

11/4/12

SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A MAN OF GOD, WEEK 36

TITLE: FINISH WHAT YOU START!

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 8:10-15

INTRODUCTION: (1) IT IS EASY TO START SOMETHING, BUT DIFFICULT TO FINISH.

*** LET ME ILLUSTRATE. HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE STARTED A PROJECT AT HOME, AND A GOOD AMOUNT OF TIME HAS PASSED, BUT YOU HAVE NOT FINISHED?**

**** SO BEYOND THAT, MANY OF US KNOW, IT IS EASY TO START AN EXERCISE PROGRAM, WALKING, RUNNING, AEROBICS, WEIGHT TRAINING, ETC., BUT DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE.**

***** HERE'S ONE A LOT OF US IDENTIFY WITH. HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE STARTED A DIET OR A LIFE STYLE CHANGE IN EATING BUT HAVE STOPPED BEFORE YOU HAVE REACHED YOUR GOAL WEIGHT OR HEALTH GOAL?**

****** ANOTHER QUESTION. HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE SET OUT IN JANUARY TO READ YOUR BIBLE THROUGH AND WILL NOT FINISH IT THIS YEAR?**

(2) OR YOU HAVE SET OUT TO START MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE AND HAVE QUIT, OR TO HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME, ETC. AND HAVE NOT CONTINUED?

*** WELL, MY POINT IS, IT IS EASY TO START AND NOT FINISH.**

**** NOW CERTAINLY THERE ARE THINGS WE HAVE STARTED AND NOT FINISHED BECAUSE WE SHOULD NOT HAVE STARTED TO BEGIN WITH AND IT IS BETTER NOT TO CONTINUE.**

***** BUT THERE ARE ALSO THINGS WE HAVE STARTED AND SHOULD CONTINUE AND FINISH.**

****** NOW WHY IS IT EASY TO START SOMETHING AND NOT FINISH?**

(3) WELL, CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE, TIME COMMITMENTS CHANGE, OUR HEALTH CHANGES, OUR AGES CHANGE, BUT THERE IS ANOTHER BIG REASON FOUND IN SCRIPTURE, WE DON'T COUNT THE COST.

*** AND THIS IS ILLUSTRATED BY JESUS IN LUKE 14:28-32 WITH THE CONTEXT OF BEING A TRUE DISCIPLE OF JESUS, A TRUE FOLLOWER OF JESUS.**

**** FOR OUR LORD SAID:**

V. 28 – “FOR WHICH ONE OF YOU, WHEN HE WANTS TO BUILD A TOWER, DOES NOT FIRST SIT DOWN AND CALCULATE THE COST TO SEE IF HE HAS ENOUGH TO COMPLETE IT?

V. 29 – OTHERWISE, WHEN HE HAS LAID A FOUNDATION AND IS NOT ABLE TO FINISH, ALL WHO OBSERVE IT BEGIN TO RIDICULE HIM,

V. 30 – SAYING, ‘THIS MAN BEGAN TO BUILD AND WAS NOT ABLE TO FINISH.’

V. 31 – OR WHAT KING, WHEN HE SETS OUT TO MEET ANOTHER KING IN BATTLE, WILL NOT

FIRST SIT DOWN AND CONSIDER WHETHER HE IS STRONG ENOUGH WITH TEN THOUSAND MEN TO ENCOUNTER THE ONE COMING AGAINST HIM WITH TWENTY THOUSAND?

V. 32 – OR ELSE, WHILE THE OTHER IS STILL FAR AWAY, HE SENDS A DELEGATION AND ASKS FOR TERMS OF PEACE.”

***** NOW IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS PASSAGE, A PERSON MUST COUNT THE COST OF FOLLOWING CHRIST AND IN THIS ILLUSTRATION, COUNTING THE COST HAS TO DO WITH BUILDING A TOWER OR FOR A KING TO GO INTO BATTLE.**

****** AND IT’S NOT WISE TO BUILD SOMETHING WITHOUT CONSIDERING IF YOU HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO FINISH IT, OR FOR A LEADER TO GO INTO BATTLE WITHOUT ENOUGH MEN TO FIGHT THE BATTLE, THAT IS NOT WISE.**

(4) BUT IF YOU COUNT THE COST, YOU MAY NOT START AND COMMIT YOURSELF TO SOMETHING YOU CANNOT FINISH.

*** WELL, IN OUR TEXT, THE CORINTHIANS STARTED SOMETHING APPROXIMATELY A YEAR EARLIER THAT THEY DID NOT FINISH.**

**** AND WHAT WAS THAT? IT WAS AN OFFERING FOR THE POOR SAINTS OF JERUSALEM.**

***** AND THE CORINTHIANS HAD STARTED COLLECTING AN OFFERING FOR THE POOR SAINTS AT THE JERUSALEM CHURCH WHOM WERE DEVASTATED BY FAMINE AND PERSECUTION.**

****** AND THEY JUMPED IN WITH BOTH FEET, BUT STOPPED. AND IN OUR TEXT TODAY, PAUL WILL ADMONISH THEM TO FINISH WHAT THEY STARTED, TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH WHAT THEY STARTED, TO COMPLETE THEIR OFFERING FOR THEIR POOR BROTHERS AND SISTERS AT THE JERUSALEM CHURCH.**

(5) THUS I'VE TITLED MY SERMON TODAY, FINISH WHAT YOU START! EXCLAMATION POINT.

*** AND UNDER THAT THEME, WE'LL LOOK AT 5 POINTS AND THEY ARE THE TULIP. NO NOT**

REALLY! THEY ARE NO. 1, THE APPEAL BY PAUL, VV. 10&11; NO. 2 THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THEIR OFFERING BY GOD, V. 12; NO. 3 THE ANTICIPATION BY PAUL OF A QUESTION OR CONCERN THE CORINTHIANS HAD, V. 13; NO. 4 THE ABUNDANCE PRINCIPLE IN GIVING, V. 14; AND NO. 5, THE ANALOGY THAT PAUL USES FROM THE O.T. TO ILLUSTRATE THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY, V. 15.

** SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE APPEAL, THE ACCEPTABILITY, THE ANTICIPATION, THE ABUNDANCE AND THE ANALOGY UNDER THE THEME OF FINISH WHAT YOU START.

*** AND WITH THOSE POINTS TO HANG OUR THOUGHTS ON, LOOK AT V. 10 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR FIRST POINT, THE APPEAL OF PAUL.

I. THE APPEAL, (READ V. 10)

A. NOW THE BEGINNING OF V. 10 MAY CAUSE SOME DIFFICULTY FOR SOME OF YOU DEPENDING ON WHAT TRANSLATION YOU HAVE.

*** FOR IN THE TRANSLATION I USE, THE NAU, IT BEGINS WITH, "I GIVE MY OPINION IN THIS MATTER, FOR THIS IS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE."**

**** AND THEN THE NIV, NKJV AND KJV, USE THE WORD ADVICE, RATHER THAN OPINION.**

***** AND I REALLY DON'T CARE FOR THOSE TRANSLATIONS OF THESE WORDS FOR IT CAUSES SOME MISUNDERSTANDING.**

****** PRIMARILY, THAT WHAT PAUL IS SAYING IS NOT INSPIRED, THAT ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NO LONGER LEADING PAUL WHAT TO SAY, THIS NOT FROM GOD, BUT FROM PAUL, HIS OPINION, HIS ADVICE.**

1. BUT WE KNOW, ALL OF THE O.T. AND ALL OF THE N.T. IS INSPIRED, EVERY WORD. WE

BELIEVE IN WHAT IS CALLED VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION.

*** WHICH MEANS THE BIBLE IN ITS ORIGINAL LANGUAGES, FROM BEGINNING TO END COMMUNICATES THE MIND AND WILL OF GOD AS HE INTENDED IT TO BE, EVERY WORD!**

**** THE ENTIRE TEXT IS ALL FROM GOD USING THE HUMAN AUTHOR'S PERSONALITY TO WRITE DOWN EXACTLY WHAT HE WILLED. GOD'S COMPLETE AND COHERENT MESSAGE TO MANKIND WAS RECORDED WITH PERFECT ACCURACY, THE VERY WORDS BEARING THE AUTHORITY OF DIVINE AUTHORSHIP.**

***** GOD BREATHED OUT AND PAUL AND THE OTHER AUTHORS WROTE DOWN EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTED.**

****** THUS THE BIBLE IS INFALLIBLE AND INERRANT, WHICH INFALLIBLE MEANS INCAPABLE OF ERROR AND INERRANT MEANS TOTALLY FREE FROM ERROR.**

******* AND I HAVE A LIST OF SCRIPTURES ON THE SCREEN THAT TEACH THAT, THAT ARE FAMILIAR TO A LOT OF YOU, II TIMOTHY 3:16&17, II PETER 1:20&21, PROVERBS 30:5&6, REVELATION 22:18&19, MATTHEW 4:4, DEUTERONOMY 12:32 AND PSALM 19:7.**

2. NOW MY POINT FROM COMMUNICATING THESE THINGS TO YOU IS NOT ONLY TO REAFFIRM THE INERRANCY OF ALL SCRIPTURE AND ITS SUFFICIENCY, AUTHORITY AND ACCURACY.

*** BUT ALSO TO REMIND YOU THAT WHAT PAUL SAYS IN II CORINTHIANS 8:10 IS INSPIRED.**

**** I MEAN WE DON'T GO BACK TO V. 9 AND SAY THAT'S INSPIRED FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT, BUT V. 10 IS NOT INSPIRED, PAUL IS SPEAKING ON HIS OWN, HIS OWN OPINION IN THAT SENSE, (GOING BACK AND FORTH FROM PAUL TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.)**

***** THE HOLY SPIRIT SHAPED AND INSPIRED PAUL'S OPINION AND ADVICE. THE HOLY SPIRIT USED PAUL'S PERSONALITY, BUT SUPERINTENDED EVERY WORD HE WROTE.**

****** AND WITH THAT SAID, IT APPEARS TO ME THAT THE ESV HERE IS THE BETTER TRANSLATION THAT HELPS THE AVERAGE PERSON NOT TO MISUNDERSTAND WHAT PAUL IS SAYING, AND THE ESV TRANSLATES IT, I GIVE MY JUDGMENT, I GIVE MY MIND, WHICH IS BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT.**

3. WE ARE GETTING PAUL, BUT PAUL BEING LED, FILLED, DIRECTED AND CONTROLLED TO WRITE DOWN THE REVELATION OF GOD.

*** AND THAT'S WHY PAUL SAYS WHAT HE SAYS IN THE NEXT PHRASE IN II CORINTHIANS 8:10, "FOR THIS IS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE IN WHAT I HAVE TO SAY, THIS IS GOD'S WORD. FOR PAUL VALUES WHAT GOD VALUES, THIS IS PROFITABLE FOR YOU AND PAUL WAS NOT AN EGO-MANIAC, HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS BEING**

LED TO SAY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS PROFITABLE AS ALL SCRIPTURE IS PROFITABLE.

**** NOW I'VE TAKEN ALL THIS TIME ON THIS NOT TO CHASE RABBITS, BUT TO REASSURE YOU ABOUT THE AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE. FOR A SURFACE LOOK AT THIS TEXT MIGHT CREATE DOUBT THAT EVERY WORD OF GOD IS INSPIRED IN THE 66 BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.**

***** WE NEED A HEALTHY TRUST AND FAITH IN ITS DIVINE AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHORITY. FOR IF YOU TAKE THIS TRUTH AWAY, OPINION TRADITION AND HUMAN REASON RULES!**

****** NOT THE WORD OF GOD THE BIBLE.**

4, NOW WITH ALL OF THAT SAID, IN THE REST OF V. 10, PAUL REMINDS THE CORINTHIANS THAT THEY WERE THE FIRST TO BEGIN A YEAR AGO TO TAKE UP THE OFFERING FOR THE POOR SAINTS AT JERUSALEM AND THEY HAD A

DESIRE TO DO IT, IT WAS A HEARTFELT DETERMINATION TO DO THIS, THEY WERE NOT MANIPULATED OR COERCED TO START TAKING UP THIS OFFERING ON THE LORD'S DAY. THEY HAD ALREADY STARTED AND THAT WAS THEIR BURDEN, QUOTE I CORINTHIANS 16:1&2.

*** NOW THE CORINTHIANS HAD STARTED THIS COLLECTION FOR THE POOR SAINTS. SO WHAT WOULD BE TO THEIR ADVANTAGE IN THIS HEART'S DESIRE FROM THE LORD?**

**** TO FULFILL IT, TO FINISH IT, TO COMPLETE IT! LOOK AT V. 11 PLEASE.**

B. READ V. 11. NOW THE GREEK VERB FINISH, PERFORM OR COMPLETE HERE, DEPENDING ON WHICH TRANSLATION YOU HAVE, IS IN THE IMPERATIVE MOOD MEANING THAT THIS IS A COMMAND, WHICH REMINDS US, THAT PAUL'S JUDGMENT, OPINION OR ADVICE IS NOT JUST FROM HIM, BUT GOD. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS INSPIRING PAUL, THIS IS AUTHORITATIVE.

*** AND BY THE WAY, THIS IS THE ONLY FORMAL
COMMAND IN CHAPTERS 8&9 OF
II CORINTHIANS.**

**** AND PAUL IS NOT COMMANDING THEM IN THE
AMOUNT THAT THEY SHOULD GIVE, FOR HE
SAYS AT THE END OF V. 11, “BY YOUR ABILITY,”
WHICH LIT. MEANS “OUT OF WHAT YOU HAVE.”**

***** HENCE, PAUL IS NOT FIXING AN AMOUNT OR
A PERCENTAGE BUT IS TELLING THEM TO FINISH
WHAT THEY STARTED, THAT IT IS TO THEIR
ADVANTAGE ETERNALLY AND SPIRITUALLY FOR
THEM NOW.**

****** AND ALL THE CORINTHIANS GOOD
INTENTIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THEIR
TAKING UP THIS OFFERING FOR THE POOR
SAINTS WOULD HAVE MEANT LITTLE HAD THEY
FAILED TO COMPLETE THE COLLECTION.**

**1. THEREFORE PAUL COMMANDED THEM TO
FINISH DOING IT.**

*** IT IS TO SAY, THE CORINTHIANS READINESS TO DESIRE TO GIVE WAS MEANINGLESS APART FROM THE COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT.**

**** THUS PAUL WAS CONCERNED THAT, THOUGH THEY WERE WILLING, THEY MIGHT FAIL TO FINISH. COMPLETING NEEDS TO MATCH INTENTION.**

***** AND WE MUST BE CAREFUL HERE NOT TO CONFUSE WILLING WITH DOING, BECAUSE THE TWO MUST GO TOGETHER.**

****** AND IF THE WILLING IS SINCERE AND IN THE WILL OF GOD, THEN THERE MUST BE A PERFORMANCE, A COMPLETION ALSO.**

2. BELOVED, PAUL DID NOT SAY THAT A WILLINGNESS WAS A SUBSTITUTE FOR DOING, BECAUSE IT IS NOT.

*** BUT IF GIVING IS MOTIVATED BY GRACE AND LOVE FOR CHRIST WHO GAVE HIS ALL, V.9, WE**

WILL GIVE WILLINGLY AND NOT BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN FORCED TO GIVE.

**** AND PAUL IS TELLING THE CORINTHIANS TO FINISH WHAT THEY STARTED ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY, OUT OF WHAT YOU HAVE.**

***** AND PAUL EXPANDS ON THIS IN V. 12 WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE ACCEPTABILITY. LOOK AT V. 12 PLEASE.**

II. THE ACCEPTABILITY, (READ V. 12)

A. NOW THE LAST PHRASE IN V. 11, ACCORDING TO YOUR MEANS, BY YOUR ABILITY, OUT OF WHAT YOU HAVE, IS NOW EXPLAINED IN V. 12.

*** FOR PAUL SAYS, FOR IF THE READINESS IS PRESENT, IF THERE IS A WILLINGNESS TO GIVE, IF AN EAGERNESS, A ZEAL TO GIVE IS PRESENT, IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, ACCORDING TO WHAT A PERSON HAS, NOT ACCORDING TO WHAT HE DOES NOT HAVE.**

**** MEANING: THOUGH PAUL COMMANDED THE CORINTHIANS TO FINISH THEIR OFFERING, HE DID NOT EXPECT THEM TO GIVE BEYOND THEIR MEANS, LIKE THE MACEDONIANS, THAT WAS NOT HIS COMMAND.**

***** NO ONE IS EXPECTED TO GIVE BEYOND WHAT THEY DO NOT HAVE. WE ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BORROW MONEY TO GIVE.**

****** AND WITH THE LORD, THE AMOUNT IS NOT THE ISSUE, BUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE HEART. THE LORD EXPECTS BELIEVERS TO GIVE IN PROPORTION TO THEIR RESOURCES, NOT MORE, BUT ALSO NOT LESS.**

1. LET ME ILLUSTRATE. DURING A SCOTTISH WORSHIP SERVICE IN EDINBURGH, I READ WHERE IT WAS REPORTED THAT ONE MEMBER OF A CHURCH ACCIDENTALLY PUT IN A CROWN PIECE INSTEAD OF A PENNY, AND 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 A PENNY.”**

**** BY THE WAY, I LIKE THAT USHER AND AM GOING TO ASK THE ELDERS TO HAVE STEVE ZOOK TRAIN ALL OF OUR USHERS THAT WAY.**

***** BUT SERIOUSLY, THE POINT IS, THE USHER WAS RIGHT BECAUSE GOD’S FOCUS IS ON THE HEART AND GOD DESIRES WILLING HEARTS THAT EAGERLY GIVE ACCORDING TO WHAT A PERSON HAS, NOT ACCORDING TO WHAT HE DOES NOT HAVE.**

****** AND OF COURSE, SOME PEOPLE HAVE OVERSPENT ON SELF AND TO FULFILL THEIR LUST FOR MATERIALISM AND THINGS, WHICH IS A HEART ISSUE ALSO OF COVETOUSNESS, LOVE FOR MONEY AND LOVE OF THINGS.**

2. BUT AGAIN, THE LORD EXPECTS HIS CHILDREN TO GIVE IN PROPORTION TO THEIR RESOURCES, NOT MORE, BUT ALSO NOT LESS.

*** AND ANY CHURCH OR MINISTRY THAT ATTEMPTS TO PRESSURE PEOPLE TO GIVE BEYOND THEIR RESOURCES IS OPERATING OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP.**

**** HOWEVER, SO ALSO ARE THOSE WHO FAIL TO GIVE IN PROPORTION TO THEIR RESOURCES. GIVING IS A HEART ISSUE AND REVEALS WHAT OUR AFFECTIONS ARE SET UPON, ON THINGS ABOVE OR BELOW, QUOTE COLOSSIANS 3:1-4 AND MATTHEW 6:19-21.**

***** SO WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE GIVING IN GOD'S SIGHT? IT IS GIVING WITH A READINESS, A WILLINGNESS, A ZEAL, TO GIVE IN WHAT PROPORTION GOD HAS GIVEN TO US, OUT OF WHAT YOU HAVE.**

****** IT'S NOT THE PORTION BUT THE PROPORTION, THAT'S THE ISSUE. IF WE COULD HAVE GIVEN AND DID NOT, GOD KNOWS. IF WE WANTED TO GIVE MORE, AND CANNOT, GOD KNOWS. WHEN WE GIVE WILLINGLY, ACCORDING TO WHAT WE HAVE, WE ARE PRACTICING GRACE GIVING.**

3. WHICH LEADS US TO V. 13, WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR THIRD POINT FOR TODAY, THE ANTICIPATION. LOOK AT V. 13 PLEASE.

III. THE ANTICIPATION, (READ V. 13)

A. NOW IT APPEARS TO ME, THAT PAUL SAYS WHAT HE SAYS IN V. 13 IN ANTICIPATION TO AN ACCUSATION OR TO A MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THIS OFFERING.

*** IT IS TO SAY, PAUL MAY HAVE ANTICIPATED A POSSIBLE OBJECTION THAT THE CORINTHIANS WERE BEING ASKED TO IMPOVERISH THEMSELVES SO THAT THE JEWISH SAINTS MIGHT BE ENRICHED.**

**** THUS HE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT HE IS NOT ASKING THE WEALTHY TO BECOME POOR BY EXCHANGING PLACES WITH THE POOR.**

***** PAUL'S PURPOSE IS NOT TO PUT THE CORINTHIANS UNDER FINANCIAL STRAIN AND THEY GO INTO POVERTY.**

1. PAUL'S GOAL WAS NOT TO RAISE THE JERUSALEM SAINTS COMFORT LEVEL BY CAUSING THE CORINTHIANS AFFLICTION AND HARDSHIP.

*** FOR PAUL ASSURED THE CORINTHIANS THAT THIS LOVE OFFERING WAS NOT FOR THE EASE OF OTHERS IN V. 13.**

**** HE WAS NOT OUT TO MAKE THE RICH POOR AND THE POOR RICH.**

***** INSTEAD, HIS GOAL AND HEART WAS TO OPPOSE FAVORITISM AND BRING ABOUT SOME EQUALITY IN MEETING BASIC NEEDS, PAUL WAS NOT COMMUNICATING A QUOTE CHRISTIAN COMMUNISM OR SOCIALISM IN A MARXIST WAY.**

****** PAUL JUST WANTED THOSE WITH MORE THAN THEY NEEDED TO HELP THOSE WHO HAD LESS THAN THEY NEEDED.**

2. THIS WAS NOT A GOVERNMENT MANDATE, BUT A PLEA IN THE CHURCH TO HELP THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS OUT THAT WERE IN DEEP POVERTY, NOT HAVING ENOUGH TO EAT, NOT TRYING TO MAKE EVERYONE IN THE SAME CLASS FINANCIALLY.

*** THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH THE CORINTHIANS HAVING MORE THAN THE JERUSALEM BELIEVERS. BUT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN WRONG TO BE UNWILLING TO SHARE.**

**** AND THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE CHURCH IS TO SUPPORT THOSE WHO ARE LAZY OR CHOOSE NOT TO WORK. AND WE LIVE IN A DAY WHEN PEOPLE WANT TO WORK, BUT THERE ARE NO JOBS AVAILABLE THEY CAN DO.**

***** HOWEVER IF A PERSON DOESN'T WANT TO WORK BECAUSE THEY ARE LAZY OR IS A SLUGGARD AS PROVERBS CALLS THEM AND**

LOVES SLEEP, WE ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO HELP THEM.

****** AND FAMILY SHOULD HELP FIRST AND THEN THE FAMILY OF FAMILIES, QUOTE I TIMOTHY 5:8, II THESSALONIANS 3:10.**

3. NOW AS WE GO BACK TO V. 13, THE PRINCIPLE HERE IS, YOUR GIVING CORINTHIANS, IS NOT FOR THE EASE OF OTHERS THAT ARE LAZY, BUT TO SUPPLY GENUINE NEED.

*** THERE MUST BE AN EQUALITY IN SUPPLYING NEED. PAUL WANTED THOSE WITH MORE THAN THEY NEEDED, WHO HAD ABUNDANCE IN THAT SENSE, TO HELP THOSE WHO HAD LESS THAN THEY NEEDED, AN EQUALITY WHEN IT CAME TO NEED, BUT NOT FOR EASE OR MAKE THE POOR RICH, ETC.**

**** AND THAT THIS IS THE MEANING IS COMMUNICATED IN V. 14, WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR 4TH POINT, THE ABUNDANCE, LOOK AT V. 14 PLEASE.**

IV. THE ABUNDANCE, (READ V. 14)

A. NOW “NEED” HERE IS AN IMPORTANT WORD USED TWICE IN V. 14.

*** AND THOUGH AT THE PRESENT TIME THE CORINTHIANS ABUNDANCE, HAVING MORE THAN THEY NEEDED, WAS A SUPPLY FOR THE JERUSALEM’S SAINTS NEEDS.**

**** HOWEVER, THAT MIGHT NOT ALWAYS BE THE CASE, THE FORTUNES OF LIFE CAN CHANGE QUICKLY IN GOD’S PROVIDENCE, AND THE TIME MIGHT COME WHEN PERSECUTION OR DISASTER COULD IMPOVERISH THE CORINTHIANS.**

***** AND SHOULD THAT HAPPEN, THE JERUSALEM SAINTS ABUNDANCE WOULD THEN BECOME A SUPPLY FOR THE CORINTHIANS NEED.**

****** IN OTHER WORDS, ROLES COULD REVERSE SOME DAY AND THE NEED, THE TABLES MAY BE TURNED.**

1. AND NOTE THAT THE WORD EQUALITY AT THE END OF V. 14, TRANSLATED FAIRNESS IN THE ESV, LIT. MEANS EQUITY, WHAT IS FAIR, WHAT IS EQUITABLE.

*** AND PAUL IS NOT ADVOCATING AN EQUALITY OF GOODS AND POSSESSIONS, BUT SPEAKS OF AN EQUAL RELIEF FROM THE BURDEN OF NEED, NOT AN EQUALITY OF POSSESSIONS IN A SOCIALISTIC, COMMUNISTIC TYPE OF WAY MANDATED BY GOVERNMENT TO SHARE THE WEALTH.**

**** AND WE NEED TO MEET GENUINE NEEDS OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WE THAT HAVE ABUNDANCE, WE THAT HAVE MORE THAN OUR NEEDS MET, AND PAUL POINTS OUT, WE MAY BE THE ONES IN NEED SOME DAY.**

***** AND IN V. 15 PAUL ILLUSTRATES THIS POINT FROM THE O.T., SO LOOK AT V. 15 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR LAST POINT, THE ANALOGY.**

V. THE ANALOGY, (READ V. 15)

A. NOW I LOVE SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS, FOR THEY ARE AUTHORITATIVE.

*** WELL, PAUL GOES BACK TO THE O.T. AND QUOTES EXODUS 16:18 WHICH SAYS: "WHEN THEY MEASURED IT WITH AN OMER, HE WHO HAD GATHERED MUCH HAD NO EXCESS, AND HE WHO HAD GATHERED LITTLE HAD NO LACK; EVERY MAN GATHERED AS MUCH AS HE SHOULD EAT."**

**** NOW THIS PASSAGE ON THE WHOLE FROM EXODUS 16:8-36 COMES FROM THE ACCOUNT OF ISRAEL'S WILDERNESS WANDERINGS.**

***** AND IN RESPONSE TO THE PEOPLE'S GRUMBLINGS, THE LORD PROMISED TO SEND**

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL BREAD FROM HEAVEN CALLED MANNA.

****** AND WHEN THEY GATHERED THEIR MANNA, SOME GATHERED MUCH AND SOME LITTLE. YET HE WHO HAD GATHERED MUCH HAD NO EXCESS, AND HE WHO GATHERED LITTLE HAD NO LACK.**

1. THERE WAS EQUAL PROVISION OF THE NEED OF FOOD. WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT POSSESSIONS OR WEALTH.

*** BUT EVERYONE'S NEED WAS MET EQUALLY DURING THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL'S 40 YEARS DESERT JOURNEY.**

**** IN FACT, INITIALLY, SOME GATHERED MORE THAN THEY NEEDED BEYOND COLLECTING DOUBLE FOR THE SABBATH BUT GATHERED MORE FOR STORING IT UP AND IT DID WHAT?**

***** IT SPOILED, IT BECAME WORMY. SO EVERYONE'S NEED FOR FOOD WAS MET.**

****** LIKewise, WE THAT HAVE ABUNDANCE TODAY, ARE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, NOT MAKE OURSELVES POOR, FOR THEN WE WOULD HAVE NEED.**

2. BUT WE ARE TO SHARE SO THAT EVERYONE HAS ENOUGH, JUST AS THE ISRAELITES DID IN GOD FEEDING THEM WITH MANNA.

*** AGAIN WITH THE ISRAELITES, THE NEEDS OF ALL WERE MET, NO ONE SUFFERED WANT, AND SO SHOULD IT BE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

IN WRAP UP: (1) I WANT TO GO BACK IN APPLICATION IN WHERE I STARTED TODAY AND THE THEMES OF OUR STUDY, TO FINISH WHAT YOU START.

*** FOR THAT'S WHAT PAUL WANTED THE CORINTHIANS TO DO, TO FINISH THE OFFERING THEY STARTED TO TAKE UP FOR THEIR NEEDY**

POVERTY STRICKEN JERUSALEM BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

**** AND IN APPLICATION, ONE OF THE MOST TROUBLING, DISTURBING, VEXING ASPECTS OF THE MINISTRY, BOTH PERSONALLY AND CORPORATE IS DEALING WITH THOSE WHO MAKE A GOOD BEGINNING, BUT NEVER FINISH WHAT THEY START.**

***** AND WE ALL KNOW IT IS NOT EASY TO CARRY THINGS THROUGH TO COMPLETION; IT TAKES DISCIPLINE, DEVOTION, ACCOUNTABILITY, FAITHFULNESS, COUNTING THE COST AND MOST OF ALL LOVE FOR OUR SAVIOR, GOING BACK TO II CORINTHIANS 8:9.**

****** AND SADLY, PROBABLY ALL OF US HAVE EXPERIENCED THINGS THAT THE LORD LED US IN HIS WILL TO START, AND EVEN MADE PROMISES OR COMMITMENTS OR VOWS TO DO THINGS FOR HIM, BUT FAILED TO COMPLETE THAT PROMISE OR COMMITMENT.**

2. AND LIKE THE CORINTHIANS, ALL THE GOOD INTENTIONS IN THE WORLD MEANS VERY LITTLE, IF WE FAIL TO COMPLETE WHAT HE HAS

LED US TO DO, FOR THE CORINTHIANS TO COMPLETE THE COLLECTION.

*** AND THE LORD MAY BE PROMPTING YOUR HEART TODAY, TO COMPLETE SOMETHING YOU PROMISED TO DO FOR HIM.**

**** MAYBE IN GIVING, MAYBE IN READING, OR STUDY, OR MEMORIZING, MAYBE IN FAITHFULNESS, GOING TO A FLOCK, GOING TO AN ADULT CLASS, SERVING AND USING YOUR GIFTS, MAYBE IN A PROMISE OF DISCIPLESHIP OR A PROMISE MADE TO ANOTHER BROTHER OR SISTER.**

***** IF GOD LED YOU TO DO IT, FINISH IT. FOLLOW THROUGH.**

****** OUR MOTIVE TO DO IT, LOVE FOR OUR LORD WHO BECAME POOR IN HIS INCARNATION AND ADVENT.**

3. AND MAYBE YOU NEED SOME ACCOUNTABILITY, THEN SEEK OUT A FAITHFUL BROTHER AND SISTER AND DO IT.

*** BELOVED, FINISH WHATEVER IT IS YOU STARTED FOR YOUR LORD.**

**** I CLOSE WITH 3 VERSES. QUOTE COLOSSIANS 4:17. AND II TIMOTHY 4:6-8.**

***** MY ADMONITION TODAY TO YOU AND ME. FINISH YOUR MINISTRY IN THE LORD IN WHAT HE HAS GIVEN TO YOU, AND FINISH WELL. (LET'S PRAY)**