not been hoodwinked by human techniques and emotional gimmickry, and you have an opportunity to respond to the Word of God. Most Christians, unfortunately, never get that response.

Now we’re talking about the response particularly to the matter of your financing of God’s work. One of the principles we have established from the Word is that giving is an expression of love for the Lord. Consequently, when you give in the right way because your soul has been oriented to the Word of God, you are giving in a noble way. You are part of God’s nobility. God is not interested so much in how much you give, though He is interested in that and I don’t want to give the wrong impression there. God is first of all not interested in what you give but in the spiritual status of your soul. But once the status of your soul is right, God is very much interested in what you give because you can do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord by holding back that which He has given you for the explicit purpose of passing along to His work. You will not do that unless you are in love with Jesus Christ and unless you have this compulsion that is born of love in your soul.

**2 Corinthians 8:16-24**

So we have been looking here in 2 Corinthians where Paul was urging the Corinthians who have now come to a spiritual status where they are reoriented to the love of God, and now can express that love through this special offering to the Jerusalem relief fund. Paul is urging them to complete this fund which was begun a year before.

Now what God lays upon your heart, you should complete. There may be believers here this morning who can say them to themselves, “A long time ago the Lord laid this thing upon my heart that I should do, and I said, ‘Yes.’” As we indicated there was with the Corinthians a willingness all along, but they had come to the point where their doing had ceased. And God said, “Get your doing back up to your willingness.” Our giving is from what we possess, not from what we do not possess. We do not give on the basis of what we will someday possess. We don’t make commitments in the future. Those who have not are to look to the Lord. Those who have are also to look to the Lord, and they are to give accordingly. However, those who have a great deal are not to be under the impression that they are to impoverish themselves in order to make the poor rich. What Paul is speaking of in this passage of believers sharing with believers is that nobody should have basic necessities un-provided. All basic necessities among believers should be met, and if necessary, by other believers.

**Titus**

So we pick it up at verse 16 where Paul says, “But thanks be to God who put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation, but being very diligent of his own accord he went unto you.” Paul says, “Thanks be to God.” This is the word for “grace.” The Greek word is “charis.” “Thanks be to God for this man Titus, for the believer that he is.” He is viewed as a gift from God, as a grace provision. This man into whose heart God put something. And the word “put” is in the present tense which means it was a constant provision by God to Titus. This man was actively engaged and delighted to be actively engaged in the Lord’s work. “Thanks be to God who is constantly putting this motivation in the heart of Titus. And what was that motivation? “The same earnest care.” This refers to the concern that Paul had for the Corinthians’ well-being. You read his letters and you’re well aware that this man spent some tears and some sad moments and some regrets and some moments of great discouragement perhaps over the way the Corinthians had acted—this church that he had founded.

Well, this had been straightened out. It took Titus, who was a good trouble-shooter, to go in there and straighten out and lay it on the line and get rid of a few people by putting it on the line. Nothing gets rid of the wrong crowd like putting it on the line. The result was the Corinthians had swung back to a spiritual orientation. Now Paul had a great care for this people all along. Titus is one of the splendid people that we who are in the ministry from time to time discover, here a man, there a woman, who ends up with our same concern and care for the people of God. Those are God’s nobility, and they are gems and they are precious. The work of the Lord is advanced fantastically when God gives you people like that. You can’t do much on your own, but with people who share your concern and are oriented to God’s viewpoint, the work multiplies in effectiveness.

So he says, “I thanks God for Titus who has the same earnest care in his heart for you that I have for you. Titus wanted to seek the Corinthians’ well-being so that they were functioning properly in their giving for their own spiritual well-being. Titus wasn’t only concerned for the poor Jews who were suffering in Jerusalem. He was concerned that the Corinthians would be right with their money for their own blessing.

**The Heart**

Now where was this placed? This concern was placed into the heart of Titus. The Greek for “heart” is “kardia.” Now the word “kardia” in Scripture does not mean simply your physical organ of the heart. But rather as you read through the Word of God, you discover that the word “kardia” implies a mentality of the soul. For example, in Romans 10:10, we read, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” Now obviously this is not your physical organ. This is something with which you think. When the Bible says “heart,” it’s talking about something with which you think. It’s the mentality of the soul, and you make decisions with it. Proverbs 23:7 says, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Again, the heart is a factor for thinking. It’s the mentality. In Luke 24:25, we read, “Then he said unto them, ‘Oh foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken.’” The disciples on the Emmaus road had gone negative to what they had been taught concerning the teachings of the prophets of the Old Testament, and Jesus said they were “slow of heart” to believe because it’s with the heart that you believe.

Now you’ve heard the expression, “Oh, he’s all heart.” In our common language, when we say that somebody is all heart, what do we mean? We don’t mean that he’s a smart boy. We mean he’s just so warm. He’s so emotional. He’s so generous. He’s so out-going. We mean some kind of emotional connotation to it. But this is not the scriptural connotation of heart. When the Bible uses the word “heart,” it means the mentality of the soul. What God put into Titus’s mentality was doctrine. The result was that Titus was guided into an action that pleased the Lord and which Paul commended.

We have had some negative reaction to the idea that there is no difference between head belief and heart belief. Preachers like to get up and sound off to people about getting from a head belief to a heart belief. Obviously they haven’t read their Scriptures very carefully of they wouldn’t make a statement like that. It panics the professional preacher to think that he can’t hit people with that little emotional device, “You folks have to get away from your head belief and get down to a heart belief so that you can really get to the Lord.” But obviously when the heart is the mentality, the only belief with which you can believe is your head, and that’s the only way you get into salvation. There is no other way except the mentality by which you approach God, but you can go positive or negative to that.

The gospel for the unbeliever will enter his mind. He’ll understand what it’s saying. God the Holy Spirit will illuminate him under the conviction of God the Holy Spirit the gospel is understood. It’s believed, and there is produced salvation in the heart to direct the life.

Now there is a side of your mind that’s for learning. There is a side of your mind that’s for directing. That’s what James 1:22 means when it says, “Be not hearers,” that is, don’t only be learners. You use your mind for learning things, for perceiving things. But he says, “… Be doers also.” You use your mind for directing your life. James says that a Christian who is only perceiving things and learning things is nothing. It is the Christian who has gone positive toward what he has learned so that now he can do with that and his mind can start directing his life. That’s what counts. What is acted upon was position which had made what you learned a part of your spiritual life.

Now the heart is where a person lives. It’s his way of life. Everybody here this morning has a way of life, and that way of life is to be found in your heart, in your mentality. Your way of life is reflected by many things outwardly about you. It’s reflected by the style in which you dress. It’s reflected by your personal appearance. It’s reflected by the length of your hair. It’s reflected by the manner of your speech. It’s reflected by many things that you do, and it is also reflected by intangibles that are harder to notice that within your mind—your character—the qualities of your being which are a little harder to discern immediately. Your heart, your mentality, is where you live, and this is what you are. You receive guidance on the basis of the fact that in your mind God has given you a frame of reference by which to judge. You have values and standards that set up a conscience. You have divine viewpoint from the principles of doctrine.

Isaiah 55:7-9 describes for us the fact that our minds are what make our lives. Isaiah 55:7 says, “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon. The wicked man forsakes his way by forsaking his thoughts. For my thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” 2 Corinthians 10:5 calls upon us to bring all of our thinking into obedience to Christ. Proverbs 23:7 again tells us that we are what we think.

So what one does is not his way of life. What one does is what stems from an attitude of mind and that’s what your way of life is. It depends upon what you’re willing to accept and what you’re willing to reject. You may impose a certain false outward expression. We all recognize that. That’s called hypocrisy. You may have a certain attitude of mind but you may outwardly deliberately perform otherwise, but that is a false front.

So the heart is our capacity for life. We have this demonstrated in Scripture many times by the qualities of life that are expressed through the mentality, or through the heart. For example, the Bible says that love is an expression of the heart, or the mind (Deuteronomy 11:13). It says that happiness is an expression of the heart (Psalm 19:8, Psalm 28:7). It says that sorrow comes from the heart, the mentality (Nehemiah 2:2). Discouragement comes from the mind (Numbers 23:9). Cowardice comes from the mind (Joshua 14:8). Good and evil stem from the mentality (Luke 6:45). Grace comes from the mind (Proverbs 24:17). Our whole motivation is from the heart (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Now this part of our soul, the heart, is what is to dominate the soul and to guide your life. The emotions are to follow the mentality like a right woman responding to her right man. Emotional domination of the soul is what leads away from the will of God. When you move away from the will of God, you begin to move into frustration. When you move into frustration, this is an experience of apostasy and you begin to try to sublimate, to substitute, so you try to substitute with human good or you try to substitute with some kind of perversions and you move into degeneration.

Emotional domination of the soul is a breakdown of authority within your soul. Just as any authority that breaks down outwardly is destructive, so the breakdown within the soul of our authority is also destructive. When emotions take over a man’s soul, he will begin to think and to act like a woman. When a woman begins to operate with her emotions instead of by the thoughts of doctrine, she becomes a man in her expressions. So you have the women’s lib movement which is really quite a joke because the only way a woman is ever liberated is by finding the fulfillment that only her right particular man can bring to her. When she finds that right particular man and can look him in the eye and say, “My lord,” then she is liberated. Then she finds fulfillment. Until then, she is living in a delusion dream world. But this is what happens to women. They become masculine and not feminine because the emotions have taken over to dominate their soul.

A Christian can go from this condition where he has a spiritual maturity structure in his soul right down to apostasy. The motivation that sets you up on this road is emotional domination of the soul. When the emotions dominate, you will go from spiritual maturity down to apostasy. Now you won’t realize that’s what’s happening to you. You won’t realize that all of a sudden you’re bucking things that you were once for. You’re against things all along the line that you were highly enthusiastic for before, and you think you’ve come to some enlightenment. You haven’t come to any enlightenment. What has happened is that once you start going negative toward the Word of God and emotional reactions toward what you’ve heard that happens to be right, then you become subjective. You lose the objective vision of the Word of God. When you can no longer look at yourself and look at things and look at people and look at circumstance through doctrine, you become subjective. It looks to you like it’s perfectly right. You have the wrong glasses on. Gradually you’re going downhill all the time. You’re reverting.

The old-fashioned word is backsliding. When people used to talk about backsliding, they really didn’t explain it. They generally didn’t know what it meant. Generally they meant that people weren’t doing what they were supposed to do in church. They weren’t there like they were supposed to be. They weren’t giving money like they were supposed to be, attending Sunday School and so on. But that was not backsliding. Backsliding is going from spiritual maturity down to apostasy because you have become subjective about yourself, because you have become negative toward what is God’s viewpoint.

So under emotional domination of the soul, any excuse will justify your going your own way and doing your own thing. And you think it is perfectly right and that you’re right at the heart in the center of the Lord’s will. The closer you get to apostasy, the closer you think you will be coming to the Lord. That’s how great is the delusion when your mind is permitted to be dominated by your emotions.

So Paul says, “I thank God for this man who has a heart, who has a mentality, that is in line with God’s viewpoint, and therefore,” Paul says, “he is in line with the viewpoint that I also share of God’s objectives, and together we are able to accomplish something for Corinth.” Verse 17 says, “For indeed he accepted the exhortation.” The word “accepted” here means he tolerated, that is, he put up with it, so to speak. It actually connotes a readiness. He accepted the exhortation, and the exhortation meant the appeal of Paul which we read about in verse 6, “Insomuch that we besought Titus that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also,” that is the offering. That’s what he means by the word “grace.” This request comes from Paul who is an apostle. Because Paul is an apostle it carries a certain authority, so it is in the form somewhat of a command. And Titus is asked by Paul like a military officer making a request. When an officer makes a request, you know that it’s a command. Paul, in his apostolic authority, requests Titus to go to Corinth and to bring the offering to a conclusion now that the Corinthians are in a spiritual status where they can do that. And he is to act as Paul’s agent.

Now this is a very important thing. There was a lot at stake for the people of Corinth to complete this thing which God had laid upon their heart. There was a lot at stake for the saints who were suffering and dying from starvation in Jerusalem. There was a lot at stake for the unity of the New Testament church that Gentiles should come through for Jewish believers to whom they were indebted for spiritual things in the first place. So in other words, this is somewhat of a unique opportunity of service for Titus.

We have already pointed out that Apollos was asked to do the job. He passed it by. Now Paul comes and he says, “God has given me a man like Titus. I’ll ask Titus.” And Titus responds and he welcomes the opportunity of service.

Now here is something that is significant relative to the moments of Christian service opportunity. You and I as believers do certain things that are routine day-by-day. God has given us a system whereby we can learn His Word. Day-by-day we engage in prayer. Day-by-day we have learned on the basis of His Word to move in faith and confidence in Him—we move in faith rest. Day-by-day we maintain a status of spirituality by confession of sins. Day-by-day we respond to opportunities for witnessing as they arise. But the Christian life also has its moments—its great moments of opportunity that come by for vital service.

In Esther 4:14 we read that Esther was brought to the kingdom for that moment, that purpose, that hour when the Jewish people needed her in a sensitive spot or else the Jewish population would have been decimated, perhaps wiped out. It was another one of those attempts of Satan to destroy the line through which Christ could be born. The Bible tells us that Esther was raised and that was her opportunity. That was her moment and that was the appeal that was made to her to go to the king in behalf of her people. What if Esther had said, “No?” What if in this moment that arose Esther turned her back upon on it?

Responding to a great challenge now obviously requires previous spiritual preparation, both in the knowledge of the Word and in the refinement through suffering. But when God suddenly presents these moments of service, we ought not to falter. We must not falter because there is so much eternally at issue, and Titus did not falter. There are few regrets that move so deeply as looking back and realizing that at some point in your experience you could have done something that was strategic and tremendous in the work of the Lord. All of us can think back with regret to opportunities that came by and we smugly said, “No.” Opportunities came right from God but for some reason at the moment we were so spiritually disoriented and blinded. Something else was standing in the way so we wanted to say, “No, I won’t do it.” And a moment slipped by us.

I look all over this auditorium right now and incident after incident flashes through my mind of people who are sitting here right now who have been God’s tools at a strategic moment and they grabbed that moment as it went by—things that are the result of blessing to scores of people; things which at the time were incidental little things that nobody really thought much of. But here was a man and here was a woman as this thing came floating by that reached out and they said, “I’ll do that. I’ll grab it. I’ll capitalize on this moment,” because it was that person’s moment. There are many of you sitting here who have advanced the cause of the church because you responded at a strategic moment. Undoubtedly there are some of us here who have let moments slip by that seemed like nothing at the moment but which would have been reproductive of great spiritual blessing and divine good.

So this is what Titus is doing. Titus hears the Lord Jesus knocking at the door of his soul. And Titus opens up and says, “What is it, Lord?” And he says, “Yes,” and he grabs this chance to go do a job that other people have turned down and that was trying and demanding, but Titus went. Now Satan will hit you hard on the occasions of your opportunity to dissuade you. That’s the time he wants to get you to jump and to cut out. But your moment is coming, and take care lest it should pass you by without you even being aware that it’s there—or yet worse, that you know it’s there and you reject it. You will have cause to regret that. If the Lord knocks on your door, think twice before you yell, “There’s no one home.”

Titus, because of his spiritual maturity, Paul says, was very diligent and of his own accord, by his own nature, he was well motivated within his own soul so he was ready to respond to this opportunity of spiritual service. He was ready to deal with the Corinthians. He did it, it says, “Of his own accord he went unto you.” “Unto you” uses that little Greek preposition “pros.” This means face-to-face. He got up, went to them, and he faced them face-to-face on this issue. For he welcomed the appeal of being more immersed than ordinarily, and of his own volition he went to you face to face.

Now verses 18 through 21 tell us that he sent a team of administrators. He sent also some brother that’s not identified. It says, “We have sent.” The word for “sent” here is the Greek work “sunpempo.” This means “to send with.” “Pempo” means “to send,” and “sun” means “with.” “To send with,” so that the word indicates that Titus was in charge of the team, but this man went with Titus under Titus’s direction. There was administration. There was authority. Titus was in charge. But the man was a Christian, and he was a Christian of some reputation among the New Testament churches. It speaks about his praise, and the Greek word here means “his approval” or “his recognition.” It may be that he was actually a blood brother of Titus because when the Greek uses the word “the brother,” it can also be translated sometimes as “his brother.” It has been suggested that this might be none other than Dr. Luke himself who may have actually been a blood brother of Titus. We have no way of knowing that, but that’s one of the favorite conjectures, that Luke was the brother that was referred to here. In any case, this was a responsible man sent to help administer this offering.

The brother was sent by Paul with Titus to Corinth. He was chosen by the churches, and the word for “chosen” here means that they raised their hands, so in public he was elected and he was chosen under the authority of the churches to travel with Titus to bring the money to Paul and thus to the Jerusalem saints.

“We have sent with him the brother whose praises in the gospel throughout all the churches, and not only that but who also was chosen of the churches (publicly raising their hands) to travel with this grace (that is, this offering) which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord.” The administration here is to the glory of the Lord. That means again a face-to-face confrontation. This is the purpose. This is the reason for all true Christian service—the Lord’s glory. Paul is ready to show his ready mind in assisting these saints.

So what he says in verse 19 is, “Not only that but who was also appointed by public vote under the authority of the churches as a traveling companion in this grace, which is being administered by us face-to-face with the glory of the same Lord, and with our willingness of mind.

Now verse 20 and 21 declare to us the principle that we’re coming to in this passage concerning the handling of church money. That is that there has to be proper handling. There has to be provision, Verse 20 says, “for honest handling of offerings.” We are to avoid any doubt that it is being handled properly. “Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us. The word “avoiding” is the Greek word “stello.” It means to arrange, that is, in the sense of arranging a thing so that there is no question about misconduct with the funds. It is in the present tense so it is to be a constant provision. It’s in the middle voice so that there’s no doubt about the people who handle the money, that they’re handling it honestly. And “avoiding this, that no man (or lest no man, lest anyone) should blame us (or find fault with us) at the point of collecting these funds that they should find fault with us.” This is in the subjunctive mood which is potential: they might or they might not. It depends upon how you handle the church money. It depends upon how you handle the collection—whether they would question what you’re doing with it—constantly avoiding this lest anyone should find fault with us. In this abundance, it’s the word that means “lavish,” which indicates that the offering they were collecting from the Corinthians was going to be quite large sum, and therefore particularly one that had to be administered carefully, and this was to be under the authority of this time.

Verse 21 says, “Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. The word “providing” is kind of a significant word. It’s the Greek word “pronoeo.” This can be divided as “pro” and “noeo.” “Noeo” means “to think” and “pro” means “before. The idea is to provide through forethought; that is, before you start collecting money from Christians, make plans as to how you’re going to handle it, how you’re going to collect it, how you’re going to deposit it, how you’re going to account for it, and how you’re going to spend it. This requires thought ahead of time, so as to be providing honest, or honorable, above suspicious things. It’s not enough for you to say, “Well, the Lord knows I’m honest, because Paul says, “not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.” So it’s not right for people who handle church funds to become impatient when they are questioned and people try to clarify in their minds how the funds have been handled and how they’ve been spent and what has been done with the Lord’s money. It is perfectly legitimate to do so and should be done. But these things should be thought through ahead of time, to be handled in such a way that you don’t have to ask somebody to take your word for it. They can see that it has been handled honestly.

Now Paul has had enough resistance from these carnal Christians in Corinth that he knew his critics were going to suspect him. This is an old story. Once a person goes negative, the first thing they do is start deciding and suspecting that the spiritual leader is mishandling their funds. Now God says one way to handle that is that those who are responsible, members of the board in the local church, see that you arrange ways of handling your funds so there can be no question, and nobody has to ask anybody whether everything has been done in the right order. So this is what Paul says. It’s not only right in the sight of the Lord, but it must also be right in the sight of men.

In verses 22 through 24 the team is recommended by the apostle Paul. Verse 22 says he’s sending also a third brother—another unknown administrator, and he’s sending him along under Titus’s charge. This man has often been proved. It’s that Greek word meaning “testing to show that there is approval.” They found him to be diligent in many things. He is eager in Christian service. Paul’s confidence in what the Corinthians are going to do in the offering makes this man confident and eager to go. Now he’s leaving these administrators anonymous. I think maybe one reason is to encourage them to serve as unto the Lord. They are known to Him. Our divine good production is often hindered because we want people to notice us. We want people to mention us, and we want people to thank us.

Once in a while somebody wants us to make a public declaration of thanks to someone who has done something very commendable and very important. They want us to write letters of appreciation to people who do something within our local ministry. We have people who do things so constantly that we’d be writing letters all the time and we’d be hurting the feelings of people that we had slipped up on. But if you do it as unto the Lord, you don’t need my thanks. You don’t need anybody else’s thanks because God knows what you do. When you’re oriented with a real spiritual maturity structure, you’re glad to function and to serve Him without somebody patting you on the back for it. But there is a lot of work that’s done behind the scenes from the time you walk up to that offering box and put your offering in there and you walk away, there are a group of administrators who are responsible godly men who carry a very great and serious and grave role in handling the funds. What the fund-handlers do week-by-week is just as important as what any evangelist does who speaks to a stadium full of people or a pastor-teacher who may instruct a vast audience. It is just as important in the eyes of God, and it receives just as much reward and blessing in eternity.

So verse 22 says, “But we have sent with them our brother whom we have tested for approval many times in many ways, he being diligent by reason of his great confidence toward you.” Then Paul endorses the whole delegation in verses 23 and 24. He says, “Concerning Titus, he’s my partner, he’s my fellow worker. The brethren I send with him, they are messengers, they are agents of the churches, and the whole team is functioning to the glory of the Lord. The proof of the Corinthians’ mental attitude love is going to be how they receive them.

Verse 24 says, “Wherefore show ye to them and before the churches the proof of your “agape” mental attitude love, and of our boasting in your behalf.” Paul says, “Now when they get there, you prove me right about how much I bragged about your spiritual status and how you people are going to come through with financing God’s work because you have the money. There’s no reason you shouldn’t do it, and you are now in a position where your heart is ready to respond in that expression of love.”

So the principle taught in these closing verses of 2 Corinthians 8 is simply this: Money given to the Lord’s work by believer priests must be handled so as to be above question before God and man. Reliable Christians therefor will have to be appointed by the church to collect and to account for the use of the funds. The church funds must be handled by more than one person. They didn’t have just one man who took the money out of the box and went to the office and collected it and deposited it. You can’t have no question of dishonesty unless you have more than one person handling the funds. Furthermore those who administer the funds must be spiritually mature so that they can act as those who are acting in the face of the Lord’s glory. That’s why they’re doing it, because it is a chore. Do you realize how long our deacons have to stay here after a Sunday evening service after all the rest have gone home, and they’re here counting the money and putting the accounts together, then somebody has to go that very night down to the bank and make the deposit, and then it goes from there through the agencies of the work and through the people who write the checks and keep the books? All of these are involved as administrators of the Lord’s money, and they have to be people who have a little spiritual maturity. Unless you have spiritual administrators who depend on God’s divine viewpoint, they’re going to start functioning on human viewpoint. Just because a man is a good businessman does not mean that he is a good administrator of church funds. It would help to be a good businessman, but unless he has God’s viewpoint, he’ll keep trying to make decisions for the Lord’s work as if he were running his business, and that’s no good because God does not work on business techniques, any more than God works on assured military techniques, like telling Gideon to send most of his army home so he could fight a big war with a handful of people. Now what kind of a general does that? God does. That’s who does. And the same thing goes for handling God’s money. People cannot handle it the way human viewpoint concludes it should be handled. God has his other methods. But everything has to be right down the line, from the believer in the pew, his walk to the box, to the handling of the funds, to the things that are purchases, to the things that are not, to the way the money is spent. It has to be right all the way down the line. Sometimes the outgo is right but the problem is on the income. The income is wrong because the believers are wrong.

So church money must be viewed by administrators as sacred funds given by Christians out of Christian nobility from love because they are oriented to grace. These procedures for handling the church funds should be clearly stated and thought out beforehand so that there is no question about their honest application and use.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971