

“Faithful Stewards”
2 Corinthians 8:10-12

Introduction:

1. In Paul’s First Letter To The Corinthian Church:
 - He Wrote These Familiar Words:
 - 1 Corinthians 4:2 - “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful!”
 - Now - When You Hear That Word:
 - “Steward” - What Do You First Think Of?
 - If You’re Like Me:
 - The First Thing You Think Of Is - Giving!
 - And Even The Offerings That We Collect Each Week In Our Church!
 - In Fact - The Financial Statement:
 - That Is On The Back Of Your Bulletin Each Week:
 - We Call - A “Stewardship Report!”
 - Because It Describes How We Feel About All That You Give In This Place!
2. A “Steward” Is Someone Who:
 - Has Been Entrusted With The Resources:
 - Of Someone Else!
 - In The New Testament - This Term Was Applied To A Manager Of Another Person’s House, Another Person’s Finances, Or Even Another Person’s Children!
 - So - This Is A Good Term:
 - To Describe Our Role:
 - As Christians As Well!
 - We Are All Stewards Of The Resources Given To Us By God!
 - All That We Have Has Been Given To Us By The Lord - Because All That We Have Ultimately Belongs To The Lord!
 - And As His Stewards - We Have Been Given The Privilege To Oversee & To Manage What He Has Provided To Us - For Him & For His Glory!
 - And What Is The Most Important Quality:
 - Of A Steward Of The Lord?
 - Faithfulness & Trustworthiness & Reliability!
 - Which - Of Course - Can Only Come From The Grace Of God At Work In Our Lives!
3. And So - This Morning - As We Turn Back In Our Bibles To 2 Corinthians 8 Together:
 - We Will See The Importance Of Being Faithful Stewards:
 - Especially In Our Giving To The Lord!
 - Beginning In 2 Corinthians 8:10-12:
 - “And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. / 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. / 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!”
 - God Wants You To Be:
 - A Faithful Steward!
 - In Your Giving - As Well As In Your Life Of Service For Him!
 - And He Gives Us 3 Reasons Why!

* The First Reason - We Find Back In 8:10:

1. ***Faithful Giving Is Profitable!***
 - Profitable - And Beneficial - For Us As Christians & As A Church!
 - Now - At First Glance:
 - This Seems To Be A Contradiction!
 - How Can Giving Be Profitable?
 - How Can It Be That When You **Give** Something - You **Gain** Something?
 - **IE:** We Must Not Think Of Christian Giving:
 - In The Same Way That We Think Of:
 - Paying Our Taxes Or Paying Our Bills!
 - Even Though We May Gain Something From Giving Our Money To The

- Government Or To The Utility Company:
 - Yet - It Still Feels Like A Big Loss! Its Painful To Write Those Checks Or To See Your Income Being Withheld!
- But Things Are Different:
 - When You Give To The Lord!
 - In 8:8 - Paul Wrote - "I Speak Not By Commandment!"
 - In Other Words - Christian Giving Is To Be Done Freely & Not Forcibly! It Is To Be Seen As An Opportunity & Not An Obligation!
 - **IE:** There Are Still Some Countries That Have A "Church Tax" - Where The Government Collects Money From Its Citizens For The Support Of Different Churches! In Germany Alone - In 2017 - 6 Billion Euros Collected By Tax & Given To The Lutheran Church!
 - Christian Giving Was Never Designed To Be Just Another Tax Or Another Bill!
- And This Is Why Paul Also Writes - In 8:10 - "And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you!"
 - Paul's "Advice" & Judgment:
 - About Giving:
 - Is For Your Best - Your Benefit - Even Your Spiritual Profit!
 - It "Is Expedient For You!"
 - When You **Give** To The Lord - As A Faithful Steward:
 - You Will **Gain** From The Lord:
 - His Great Blessing!
 - John Gill - "It Will Be Rewarded With A Reward Of Grace!"
 - In Acts 20:35 - Paul Told The Church In Ephesus:
 - "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive!"
 - And In Luke 6 - Jesus Tells Us:
 - 6:30, 35, 38 - "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." / "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest!" / Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again!"
 - Faithful, Generous Giving In The Life Of A Christian:
 - Is Good!
 - Because It Reflects The Faithful, Generous Giving Of Jesus Christ Himself!
 - Remember 8:9 - "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich!"
 - So - If Giving Is So Good:
 - Good For Others & Good Even For Us!
 - What Should We Do According To 8:10?
- We Need To Regard Paul's Advice For Giving!
 - Especially When You Realize The Kind Of Advice:
 - Paul Is Giving!
 - The Word "Advice" Could Also Be Translated "Conclusion" Or Judgment!
 - He Used The Same Phrase:
 - Back In 1 Corinthians 7 - When He Was:
 - Giving His "Advice" On Christian Marriage!
 - 7:25 - "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful!" / But In 7:40 He Adds - "And I think also that I have the Spirit of God!"
 - The Advice Of The Apostle Paul:
 - Was Always More Than Just Advice!
 - More Than Just His Opinion! Because After Much Thinking About & Praying About & Meditating On The Truth Of Christ's Grace:
 - He Came To This Inspired Conclusion Of How To Apply The Grace Of Jesus Christ To Our Own Giving!
 - So - We Need To Not Only Listen To The Advice:

- He's About To Give - We Need To Regard It:
 - And Follow It! But Also:
- We Need To Remember Our Ambition For Giving!
 - In 8:10 - Paul Reminds Them:
 - Of Something That They Had Already Started!
 - "This is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago!"
 - About A Year Before:
 - The Corinthians Already:
 - Had Great Plans To Give!
 - Especially To Paul's Collection!
 - "To Do!"
 - And When They Made Their Plans - They Also:
 - Had Great Passion To Give!
 - "Forward" - Means They Had A Willingness To Give!
 - So - At Some Point In The Past:
 - They Had The Same Heart For Giving:
 - That The Macedonian Churches Now Had!
 - See 8:3 & 5!
 - But What Happened?
 - Well - In That Relatively Short Period Of Time:
 - About One Year - Their Heart For Giving Had Grown Cold!
 - This Is Probably The Time Period When Their Sin Caused Their Strife With Paul!
 - And They Stopped Growing!
 - All This Happened In Just One Year's Time!
 - We Can See From This:
 - That It Doesn't Have To Take Very Long:
 - For Spiritual Health & Vitality To Become Dormant!
 - **IE:** Like Grass!
 - But We Can Also See From This:
 - That It Doesn't Have To Take Very Long:
 - For Spiritual Health & Vitality To Resume Either!
 - Is There Something That Has Gotten In The Way:
 - Of Your Own Spiritual Health & Vitality?
 - Something That Has Taken Away Your Joy & Blessing - Even In Your Giving?
 - Then - You Need To:
 - Remember That Faithfulness In Giving:
 - Is Spiritually Profitable:
 - And Beneficial For You!
 - It Is A Sign:
 - Of God's Grace At Work In Your Life!
 - Of Your Growth In The Lord!
 - Of Your Gratitude To The Lord!
 - And His Faithful Giving Of Himself For You!

* Another Reason For Us To Be Faithful Stewards Is Found In 8:11:

2. ***Faithful Giving Is Prescribed!***

- At The Start Of This Verse - Paul Gives His Advice:
 - "Now Therefore Perform The Doing Of It!"
 - He Is Telling The Corinthians:
 - To Finish What They Started!
 - The Collection They Started A Year Ago, They Must Not Delay Any Longer! Finish It! Complete It!
 - And Instead Of Just Giving His Opinion:
 - Paul Provides Clear Instruction On Giving!
 - **IE:** Kind Of Like When You Go To The Doctor To Find Out What Might Be Wrong With You! Sometimes You Go To Another Doctor To Get A "Second Opinion!" Well -

No Doctor Thinks His Opinion Is Just An Opinion! And No Doctor Thinks His Advice Is Just Advice!

- And This Is Paul's Prescription - For Our Giving!

- There Needs To Be Eagerness:

- In What We Desire To Give!

- 8:11 - "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!"

- At First - The Corinthians Had A:

- "Readiness To Will!"

- This Means That:

- There Was Not Only A Willingness:

- To Give - But There Was An:

- Eagerness To Give!

- There Was An Electric Excitement In The Church For This Giving Project!

- But In Order To Be A Faithful Steward:

- For The Lord - This Eagerness:

- Must Not Stop There!

- It Needs To Start In The Heart, For Sure! But It Must Not Stop In The Heart! Because - Then:

- There Needs To Be Eagerness:

- In What We Do Give!

- 8:11 - "So There May Be A Performance Also Of That Which Ye Have!"

- What Was In Their Heart:

- Needed To Be Transferred:

- To Their Hands!

- Now - This Is Not Just Paul's Prescription For Our Giving!

- This Ought To Be Applied To All Areas Of Our Lives As Faithful Stewards For The Lord!

- There Needs To Be An Eagerness:

- Not Only In What We Desire:

- But Also In What We Do!

- As We Are Told In:

- Ecclesiastes 9:10 - "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might!"

- When There Is The Right Kind:

- Of Eagerness In Your Heart:

- It Will Provide The Right Kind Of Energy You Need:

- To Be A Faithful Steward For The Lord!

- Faithful In Giving!

- But Also Faithful In Your Service, Your Witness, Your Worship - All For The Lord!

- A Faithful Steward - By God's Grace - Will Not Give Up!

- But Will Strive To Finish What God Directed & Enabled You To Start!

* But A Third Reason For Us To Be Faithful Stewards Is Found In 8:12:

3. ***Faithful Giving Is Pleasing!***

- Pleasing To The Lord!

- 8:12 - "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!"

- The Word "Accepted" Here Is A Word:

- That Describes An Offering:

- That Is Acceptable & Well-Pleasing To The Lord!

- In 1 Peter 2:5 - We Are Told That - As Christians:

- We Are - "As lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ!"

- And When You Give To The Lord - It Is A Spiritual Sacrifice - An Offering To The Lord!

- But What Makes Your Offering:

- Pleasing & Acceptable To The Lord?

- First In:
- How You Give!
 - “First If There Be First A Willing Mind!”
 - This Is The Same Kind Of Heart:
 - Referred To In The Previous Verse!
 - An Eager & An Earnest Heart!
 - It Means That You Are Giving:
 - Freely & Fervently & As Fully:
 - As You Are Able!
 - As We Are Told At The End Of 8:11 - “Out Of That Which Ye Have!”
 - This Is The Kind Of Giving & Offering:
 - That Pleases The Lord!
 - Giving From The Heart!
 - And Then - When **How** You Give Is Acceptable To The Lord:
- **What** You Give:
 - Will Be Acceptable To The Lord As Well!
 - 8:12b - “It is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not!”
 - When Your Heart Is In:
 - Your Giving - This Is The Standard God Uses For Your Giving!
 - John Calvin:
 - “If You Offer A Gift From Your Slender Resources, Your Intention Is Just As Valuable In God’s Eyes As If A Rich Man Had Made A Large Gift Out Of His Abundance!”
 - And Isn’t This What Jesus Himself Taught:
 - Back In Mark 12:43-44 - “And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. / And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. / And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: / For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living!”
 - It Seems Clear:
 - That This Poor Widow’s Offering:
 - Was Pleasing & Acceptable To The Lord:
 - Not Just Because Of:
 - **What** She Gave!
 - But Because Of:
 - **How** She Gave!
 - What She Gave:
 - Was So Little:
 - In The Eyes Of The World!
 - She Was Probably Looked Down Upon By Those Self-Righteous Pharisees!
 - But **How** She Gave:
 - **What** She Gave:
 - Was **Great** In The Eyes Of The Lord!
 - And Was A “Sweet Savor” Unto Him!

Conclusion:

1. This Was Also True:
 - Of The Philippian Church:
 - One Of Those Poor & Persecuted Macedonian Churches:
 - Founded By Paul - Who Gave To Paul:
 - From Their Heart!
 - Freely & Fervently & As Fully As They Were Able!
 - And Paul Said This:
 - About An Offering That They Gave To Him!
 - Philippians 4:18 - “But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God!”
2. This Is What:

- Being A Faithful Steward For The Lord:
 - Is All About!
 - It Means That You Are Faithful:
 - In *All* Of Your Giving!
- Not Just:
 - The Giving Of Your Resources:
 - But The Giving Of Yourself:
 - *All* To The Lord!
- Faithfulness In This Kind Of Giving:
 - Is Spiritually Profitable:
 - For You - And Is:
 - Abundantly Pleasing:
 - To The Lord!
- When You Give To The Lord - Do Not Give:
 - With Just Your Hands - Give:
 - With All Your Heart!

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