

Generosity Encouraged

2 Corinthians 8 – 9

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There was a famine in Jerusalem and the surrounding area that had lasted for a very long time. The believers in Corinth began a relief operation, collecting gifts to send to the impoverished people in Jerusalem who were suffering terribly. The Corinthian enthusiasm for this project inspired many believers in Macedonia to begin giving as well.

The Macedonian believers were desperately poor and had many difficulties of their own. Yet their abundant joy overflowed in rich generosity. They gave well beyond their means. Again and again they pleaded with Paul to be allowed the privilege of sharing in this service to God's people. In the meantime, the contribution effort in Corinth had stalled.

When Titus returned to Corinth with Paul's most recent letter, he encouraged the Corinthian assembly to complete the giving project they had begun over a year before. Paul wrote:

Give generously, according to what you have. You excel in so many ways; let's see you excel in this gracious act of giving. Jesus Christ gave up his riches and became poor, so through his poverty we might become rich. Don't make yourselves destitute! But right now you have plenty, so share with those in need. Then when they have plenty and you are in need, they will share with you.

Of course, your gifts should be given willingly, even cheerfully. The recipients will see their needs met and will praise and thank God for you – a gift too great for words. If you're going to begrudge the money, keep it. With such an attitude you don't deserve anyone's thanks.

Paul soon followed Titus to Corinth. He and several appointed representatives collected donations from Achaia, Macedonia, and all across Asia Minor and delivered these much-needed gifts to the believers in Jerusalem.