

2 Corinthians 8:1-9 – Giving in Grace – Small Group Notes

Introduction

The aim of this study is to help small groups engage with the Vision/Giving Review currently taking place at HTC, building up to Thanksgiving Sunday on Sunday 1 February. It sits alongside the preaching on 2 Corinthians 8&9, the booklets and letter from Philip, and the Church Meeting on Monday 19 January

Icebreaker question

- if you were given £1million to spend in the next 30 days, what would you do?

Money and Us

- share with the person next to you
 - your earliest memories of money – are they good or bad, happy or sad?
 - your present feelings about money
- share as a group what words emerged, and note them on a large piece of paper everyone can see

Background to 2 Corinthians 8&9

Paul's words to the Corinthians take place against a very specific background. The key features of the background are

- it is 55AD and the apostle Paul is seeking to make a collection from the Gentile churches for the mainly Jewish church in Jerusalem – which is experiencing considerable hardship
- while initially keen, the Corinthian church's response has been rather lukewarm
- Paul is concerned about this, not just because of the collection itself but because of what it says about the spiritual life of the Corinthian Christians
- in these chapters he writes about the spiritual value and importance of giving – not about giving to a need but needing to give

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

1. Read 2 Cor 8:1-9 and highlight the words that Paul uses to describe money. Note them down as a group on a bit of paper. How do they reflect the words we have used (in our earlier sharing)?
2. List the things that strike you about the Macedonian churches' example of giving (vv1-4)
 - what explains their decisions? what messages might we take from their example?
 - have we heard stories of giving that have really encouraged us to give?
3. The Macedonians were eager to 'share in the service to the saints' (v4), that is, share in what God is doing.
 - list as a group what God is doing the local church at HTC
 - to what extent are we aware that giving is sharing in what God is going at HTC?
 - how might a full appreciation of this affect the way we approach giving?
4. Paul asks the Corinthians to 'excel in the grace of giving' (v7), that is, grow in this part of their Christian lives
 - how do we feel about growing in giving as a part of our Christian lives? what do we see as the benefits for ourselves and others?
 - what has helped you grow in giving in the past? what do we feel would help us in the future?

5. Paul explains that the motivation to give is not an order but because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ (vv8-9)
- o how does what God has given us in Jesus Christ act as a motivation to give?
 - o how can we ensure this stays at the forefront of our minds?
 - o how can we help giving stay a priority in our lives?

Practical

- share as a group practical advice that has worked in helping each of us grow in giving
 - o e.g. how should we start giving if we have never given before? what proportion do we think it right to give? what is a tithe and how can we work towards it?
- use the Vision and Budget booklets to reflect on the specific issues facing us as HTC
 - o discuss questions and note down any that need to be passed on to Philip or Brian
- have copies of *The Money Revolution* (available free from church) for group members to take away

Prayer/Response

- pray that God will help us make the right response to his generosity in Christ
- pray that the mission of God has at HTC would continue to flourish
- consider coming to the 24hours of prayers as a small group, or blocking out 2 hours together