

Weak yet Strong

Series in 2 Corinthians

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 8; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; Gal. 2:9-10;

1. Is 'money' spoken about too much or too little in churches today? What are the extremes that we need to beware of? Were you surprised by the decision of Tamworth Elim leaders choosing not to take public offerings?
2. Read Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35. Would you have been comfortable being a member of the early church at Jerusalem?
3. Read Gal. 2:9-10. What one thing did the apostles in Jerusalem request of Paul and Barnabas as they ventured out into the Gentile world? What does this tell us about the heart of the early Christians?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-24. Why do you think Paul needed to write this chapter? [Don't forget that reading this is a little bit like listening just to one side of a telephone conversation].
5. Why were the Macedonian churches such a good example to the Corinthians? In verses 1 to 5, what does Paul say to commend them? In which ways do the Macedonians speak to us today?
6. The Macedonians gave "beyond their ability" (v3). Do you agree with C S Lewis who said "I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give; I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare"?
7. Martin Luther once said: "Three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, mind and the wallet. Of these three, the conversion of the wallet is the most difficult." Do you agree? Do you find giving (being generous) difficult? [Please note: this is not referring to being generous to our family or close friends!]
8. The Macedonians "gave themselves first to the Lord..." (v5). Why is this the key to generous giving?
9. Notice that Paul uses the word "grace" in the context of giving? (v1, 6, 7, 9). Why do you think this was so?
10. In which way is Jesus being quoted by Paul as an example of generosity? (see v9)
11. What do make of Paul's words in v8 "I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love..." In which ways is NT giving different from OT giving?
12. What PRACTICAL advice does Paul offer in:
 - ~ 1 Corinthians 16:2
 - ~ 2 Corinthians 8:12
 - ~ 2 Corinthians 8:16-22 (esp. v20-21)