

**1212 Financial offerings and truth about tithing, Titus, more giving - 2Co(8)1-(9)15
(by Whirlwind)**

First, we discussed the willing and cheerful offerings of the churches in Macedonia, noting that Titus had visited Corinth a year before reporting on the Corinthian church's repentance. Second, we discussed how the Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily gave up His wealth to become poor and also the equitable offering, citing two previous articles to explore the true meaning of tithing. Third, Paul praised Titus and emphasized the importance of walking in the light before others, and also we provide a general overview of what the Bible says about Titus and noting that Paul's attitude toward financial offering was very clear—citing a previous article on the different aspects of love. Fourth, it discusses how the church in Corinth willingly provided for the saints. Fifth, it addresses the principle that "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully," referring here to Christians' financial offering. Finally, it highlights that they gave in recognition of Christ and in obedience to the gospel, practicing the truth that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It shows that one aspect of God's blessing is financial, so it is not that one cannot possess wealth or be rich; the key is not to be controlled by it.

Please note that this article is an expansion of the topicwise Bible study held on Sunday (10/18/26). Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. If this article refers previous articles, they can all be found on our website, '<https://a-christian-voice.com/>'; click on 'Understanding Spiritual Life'.

1. The willing offering of the churches in Macedonia

"Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches (G1577, plural) of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also." (2 Corinthians 8:1-7)

Let us first look at the word "churches" (G1577, plural). There was more than one church in Macedonia, so it is in the plural. Let's look at another Scripture passage using the same word: "To the angel of the church (G1577, singular) in Ephesus write: .." (Revelation 2:1). This refers to the one church in Ephesus, so it is singular. Therefore, when we see this word, we can determine whether it is singular or plural by looking at the context.

Next, the text mentions the willing contributions of the churches in Macedonia; please read the passage for yourself—we won't repeat it here. Regarding their contributions, "and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God." (2 Corinthians 8:5) This act of generosity in the church in Corinth was originally initiated by Titus, for the Scripture says, "So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well." (2 Corinthians 8:6) Paul said, "I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it. But now finish doing it also, ..." (2 Corinthians 8:10-11) Therefore, Titus had already visited Corinth a year ago before reporting on the Corinthian church's repentance; this was not his first visit. Consequently, "...just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also." (2 Corinthians 8:7)

2. Lord Jesus Christ's voluntary renunciation of wealth and the equitable offering

"I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. I give my opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do this, but also to desire to do it. But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability. For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality— at this present time your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality; as it is written, "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little had no lack."" (2 Corinthians 8:8-15)

He said, "I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also." (2 Corinthians 8:8) Notice that he never used a command. He knew very well that it would only be beneficial for them if they acted of their own free will; that is why he spoke of testing the genuineness of their love. For "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) It is only when people are unaware that their true thoughts and actions can be tested—and this is exactly what the Holy Spirit does in us.

The Lord Jesus Christ is one of the three Persons of the Trinity. To save us and give the world a chance, "...Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:5-8) Therefore, He was a complete human being who could die just like any other and be crucified. What sets Him apart from us is that He is also fully God; though He emptied Himself, this did not alter His nature. Rather, during His time as the

Incarnate Word, He never exercised His divinity, which is why it is said that "...the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."(John 1:14) One of the purposes of His coming was for us to have life abundantly, as the Scripture says, "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."(John 10:9-10) Therefore, it's said, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."(2 Corinthians 8:9)

He then went on to say that they had a willing heart, and encouraged them, but it only counts if they put it into practice. Regarding offering, "...it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have."(2 Corinthians 8:12) Today, some teach that we must observe the law of tithing; however, from the perspective that " what God tells us through the Bible is consistent," we know this is incorrect. Simply put, in the New Testament era, we observe the true spirit of the law, not the letter of the law. In this regard, Jesus set an example for us: He observed the spirit of the Sabbath, not the specific time prescribed by the law. Previously, in "1207 Gospel, resurrection of dead, spiritual body, willing and joyful offer – 1Co(15)1-(16)24," under "6. Willing and joyful offering, and Paul's scheduled itinerary and plans," we briefly explained that in the New Testament era, the Bible has only one requirement for offerings: they must be given willingly. If you wish to further understand the true meaning of tithing, you can refer to "1. The true meaning of tithing" in "1142 True meaning of tithing and don't acknowledge Satan as father."

Regarding tithing, the Old Testament tells us that one-tenth is merely a guideline to ensure the Lord's house has provisions. Some people's financial circumstances truly make it impossible for them to tithe one-tenth, yet some who love the Lord give far more than one-tenth to ensure the Lord's house has provisions. I know of one person who gave far more than that. She wasn't boasting; rather, given the circumstances at the time, she wanted to explain to us that the federal government has different tax-deductible limits for nonprofit organizations such as churches—a fact she only discovered when filing her taxes.

He stated very clearly, "For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality— at this present time your abundance being a supply for their need, so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality "(2 Corinthians 8:13-14) No one knows what the future holds, and the same was true for the church in Corinth; therefore, this is giving that brings equality. This is similar to how, when the Israelites gathered manna, some gathered more and some gathered less, but "When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat."(Exodus 16:18)

3. Praising Titus and doing what Is right in the sight of others

"But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof (G1732) of your love and of our reason for boasting about you."(2 Corinthians 8:16-24)

Paul said, "But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus."(2 Corinthians 8:16) Notice that he gave thanks to God, for he knew that all this was due to God's arrangement—God had moved Titus's heart and knew in advance that Titus was capable of doing it by "Do not quench the Spirit."(1 Thessalonians 5:19) "As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; ..." (2 Corinthians 8:23) He is also "...my true child in a common faith: ..." (Titus 1:4). He was a Greek, an uncircumcised Christian. When Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to discuss the issue of circumcision, they took Titus with them (see Galatians 2:1-3).

The Bible does not say much about Titus. Aside from what we have already mentioned regarding his work in Corinth, his report of the church's repentance also prompted Paul to write 2 Corinthians. Although the Bible does not state this explicitly, he likely took 2 Corinthians with him, for the letter says, "...he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord."(2 Corinthians 8:17) Judging by common sense, delivering letters was not easy at that time; to find someone trustworthy, Paul would likely have asked him to wait until the letter was completed before setting out. He had remained in Crete to carry out his mission; the Bible does not specify how long, but at least until Artemas or Tychicus replaced him, after which he saw off the lawyer Zenas and Apollos (see Titus 3:12-13). The Bible also mentions that he went to Dalmatia, though it does not specify what he went there to do (see 2 Timothy 4:10). This is essentially an overview of what the Bible says about Titus.

Next, the passage discusses the matter of financial offering, and his attitude is very clear: "...we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."(2 Corinthians 8:21). Two brothers accompanied Titus; if you read the passage yourself, you will see how carefully he chose these two brothers. In conclusion, Titus "...is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. Therefore openly before the churches, show

them the proof (G1732) of your love and of our reason for boasting about you."(2 Corinthians 8:23-24)

Finally, let's look at the word "proof" (G1732); it appears only four times. In here, it's translated as "pledge" instead of "proof." You can review all the relevant passages. Previously, in another passage, the Chinese Union Version translated it as "pledge" too: "...God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge (G728)."(2 Corinthians 1:21-22) If you look up the original text in Strong's Concordance, you'll see that these two "pledge" are two different words. Some might say at this point, "Isn't this a good example of how you can tell the difference just by looking at the English version?" Yes, in this case, you can tell the difference by looking at the English, but the problem is that sometimes even the English version isn't enough. For example, the Chinese and English translations are the same for the word "love," but the original Greek uses different terms for love. If you look at John 21:15-19, you must consult the original text to have any chance of understanding it correctly. We previously discussed this point in "1139 Do you love Me and Bible verses cannot be equated casually – John(21)1-25," specifically in the section titled "2. The true meaning of Jesus asking Peter three times: "Do you love me?""; please refer to that article.

4. The church in Corinth's willing offerings to the saints

"For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to speak of you—will be put to shame by this confidence. So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness."(2 Corinthians 9:1-5)

We have already mentioned that the church in Corinth prepared offerings about one year ago, and then Paul said, "But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared."(2 Corinthians 9:3) So even though Paul was confident they would do this, he still wanted to remind them to have everything ready. What this tells us is that God's work is often accomplished through people; therefore, people are not to do nothing, but are to walk with God. That is why Paul tells us, "Do not quench the Spirit."(1 Thessalonians 5:19) They were able to "...arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness." This was also what Paul wanted to see—that they give willingly and cheerfully.

5. He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully

"Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it is written, "He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, His righteousness endures forever.""(2 Corinthians 9:6-9)

From the context, it is clear that the saying, "he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully," refers to Christians' financial offerings. In fact, Christian offerings is not limited to money; it also includes time, energy, and more. This insight is found in the Old Testament: "He has given freely to the poor, His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted in honor."(Psalm 112:9) This is precisely what is referred to at the end of this passage as "as it is written."

Of course, this does not mean offering in order to receive a reward; it is not a transaction. It must be done willingly and cheerfully, and we must recognize that God has absolute sovereignty. Although He is able, it is He who decides when to repay, how much to give, or even whether to give at all. Moreover, this is merely a general principle—one can even reap a bountiful harvest without sowing much. This depends entirely on whether and how God chooses to bless. An example from the Old Testament is: "Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy "(Genesis 26:12-13)

6. Confessing Christ, obeying the Gospel, and then offering

"Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"(2 Corinthians 9:10-15)

Right from the start, he spoke of what he had seen—the work God was doing in the church at Corinth, enabling them to give generously. In fact, this was also what Paul himself had done when "From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church."(Acts 20:17), he said, "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He

Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"(Acts 20:35) "For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God."(2 Corinthians 9:12) Because it is God's arrangement, people will thank God—and of course, they will also thank those who carried it out—but they will first thank God for moving their hearts to do so.

They recognized that these offerings were made in obedience to the gospel of Christ, for the Scripture makes it very clear: "Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all."(2 Corinthians 9:13) The Scripture also says, "while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you."(2 Corinthians 9:14) You see, those people aren't just sitting idly by—they pray for them. Yes, it's a must that "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"(2 Corinthians 9:15)

This entire passage has been discussing Christians' financial offerings, because one aspect of God's blessing is financial, so Christians must have the right perspective in this area. We have already mentioned that one of God's blessings upon Isaac was financial; now let's look at how one of His blessings upon Abraham was also financial. We can see this in the following passage: "Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together."(Genesis 13:5-6) We often speak of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (see Exodus 3:4-6 for an example). Let us now see that one of God's blessings upon Jacob was also in the form of material wealth. The Scripture says, "Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,' I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies.'"(Genesis 32:9-10) From the context, we can see that these two companies were quite large; Jacob was extremely wealthy.

The New Testament states very clearly, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth (G3126, Mammon)." Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him."(Luke 16:13-14) Although the word "Mammon (G3126)" appears only twice, we know from here that Mammon refers to money. It's not that we can't possess wealth, but it depends on how we use it. For example, to carry out the Great Commission, money is sometimes necessary; the key is not to be controlled by it.