

MEMORY VERSE: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." 2 Corinthians 8:9, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's lesson introduces us to the church in Corinth and the work of Paul for their salvation.

1. Christ is the model Giver (Sab, Sun)

- In 2 Cor. 8:9, Paul uplifts Christ as the ultimate example of sacrificial giving.
- The Gospel is frequently described in monetary terms.
 - In parables like the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price (Lk 13:44, 45).
 - In Rev. 3:14-21, Jesus is depicted as selling salvation door-to-door.

The great Redeemer represents Himself as a heavenly merchantman, laden with riches, calling from house to house, presenting His priceless goods. *FW 84*

- Paul had previously reminded the Corinthians that they were "bought at a price" (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23).
- "Second Corinthians 8–9 tells the story of a particular money offering, but this story is based upon Jesus. During this week, we will see theological principles related to the practice of offering gifts that are based on Christ's offering of Himself." *Qtly, Sun, par 5*

2. Stewardship is not spontaneous (Mon, Tue)

- Paul highlights the Macedonians as an example of Christ-like giving who, not from the overflow of abundance but from gratitude, gave sacrificially despite their own need (2 Cor. 8:1-5).
 - The Macedonian believers' motive for giving should be ours, too—gratitude for God's grace, desire to follow the example of Jesus, desire to share God's blessings, and sincere love (see Monday's lesson).

- Christ-like giving is *planned* giving.
 - Christ's sacrifice was determined beforehand (1 Cor 2:7, 8; Rom 16:26; Eph 3:9; Col 1:26; also 1 Pet 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8).
 - Likewise, our giving should be planned (2 Cor 9:5, 7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2; see also Dan 9:8).
- While God gave everything for our salvation, He only expects us to give proportionally "according to [our] means" (2 Cor 8:3).

3. Stewardship and mission and inseparable (Sab, Sun, Wed, Thu)

- One central purpose of Christian stewardship is the furtherance of God's work in the world.
 - "Stewardship provides the church with financial and human resources to fulfill God's mission." Qtly, Sab, par 3

The Lord does not need our offerings... Yet God permits us to show our appreciation of His mercies by self-sacrificing efforts to extend the same to others. This is the only way in which it is possible for us to manifest our gratitude and love to God. He has provided no other. CS, 18, 19 (Qtly, Fri, par 2)

- Since the church is the body of which Christ is the head, giving to Christ by necessity involves giving to the church.
 - "Second Corinthians 8–9 indicates that the offerings should be given to people appointed by God through the church. The phrases 'all the churches' (2 Cor. 8:18, NKJV), 'chosen by the churches' (2 Cor. 8:19, NKJV), and 'messengers of the churches' (2 Cor. 8:23, NKJV) suggest precisely that. Thus, the following exhortation is not surprising, 'Give proof before the churches of your love' (2 Cor. 8:24, ESV)." Qtly, Thu, par 3
 - Such giving is springs from and results in unity in the family of faith.

CONCLUSION

Those whose hearts are filled with the love of Christ, will follow the example of Him who for our sake became poor, that through His poverty we might be made rich. Money, time, influence—all the gifts they have received from God's hand, they will value only as a means of advancing the work of the gospel. Thus it was in the early church; and when in the church of today it is seen that by the power of the Spirit the members have taken their affections from the things of the world, and that they are willing to make sacrifices in order that their fellow men may hear the gospel, the truths proclaimed will have a powerful influence upon the hearers. AA 71 (Qtly Fri, par 1)