

LIBERALITY, A WORK OF GRACE
II COR. 8:1-6

Introduction:

- A. Paul uses the churches of Macedonia as an example to the Corinthians. v1
 - 1. This was not competition!
 - 2. They were not challenged to give more than others.
 - 3. No sum is mentioned, no goal is proclaimed.

- B. Paul teaches that liberal giving is a work of God's grace. v1,2,7.
 - 1. "the grace of God bestowed on the churches."
 - 2. "see that ye abound in this grace also."

I. THE OCCASION OF MACEDONIAN LIBERALITY. V9:1

- A. It was not immediate needs of the churches of Macedonia, (Macedonians for Macedonians)
 - 1. Not their regular support of the ministry.
 - 2. Not for "mission work."
 - 3. Not for a building program.

- B. This was an occasion of human needs.
 - 1. There were "saints" in need.
 - 2. Brothers and sisters were starving.
 - 3. These were in the "church at Jerusalem."
 - 4. There is a difference in "almsgiving" and helping a brother and sister in distress.
 - a. James 2:15-19.
 - b. Acts 6:1-

- C. Almsgiving is for any person.

II. THE SITUATION OF THEIR LIBERALITY. V2,3

[Not rich and content giving to the poor.]

A. They were in a great trial of affliction.

1. Would not seem to be a good time to ask for money.

[High taxes, high rent, high food costs.]

a. affliction = thlipsis - pressure, compression.

b. trial = dokime - proof test, as of metal.

2. They were suffering as citizens of a war-torn country and as "Christians."

B. Two things combined to demonstrate the grace of God working in their lives.

[You may join water and fire to get steam which is power!]

1. "the abundance of their joy."

a. perisseia = abundance, surplus.

b. chara = delight, gladness.

2. "and their deep poverty."

a. katabathous - down to depth, rock-bottom.

b. ptocheia - abject poverty, literally nothing, in imminent danger of starvation.

C. The demonstration.

1. "abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

a. perisseuo - to overflow.

b. ploutos - wealth, riches.

c. aplotes - generosity, single-mindedness.

The true open-mindedness and generosity toward others in which there is no duplicity of motive.

2. They did not send a fact-finding committee.

III. THE DISTINCT QUALITIES OF BIBLICAL LIBERALITY. V3-5

A. They gave more than they could afford.

1. "for to their power....and beyond their power."

2. power = dunamis - capability of doing anything.

a. They gave beyond their capabilities.

B. They gave voluntarily.

1. "willing of themselves."

2. authairetos = to choose voluntarily, of one's own accord, out of one's own initiative, without request or coercion.
- C. They begged for the opportunity to give. v4
1. praying = deomai - urgently request, beseech.
 2. intreaty = paraklesis - to ask, to beg.
- D. They did more than they were expected to do. v5
1. "And this they did, not as we hoped."
 2. hoped = elpizo - to expect.
- E. They obeyed before they sacrificed.
1. "...first gave their own selves to the Lord."
 - a. The principle failure of most.
 - b. Saul.
 2. "and unto us by the will of God."
 - a. They gave themselves and their money to God and to the Apostle.

IV. BIBLICAL LIBERALITY IS FOR ALL. V6

- A. "begun."
1. proenapchomai - to begin before or already.
 2. They had begun, now they were to do more.
- B. "finish."
1. epiteleo - to bring through to an end.

V. OUR EXAMPLE OF LIBERALITY. V9

- A. When we think we have been asked to give too much, think of Jesus.
- B. When we think we have been asked to do too much, think of Jesus.
- C. When we think we have been asked to do more than our share, think of Jesus.