

“Ready To Serve!”
2 Corinthians 9:1-5

Introduction:

1. This Morning - We Are Going To Get Back:
 - To Our Series Through 2 Corinthians:
 - So Please Turn With Me In Your Bibles To:
 - 2 Corinthians 9 - Where We Will Continue To Explore:
 - The Apostle Paul’s Instructions To The Corinthian Church About Giving!
 - If You Remember:
 - In Both Chapters 8-9 - Paul Is Addressing:
 - This Important Topic:
 - On Christian Giving - Especially As It Pertains To The Special Collection He Was Taking Up:
 - For The Poor Saints In The Jerusalem Church!
 - This Collection:
 - He Already Mentioned To The Corinthians:
 - About A Year Before:
 - Toward The End Of His First Letter - In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 - He Wrote - “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. / Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come!”
 - So - This Was A Church-Wide Offering:
 - And Paul Encouraged The Corinthian Church:
 - To Do Their Part!
 - And - At First - They Were Eager & Excited To Participate!
2. But Now - In 2 Corinthians 8-9 - Paul Is Telling Them:
 - The Time Has Come:
 - For The Collection To Be Completed:
 - And They Need To Be Ready When He Arrives!
 - And To Encourage Them & To Help Them - Paul Sent Three Faithful Brothers Ahead Of Him - Including Titus!
 - And This Leads Us To:
 - The First 5 Verses Of Chapter 9 - Which Will Be Our Text This Morning - Where Paul Writes:
 - “For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: / For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. / Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: / Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting. / Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness!”
 - Back In 9:1 - Paul Reminds Them:
 - Of What This Collection / This Offering Was All About!
 - It Was “The Ministering To The Saints!”
 - That Is - It Was Just Another Way To Serve Their Brothers & Sisters In Christ!
 - And Even Though Paul Has Their Giving In Mind Throughout These Verses - They Really Can Apply To ***All*** The Ways We Minister To & Serve One Another!
3. And So - We ***All*** Have A Responsibility:
 - To Help Each Other:
 - To Be Ready To Serve!
 - In The Words Of Hebrews 10:24 - We Need To - “Consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works!”
 - This Is Why Paul Wrote To Them:
 - These Verses!
 - And This Is Why Paul Sent To Them:
 - Those 3 Brothers!

- And We Need To Do The Same!
 - So - How Can We Help Each Other:
 - In Our Walk & Service For The Lord?
 - How Can We “Provoke” One Another “Unto Love And To Good Works?”
 - Three Ways We Can See In These Verses!

1. ***There Needs To Be A Confidence!***

- ***A Confidence In The Performance:***
 - Of God’s Work Of Grace - In The Life Of His People!
 - Which We See In 9:1-2 - “For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: / For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many!”
 - Paul Knew Some Things:
 - About The Corinthian Church:
 - That Encouraged Him Greatly!
 - In Fact - He Even Felt That It Was Somewhat Unnecessary For Him To Write About This At All!
 - So - What Did Paul Know About Them?
 - What Did Paul See In Them?
 - Paul Knew That:
 - They Had A Great Eagerness To Serve!
 - 9:2 - “For I Know The Forwardness Of Your Mind!”
 - When Paul Told Them About The Collection About A Year Before:
 - There Was A Great Excitement About It & A Great Eagerness To Participate!
 - He Used This Term Back In Chapter 8 To Describe Their Eagerness As Well!
 - 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!”
 - So - At First - They Were Eager To Give & Eager To Serve!
 - They Were So Eager, In Fact, That It Caused Paul To Share Their Enthusiasm With Other Churches!
 - 9:2 - “For Which I Boast Of You To Them Of Macedonia, That Achaia Was Ready A Year Ago!”
 - So - In Spite Of All The Issues:
 - That Took Place In That Year:
 - Paul Still Remembered & Rejoiced In Their Great Eagerness To Serve!
 - And As Paul Was Telling Others About Them, He Also Knew That:
 - They Were A Great Example Of Service!
 - 9:2 - “And Your Zeal / Enthusiasm Hath Provoked Very Many!”
 - The Desire That The Corinthians Had To Give:
 - Became An Example To The Macedonian Churches To Give!”
 - And Do You Remember How They Ended Up Giving?
 - 8:1-2 - “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; / How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality!”
 - Because Of The Great Example Of The Corinthians, The Macedonian Churches Gave Willingly & Generously! Even “Beyond Their Power!” (8:3)
 - And Paul Was Confident:
 - That The Great Eagerness & The Great Example:
 - Of The Corinthians Would Continue!
 - But How Could He Be So Confident?
 - Because He Knew What The Source Of These Traits Were!
 - They Flowed Out Of:
 - The God’s Work Of Grace In Their Lives!
 - Phillip Hughes - “True Christian Giving Flows From The Prior Giving Of God’s Grace, And Paul’s Glorifying Concerning The Corinthians Is Essentially A Glorifying In The Goodness Of God!”
 - This Is Why Paul Could Be So Confident About Them!
 - As He Wrote In Philippians 1:6 - “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ!”

- Do You Have This Confidence - First Of All - About Your Own Soul?
 - Has The Lord "Begun A Good Work In You?"
- This Can Only Happen:
 - When You Respond:
 - To The Grace Of God When He Sent His Son, Jesus Christ, To Die On The Cross For Your Sin!
 - You Respond By Believing In Him:
 - And His Life, Death & Resurrection:
 - And That He Alone Can Bring You To God!
 - As Romans 10:9 Tells Us - "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved!"
 - And Once You Have This Confidence & Assurance About Your Own Soul:
- Then - You Can Have This Same Confidence:
 - About Your Church & Fellow Christians!
 - Because, In Order For You To Be A Spiritual Help To Others:
 - You Need To Have A Confidence In The Performance Of God's Work Of Grace!
 - **IE:** Have You Ever Felt Like There Was Little Or No Hope For A Fellow Christian Or For A Church? As If Anything You Say To Them Or Do For Them Will Be Ignored By Them? Sometimes This Even Causes Us To Stop Speaking Or Stop Serving Or Stop Getting With Them! We Give Up On Them! Well, Paul Could Have Done The Same Thing With The Corinthian Church - After All That They Had Done - Against The Lord & Against Him! But In Order To Continue To Minister To The Saints - And Serve Our Brothers & Sisters In Christ:
 - We Need To Believe That God Himself, Through His Grace, Will Work In & Through His People!
 - Even When It Seems Like All Hope Is Lost!
- However - Even Though We Are Confident In God's Sovereign Work Of Grace - Still:

2. ***There Needs To Be A Concern!***

- A **Concern** For **Perseverance**:
 - In The Service & Work Of God!
 - Which We See In 9:3-4 - "Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: / Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting!"
 - Even Though Paul Relied On & Trusted In:
 - God's Work Of Grace:
 - In The Corinthians' Hearts & Lives - He Also Knew That:
 - He Had A Responsibility To Help Them Be Ready To Serve!
 - And This Is A Principle We Find All Throughout Scripture!
 - Just Because God Is A Sovereign God:
 - And Bestows His Grace As He Wills & Chooses:
 - It Does Not Take Away Our Responsibility To Respond To His Grace & Serve Him!
 - So - Just Because God Promises:
 - To Finish / Complete His Work In His People:
 - We Still Have A Responsibility:
 - As His People - To Help Each Other To "Grow In Grace, And In The Knowledge Of Our Lord And Savior Jesus Christ!"
 - And This Is Why Paul - 9:3 - "Sent The Brethren!"
 - To Help Them Persevere In The Service God Had Called Them To!
 - This Shows Us That We Have A Mutual Responsibility For Each Other:
 - As Christians & As A Church!
 - We Need To Care For Each Other!
 - And Again - Hebrews 10:24 - We Need To - "Consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works!"
 - And Just Think About How Paul Did This!
 - He Sent 3 Other Brothers - Even From Other Churches - To Help Them & Encourage Them!

- And He Did So:
- For The Sake Of Truth!
 - As He Says In 9:3 - “Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf!”
 - Paul Wanted To Ensure That:
 - His Words Of Praise & Commendation About Them Would Not Be Empty & Hollow!
 - It Was A Matter Of Integrity!
 - Not Just Paul’s, But Theirs, And Even The Lord’s!
 - As Christians - We Must Be True To Our Words:
 - Because The Lord Is Always True To His!
 - And A Lack Of Integrity Can Bring Shame & Reproach To The Lord & His Church!
 - And So - Paul Had A Proper Concern For Their Christian Integrity!
 - But He Also Sent Those 3 Brothers:
- For The Sake Of Training!
 - At The End Of 9:3 - “That, As I Said, Ye May Be Ready!”
 - These Men Were Not There To Be:
 - Overlords To The Corinthian Church!
 - No - They Were There To Help & To Serve & To Encourage!
 - It Even Seems That These Men:
 - Might Have Had Some Administrative Skill:
 - In Handling Great Sums Of Money:
 - That The Corinthian Church Did Not Possess!
 - This Too Is Why We Need:
 - To Help & Serve One Another!
 - Because What One Person Lacks, Another Person Can Help Provide!
 - Psalm 27:17 - “Iron sharpeneth / Impacts / iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend!”
 - 1 Corinthians 12 - Gifts / Body Of Christ!
 - They Were Also Sent:
 - For The Sake Of Testimony!
 - 9:4 - Not Just To The World - But To Other Churches:
 - “Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting!”
 - When Paul Went To The Churches Of Macedonia:
 - They Heard About The Corinthian Church!
 - They Were Encouraged By The Macedonian Church!
 - And Now - Some Of Them - Were Looking Forward To Meeting The Corinthian Church!
 - But What A Disappointment:
 - And Even Discouragement It Would Be:
 - If The Corinthians Were Not As They Were Described!
 - And The Corinthians & Even Paul Himself Would Rightfully Be Embarrassed & Ashamed!
 - And So - Paul Was Proactive:
 - And Sent These 3 Brothers Ahead Of Him:
 - To Keep The Corinthians On The Right Track!
 - And Isn’t This What We Need As Well?
 - We Need To Have This Same Kind Of Concern:
 - About Our Own Perseverance:
 - In The Work & Service Of The Lord!
 - Because - By Ourselves - It Is So Easy To Get Off Track!
 - We Have A Responsibility:
 - As A Church - To Provide *Assistance* To Each Other As Well As *Accountability* For Each Other!
 - For The Same Reasons Paul Sent Those 3 Christian Brothers!
 - For The Sake Of Truth!
 - For The Sake Of Training!
 - For The Sake Of Testimony!

- Are You Willing To Serve Each Other In This Way?
 - Are You Willing To **Be** Served In This Way?
 - You Have A Responsibility To Care For Each Other In This Church!
 - Because - As We Find In 9:5:

3. ***There Needs To Be A Cause!***

- And The ***Cause*** Is ***Preparation!***

- 9:5 - "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness!"

- Three Times In This Verse - Paul Uses The Term "Before!"

- Paul Sent These 3 Emissaries To Help The Corinthian Church ***Prepare*** For His Arrival!

- It Was:

- A Preparation For Service!

- That Their Gifts Might Be Ready:

- When Paul Arrived!

- But The Word Paul Uses Here For Their Offering Is An Interesting Word!

- He Calls It A "Bountiful" Or "Generous" Gift - But The Greek Word He Uses Is "Eulogia" - From Which We Get Our Word "Eulogy!"

- A "Eulogy" Simply Means A "Good Word!"

- **IE:** We Often Use It At A Funeral Service! To Give Good Remarks About A Loved One's Life & Service For The Lord & For Others!

- Elsewhere In The New Testament - It Refers To A Blessing!

- Either In Word Or In Action!

- And So - Paul Encourages Them To Give:

- With This Description Of Their Gift!

- Because - Without A Word - Their Giving & Their Service Would Speak Volumes!

- It Would Speak Of God's Grace & Provision & Blessing To Them!

- And It Would Speak Of Their Love For The Lord & Their Care For His Church!

- It Was Time For The Corinthians:

- To Be A Blessing:

- With Their Blessings!

- And This Is Really What All Christian Service Is To Be About!

- Are You Prepared:

- To Serve The Other Members Of Your Church?

- Are You Prepared To Be A Blessing:

- With Your Blessings?

- Not Just In Financial Ways:

- But In Spiritual Ways!

- Do You Teach Others What God Has Taught You?

- Do You Encourage Others With What God Has Encouraged You?

- Do You Serve Others With The Gifts That God Had Given You?

- This Is Why God Has Designed The Church The Way He Did!

- Ephesians 4:11-12 - "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; / For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ!"

- We Need To Help Prepare Each Other:

- To Do The "Work Of The Ministry!"

- But - There Also Needs To Be:

- A Preparation Against Sin!

- 9:5 - "That the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness!"

- Another Reason Why Paul Sent These 3 Men Ahead Of Him:

- Was To Help Them Guard Against A Spirit Of Greed!

- Because - If He Came - And They Had Not "Laid Up In Store" Their Offerings

- Over A Period Of Time - It Would Be Even Harder For Them To Part With Their Money!

- And Instead Of Giving With A Spirit Of Eagerness:

- They Would Be Giving Out Of A Spirit Of Envy!
- And That Would Be Sin!
- And This Is The Cause & The Reason:
 - Why We Need To Care For Each Other:
 - And Disciple Each Other As Well!
 - To Help Prepare Each Other:
 - For Opportunities To Serve & Be A Blessing To Others!
 - As Well As To Help Each Other Guard Against Temptation & Sin!
 - When You Need Help In Your Life:
 - As A Christian:
 - You Need To Go To The Members Of Your Church:
 - And Ask For That Help!
 - When You See A Need For Help:
 - In The Life Of A Christian:
 - You Need To Go To That Brother Or Sister In Christ:
 - And Offer To Help!

Conclusion:

1. We Need To Remember This Morning That:
 - We *All* Have A Responsibility For Each Other!
 - To Provide Assistance!
 - To Provide Accountability!
 - To Provide Godly Advice!
 - As We Rely Upon The:
 - Sovereign Grace & Work In The Lives Of His People:
 - We Must Continue To:
 - Hebrews 10:24 - "Consider One Another To Provoke Unto Love And To Good Works!"
 - Are You Ready To Serve Your Church:
 - In This Way?

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