

“Ye Serve The Lord Christ!”
2 Corinthians 8:16-24

Introduction:

1. For The Rest Of Our Time Together This Morning:
 - Let's Return To Our Study:
 - Of 2 Corinthians - Where We Have Been Looking At:
 - Christian Giving!
 - Which Is Pretty Much What 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 Are All About!
 - And We've Already Learned Several:
 - Important Principles For Our Own Giving As A Church!
 - But Toward The End Of Chapter 8:
 - The Apostle Paul Transitions From:
 - Principles Of Giving:
 - To His Own Practice Of Giving:
 - As He Was Taking Up A Special Collection / A Special Love Offering For The Poor Christians In The Church At Jerusalem!
2. And In The Verses We Come To This Morning:
 - The Apostle Paul:
 - Under The Influence Of The Holy Spirit:
 - Wanted To Make Sure That Nothing:
 - Could Be Called Into Question With Regard To The Handling Of This Gift!
 - And So - In 2 Corinthians 8:16-24:
 - He Introduces 3 Men Who Were Sent:
 - To The Corinthian Church:
 - To Provide Proper Accountability For What Would Become A Substantial & An Abundant Gift Of Money!
 - And The Men Who Would Be In Charge:
 - Of Completing This Collection:
 - Had To Be Men Of Christian Character And Integrity!
3. And So - We Will See From These Verses:
 - What It Takes & What It Means:
 - For *All* Of Us:
 - To Serve The Lord - And To Serve Him With Integrity!
 - 8:16-24 - “But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. / 17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. / 18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; / 19 And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: / 20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: / 21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. / 22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. / 23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. / 24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf!”
 - Now - Even Though These Verses:
 - Refer To Some Specific Individuals:
 - Who Were In Charge Of A Very Specific Ministry:
 - Each One Of Us Ought To Apply What We Learn About Them:
 - To Our Own Service:
 - For Christ & Our Church!
4. And So - The First Thing We Can Learn:
 - From These Men Is:
 1. ***The Special Testimony Of A Christian Servant!***
 - What We Just Read Is A Brief Note Of Introduction:
 - And Commendation For The 3 Men:
 - Who Were Going To Help The Corinthian Church:

- Complete Their Own Commitment To This Love Offering!
 - But What Kind Of Men Were They? What Kind Of Testimony Did They Have?
 - We First Read About:
- A Testimony Of Devotion!
 - In The Life Of Titus:
 - Which We Already Looked At A Couple Of Weeks Ago:
 - In 8:16-17 - Where Paul Commends Titus With These Words - “But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you!”
 - Titus Was A Man Of Great Devotion:
 - To The Lord Jesus Christ & To His People!
 - And He Couldn’t Wait To Go Back To The Corinthian Church And Help Them Grow Through Their Giving!
 - Because For Titus:
 - Christian Service - No Matter What Form It Took:
 - Was An Honor!
 - And So - For Titus:
 - Christian Service - No Matter What Form It Took:
 - Came From His Heart!
 - This Is The Kind Of Christian Servant:
 - God Can Use & God Is After!
 - A Devoted Servant!
 - Is This Your Testimony This Morning, As A Servant Of Christ?
 - Devotion Means That Christian Service:
 - No Matter What Form It Takes For You:
 - Is An Honor!
 - And Will Come From Your Heart!
 - But Then We Also Read About:
- A Testimony Of Dependability!
 - In 8:18-19 - Where Paul Introduces Another Man:
 - Who Will Accompany Titus - And He Is Identified:
 - Simply As “The Brother!”
 - “And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; / And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind!”
 - Now - We Have Absolutely No Way Of Knowing:
 - Who This “Brother” Is - Even Though:
 - Many People Have Tried To Guess Who It Might Be!
 - Luke & Barnabas Are Two Of The More Popular Guesses!
 - But - Perhaps The Reason Why Paul Does Not Use His Name:
 - Is Because It Was This Man’s Character:
 - As A Humble & Faithful
“Brother” In Christ - That Was More Important To Record Than His Name!
 - But The Reason Why Paul Sent This Brother:
 - With Titus Is Clear:
 - He Was A Dependable & Faithful Servant Of Jesus Christ! He Was:
 - Dependable In His Reputation:
 - For Christ!
 - Paul Writes In 8:18 That His - “Praise Is In The Gospel Throughout All The Churches!”
 - This Means That This Brother Was Someone Well-Known For His Love For & Delight In The Gospel Of Jesus Christ!
 - Now - It Is Possible That He Was A Preacher Of The Gospel - But It Seems More Probable That He Was Just A Christian Who Loved To Tell Others About Jesus In His Daily Walk & His Daily Work!
 - Just Like Some Of You Here Today!
 - And He Was So Full Of Christ That He Could Be Fully Entrusted With This

Opportunity To Serve! And So - He Was Also:

- Dependable In His Representation:
 - For Christ!
 - In 8:19 - This “Brother” Was “Chosen Of The Churches To Travel With Us With This Grace!”
 - Which Refers To The Gift That Was Being Taken Up!
 - The Churches In Macedonia:
 - Knew This Brother:
 - And Loved This Brother:
 - And Then Sent This Brother!
 - Because Of His Testimony Of Dependability!
 - They Chose The One Who Had Been Faithful *Among* Them To *Represent* Them!
 - Isn't This What Jesus Himself Taught:
 - About Faithfulness & Dependability?
 - Luke 16:10 - “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much!”
 - This Is The Kind Of Christian Servant:
 - God Can Use & God Is After!
 - A Dependable Servant!
 - Is This Your Testimony This Morning, As A Servant Of Christ?
 - Are You Faithful & Dependable:
 - Even In “That Which Is Least?”
 - You Will - When You Remember That Any Service For Christ:
 - In The Words Of 8:19:
 - Is “To The Glory Of The Same Lord!”
 - This Means That When You Have Any Kind Of Opportunity To Serve The Lord:
 - It Is An Opportunity:
 - To Exalt Him As Well As To Encourage Others!
 - Dependable Servants Are The Ones:
 - Who Will Hear The Lord Say One Day:
 - To Them - “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord!” (Matthew 25:21, 23)
 - Another Character Trait Of A Christian Servant Is:
- A Testimony Of Discernment!
 - In 8:20-21 - Here, Paul Explains Why He Was Sending Along This Other Brother With Titus In The First Place!
 - “Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: / Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men!”
 - As Servants Of Jesus Christ - We Need To Use Discernment In *How* We Serve The Lord!
 - Especially When It Involves Financial Matters - Which Is What Is Going On In These Verses!
 - And So:
 - In 8:20 - Paul Used Discernment:
 - To Avoid Accusations!
 - “Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us!”
 - Paul Knew That:
 - “The love of money is the root of all evil!” (1 Timothy 6:10) - And So - He Wanted To Prevent Any Blame Or Blemish To Be Found & Bring Reproach To Christ! And Then:
 - In 8:21 - Paul Used Discernment:
 - To Advance Accountability!
 - “Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men!”
 - This Is A Scriptural Principle:
 - Found In Both The Old & New Testaments!
 - It Seems That Paul Had Proverbs 3:4 In Mind!

- But It Is Essential For Servants Of Christ:
 - Like You & Like Me:
 - To Guard Ourselves Against Temptations & Transgressions That Might Bring Reproach On Christ & His Church!
 - Paul Even Tells The Thessalonian Church:
 - In 1 Thessalonians 5:22 - "Abstain from all appearance of evil!"
- This Is The Kind Of Christian Servant:
 - God Can Use & God Is After!
 - A Discerning Servant!
 - Is This Your Testimony This Morning, As A Servant Of Christ?
 - Are You Using Discernment:
 - In Your Life In Order To Take Whatever Measures Are Necessary & Appropriate:
 - To Provide For Faithfulness & Accountability In Your Life?
 - We See From This:
 - That Standards & Boundaries:
 - Are Appropriate For Christians Who Are Seeking To Be Faithful Servants For The Lord!
 - After All - As John Calvin Once Wrote:
 - "Who Is There That Will Be Exempt From Satan's Bite - When Christ Himself Was Not Spared By Them?"
 - But Then - In 8:22 - Paul Introduces *Another* Brother:
 - Who Had:
 - A Testimony Of Diligence!
 - 8:22 - "And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you!"
 - To Provide Even Greater Accountability:
 - Paul Sent Another Brother - Who Also Remains Nameless!
 - So Now There Are Three Men Heading To Corinth! And - "A Threefold Cord Is Not Quickly Broken!"
 - And This Man Possessed:
 - A Proven Character Of Diligence!
 - Paul Knew This Man Personally And:
 - "Oftentimes Proved [Him To Be] Diligent In Many Things!"
 - This Means That In Many Things & At Many Times Paul Had Given This Brother Tasks:
 - That He Fulfilled With Diligence & Zeal!
 - Whatever Paul Asked Him To Do:
 - And No Matter How Many Times Paul Asked Him To Do It:
 - He Served With All His Heart & With All His Might!
 - He Gave His All!
 - It Didn't Matter To This Brother:
 - Whether The Tasks:
 - Were Big Or Small!
 - It Didn't Matter To This Brother:
 - Whether The Tasks:
 - Were Visible Or Hidden!
 - Whatever Way He Could Serve:
 - He Would - "Do It Heartily, As To The Lord, And Not Unto Men!" (Colossians 3:23)
 - And His Diligence & Eagerness To Serve:
 - Grew - As He Heard More & More:
 - About The Corinthian Church:
 - And How God Was Working In Them & Through Them!
 - This Too Is The Kind Of Christian Servant:
 - God Can Use & God Is After!
 - A Diligent Servant!
 - Is This Your Testimony This Morning, As A Servant Of Christ?
 - Are You Diligent In Your Service:
 - For The Lord - Whatever It May Be?

- Colossians 3:17 - "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him!"

- This Is The Kind Of Testimony:
 - That We Can & Should Have:
 - As Servants Of The Lord!
 - A Testimony Of:
 - Devotion!
 - Dependability!
 - Discernment!
 - And Diligence!
- But The Next Things We See In This Chapter Are:

2. *The Special Truths About A Christian Servant!*

- And We Find These Truths:
 - In 8:23 - Where Paul Is Making A Final Commendation:
 - Of These Three Christian Brothers & Servants:
 - He Sent To The Corinthians - "Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ!"
 - The Truths We Find In This Verse:
 - About These Christian Servants:
 - Can Help Us Become The Kind Of Servants God Wants Us:
 - And Will Enable Us To Be As Well!
- The First Truth - The Special Relationship:
 - Of Christian Servants!
 - See This In Titus' Special Relationship With Paul:
 - "He Is My Partner And Fellow-Helper Concerning You!"
 - Their Relationship Was So Close, That To Receive Titus Was The Same As Receiving Paul!
 - Titus Shared With Paul:
 - The Same Motives & Ministry & Mission!
 - And The Corinthians Already Knew The Love & Concern Titus Had For Them!
 - And Isn't This True For Us As Well?
 - We Have An Even Greater & More Special Relationship:
 - With Jesus Christ!
 - We Are **His** Servants:
 - Because He Is Our Lord!
 - And We Are His:
 - Partners & Fellow-Helpers:
 - In His Ongoing Mission In This World!
 - And Because Of Our Special Relationship:
 - With Christ - We Can & Ought To Be:
 - Devoted & Dependable / Discerning & Diligent Servants Of The Lord!
- The Second Truth - The Special Representation:
 - Of Christian Servants!
 - In 8:23 - The 2 Unnamed Brothers:
 - Are Called - "The Messengers Of The Churches!"
 - "Messenger" Here Is The Same Word As "Apostle" - Which Simply Means Someone Who Has Been Sent By Someone Else:
 - As Their Representative!
 - This Means That These Brothers:
 - Had Been Assessed By The Churches:
 - Approved By The Churches:
 - Appointed By The Churches:
 - And Then Given Authority By The Churches!
 - But In Serving The Churches:
 - They Were Serving The Head Of The Churches:
 - Christ Jesus Himself!

- When You Represent The Church:
 - You Are Representing Christ!
 - And When You Serve The Church:
 - You Are Serving Christ!
- And Because Of Your Special Representation:
 - Of Christ - You Can & Ought To Be:
 - Devoted & Dependable / Discerning & Diligent In Your Service For The Lord!
- The Third Truth - The Special Reflection:
 - Of Christian Servants!
 - Also In 8:23 - The 2 Unnamed Brothers:
 - And Perhaps Titus As Well - Are Also Called - "The Glory Of Christ!"
 - Some Translations May Say That They Are An Honor Or A Credit To Christ - Which Is Certainly True!
 - But It Seems Best To Take The Word Doxa - Or "Glory" - In Its Fullest Sense:
 - Which Is The Visible Manifestation Of God & His Own Nature & Character!
 - This Means That - Even Though "The Heavens *Declare* The Glory Of God" (Psalm 19:1) - The Servants Of Christ *Are* The Glory Of God!
 - If You Are A Faithful Servant Of Jesus Christ, He Reveals Himself In & Through You!
 - As John Calvin Once Wrote:
 - "All That Excel In Piety And Holiness Are The Glory Of Christ, Because Thy Have Nothing But By Christ's Gift!"
 - Can This Be Said Of You This Morning?
 - That You Are A Special Reflection:
 - Of Christ's Own Glory?
 - This Can Only Be True If:
 - You Believe In Him & Belong To Him!
- And Then - When You Remember:
 - That You Have This:
 - Special Relationship With Christ!
 - And Are A:
 - Special Representative For Christ!
 - And Even Are The:
 - Special Reflection Of Christ & His Glory!
 - You Will Seek To Be:
 - The Kind Of Servant:
 - Christ Himself Has Called You To Be!
 - Devoted!
 - Dependable / Faithful!
 - Discerning!
 - And Diligent!
 - No Matter Where & No Matter How God Calls You To Serve!

Conclusion:

1. In The Last Verse Of 2 Corinthians 8:
 - Paul Tells The Corinthians:
 - How They Should Receive The 3 Men:
 - Who Were There To Serve:
 - Both The Lord & Their Church!
 - 8:24 - "Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf!"
 - The Corinthians:
 - Were To Show Them:
 - Their Love & Their Growth!
2. And This Is How We Should Respond:
 - When We Think About What It Means:
 - To Be A Servant Of Christ!
 - When You Remember That Jesus Himself:

- Is The Greatest Servant:
 - And Came To Serve You!
- Mark 10:45 - "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many!"
 - And Because Of His Service For Us:
 - We Ought To Serve Him:
 - Out Of Nothing But Love And Gratitude For Him!
- Because Of Jesus' Devotion:
 - To You - Won't You Devote Yourself:
 - To Him?
- Because Of Jesus' Dependability & Faithfulness:
 - To You - Won't You Strive To Be:
 - Faithful To Him?
- Because Of Jesus' Diligence & Zeal:
 - To Seek & To Save You - Won't You:
 - Serve Him With All Of Your Heart?
- 3. This Is The Kind Of Christian Servant:
 - That God Can Use:
 - And That God Is After!
 - Because This Is The Kind Of Servant:
 - That God Alone Can Develop!
 - So - Today - Surrender Yourself Completely:
 - As The Servant Of Jesus Christ!

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