

2 Corinthians 8 and 9

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby explores the principles of giving and stewardship as taught by Paul in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, emphasizing grace and eternal perspectives.

Scripture: Proverbs 19:17, Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 15:4 - 16:9, Acts 20:35, 1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 8:9, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Galatians 6:2, 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Topics: "Generosity", "Stewardship"

Description

John Nelson Darby discusses Paul's concerns about collecting funds for the poor in Jerusalem, emphasizing the importance of generosity and the heart's attitude in giving. He highlights the example of the Macedonians and the need for the Corinthians to fulfill their commitment to support others, framing it as a matter of grace and thanksgiving to God. Darby illustrates the concept of stewardship, urging believers to use their resources wisely in light of eternal values rather than for immediate gratification. He contrasts the fate of the rich man and Lazarus to emphasize the importance of using worldly wealth to build relationships that will last beyond this life. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a heart of grace in giving, reflecting God's joy in the act of generosity.

Transcript

We now come to what Paul is ill at ease in, and that is getting money from them. He would not take any for himself, but he would for others. He told them about Macedonia, and takes occasion of the forwardness of others; he knows the forwardness of their mind; had boasted Achaia was ready a year ago; he goes all round about the bush with it, as it were, but thought it better to send somebody, lest his boasting should be in vain, and he be ashamed of it in the presence of the Macedonians, who were coming with him. The man Paul, as the instrument comes out in all that.

351 It would be very sad that there should be any poor among us, and for them not to be cared for. The laying by here was for the poor at Jerusalem. 1 Corinthians 16 did not contemplate anything but the poor. Here every man was to lay by, but "God loveth a cheerful giver"; and again, that it "might be ready as a matter of bounty and not of covetousness." And then the administration of it abounds with many thanksgivings unto God.

We see, all through, beautiful heart exercises; and then he says all this wonderful work of grace, "the experiment of this ministration," glorifies God, and calls out "their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you" (chap. 9:14): blessed exercises of heart on both sides, one towards

the other.

They would be making "themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." We find three things in Luke just before it. The first is the grace of God towards us, in three parables of chapter 15. In the first and second we have the absolute grace that seeks: Christ the Good Shepherd, and the Holy Ghost lighting up the light of truth. Nothing at all is done by the persons, who are the mere objects of the saving grace. The great subject is, grace is God's joy; the shepherd is happy, the woman is happy, and the father is happy. It is God's happiness to have souls back, and He is saying here, "I am going to save sinners, whether you Pharisees like it or not." In the third parable, we have the prodigal's reception by the father when he comes back: first, the working of sin, next the working of grace, and then the father's reception. We have the whole series of gracious dealings, till the man has on the best robe, and is at the father's table. That is, grace in chapter 15 has come, and visited man, and takes him out of Judaism and all else (for God will not have the Pharisee); and then we find that man is a steward out of place in chapter 16. In the Jews, the whole thing was tried under the best of circumstances. Man, Adam, was a steward, having the Master's goods under his hand, but he is turned off because he is unfaithful; and then comes this question: How can I - if I have these goods under my hand as steward, and am turned out of place - how can I take the mammon of unrighteousness, and use it to advantage? I do not use it for myself now, but with a view to the future. The steward might have taken the whole of the £100 to spend it, but if so, that would not do for the future, and therefore, while he can, he uses it to make friends then and there; that is the aim of it. Just while I am here, I have the mammon of unrighteousness, and, as we have it in 1 Timothy 6:17, I am not to trust in the uncertain riches, but so use them as to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come. I turn this mammon of unrighteousness into friends, that, when it fail, I may be received into everlasting habitations. I am put out of all that man has as man, that I may yet have it for a time; but by use of it I get reception into everlasting habitation. I use this world for the future. "They shall receive you" is a mere form for "you shall be received." Suppose it is now a person under grace; we find him acting in grace with things here, in view of the future; it is his preference, he would rather look out for the future. "When it fail" is when all this scene is gone, and the life ends: that is, when stewardship is over.

352 Then, in the third case, our Lord draws the veil, and says, "Now look into the everlasting habitations." The poor man Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into the bosom of Abraham. Here is a rich man using all for himself now, and you see the result; then do not use the world for your present enjoyment, but use it in view of another world. "Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, but thou art tormented." If we do not use this world's things in grace, after all we cannot keep them; and therefore, He says, you have the privilege of turning them into friends available for the future. It shews how the other world belies the whole of the present. God's blessing on a Jew was marked by the possession of such things, but the Lord shews the other world to tell him how all these things are changed.

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