

September 16-22  
New Testament Lesson # 37  
God Loveth a Cheerful Giver  
2 Corinthians 8-13  
By Lenet Hadley Read

- I. In encouraging the Corinthians to help the Saints in Jerusalem, who had suffered from a famine, Paul used the example of the Macedonians.
- A. He stresses that those Saints had donations to give, and even though they themselves were poor, they were giving liberally and joyfully (2 Cor. 8:1-2). They had even "begged with earnestness for the privilege" of sharing with the other needy saints.
  - B. But he also gave them the example of the love of the Savior.  
"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" (2 Cor. 8:9).
  - C. And he indicates that such giving will unite the members of the Church, even those who live at a distance, that all may be equal (v. 13-4).
  - D. And of course, he counseled them to give, not grudgingly, but willingly, out of love and a cheerful heart (9:7).
  - E. When one contemplate the needs in the world today, of which we know more since we have media that bring to our attention much of the suffering throughout the world, we may feel overwhelmed.

How to respond? It has brought me the most comfort to give a generous fast offering, knowing that it serves those in need nearby, and then will be passed on to the church to distribute to needs in other areas.

And then to give to the Church's Humanitarian Fund. I do so because the Church is careful to give its funds in ways that adhere to wise principles, and in ways that are most likely to actually end up in helping, and as it helps make non-members aware of the goodness of Christ's Church.

Finally, it is very satisfying to give in very personal ways to those who surround one, in whatever ways are needed.

And it is best, as the Lord told us earlier, to give quietly, without fanfare and self-seeking.

- II. Paul had previously shared some of what *he* has given in the way of suffering for Christ and the Saints.
- 1. [While in Asia] "We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (2 Corinthians 1:8).

2. Now, **contrasting himself with false apostles [or missionaries], who would likely be received well** (11:4), Paul summarized more of what *he* had suffered and the burdens he carried for Christ:
  - a. “In labours [I have been] ... abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons... frequent.... Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep: In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, In weariness and painfulness,... in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. **Beside those things ... that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches**” (2 Cor. 11:23-28) (emphasis added).
  - b. We see that sometimes our “giving” for the Saviour can include far more costly elements than money. But we can be assured He accepts our offerings of all kinds and will return great blessings.
3. Paul revealed he was scourged several times.  
But why did he endure scourging when his Roman citizenship should have made him immune?
4. Frederick Farrar gave an insightful answer. He explained that when someone was scourged, it was understood his sins had been paid for. “To have refused to undergo it by sheltering himself under the privilege of his Roman citizenship would have been to incur excommunication, and **... to have cut himself off from admission into the synagogue.**” (Farrar, *St. Paul*, p. 717). Excommunication would have denied Paul his usual method of preaching, to go into the synagogues.
5. Yet, this was not an easy choice, for the scourging Paul endured was brutally painful.
  - a. **“Paul’s claim that he endured such punishment five times is an impressive claim indeed, for often the victim died under the lashing ....** When one contemplates the determination it would take to undergo such a flogging [repeatedly] ... [it gives] some idea of the extent of Paul’s commitment to Christ....” (*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles*), p. 303.
    6. On top of all, Paul says he” carried a daily burden of anxiety for the members of Christ’s church.”
    7. This surely is true with the prophets and apostles who serve us today. Is it not comforting to know that they too carry “a daily burden of anxiety” for the members of Christ’s Latter-day Church?

8. And this is confirmed, as recently President Russell M. Nelson, who is nearly 95, embarked on another six country journey to visit the Saints in several countries in South America. He indicated that he could not sit comfortably in his home, knowing that there were members out there who could be blessed by his testimony, counsel and encouragement.

III. Paul reveals a little more of the Glories awaiting those who sacrifice and endure afflictions for the sake of Christ.

A. Paul previously explained briefly there were three degrees of glory: The Telestial, Terrestrial and Celestial (1 Cor. 15:40-42).

B. He now testifies again that not only do differing kingdoms in Heaven exist, but that he [the one of whom he speaks] had been caught up into the third heaven and actually beheld its glories (2 Cor. 12:1-4).

C. While he could not reveal much detail about that Eternal Realm, he gives us further assurance that these glorious realms exist.

D. In particular, having seen the glories of the Celestial Kingdom, **Paul could testify it is worth all the tribulations we might endure in mortal life.**

1. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).
2. His claim that our afflictions are but **“for a moment”** is absolutely true.

We should contemplate and recognize how brief mortality is in comparison to the great and infinite expanses of the pre-mortal existence and especially Eternal Life hereafter.

Any sacrifice given, any trial endured, any injustice experienced then becomes understandingly infinitesimal.

How sad it would be to cling to some minute thing or hesitancy, and lose the “Whole Eternal World.”