

Series on the Faith Promise Mission Offering

Lesson 3: An Example of the Faith Promise Mission Offering

Text: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Introduction:

1. The Lord's work in Jerusalem was in difficulty and needed much help financially. Paul contacted many churches about giving special offerings to help in Jerusalem. One of the first churches to respond was in the city of Corinth. They were not a poor church so they promised to help generously.
2. As Paul visited other churches, he told how the church in Corinth had excitedly promised to give a large offering. Many other churches were challenged to help also because of Corinth's promise to participate. The churches in the province of Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea) were very poor but still promised to give an offering.
3. A year passed and still Corinth had not fulfilled their "Faith Promise Mission Offering." Paul wrote to remind them of their promise. He told them that most of the other churches had fulfilled their promises, even the very poor churches in Macedonia. Paul was using the believers in Macedonia as an example to encourage Corinth to give their "Faith Promise Mission Offering." We too should be challenged by the example of those believers in Macedonia who were in great poverty, yet they insisted on giving to support God's work outside of their own church.

I. **The Macedonian believers gave joyfully vs. 1-2**

1. It is amazing that the Macedonian churches gave anything at all, if we consider their financial hardships. Usually when a believer is having difficulties, one of the first things he does is to stop giving to God. The Macedonians not only gave, they

gave joyfully, in spite of their difficult circumstances (**Phil.4:4-13**).

2. **In spite of their great suffering.** They were suffering greatly because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They were being persecuted for the Lord and this affected their opportunities to earn income to meet their daily needs (**I Thess.2:18;3:3-4; II Thess.1:5-6**).
3. **In spite of their deep poverty.** They were not just poor, they were in extreme poverty, and yet they gave joyfully to God and to His work. They could sympathize with the believers in Jerusalem, because they were experiencing the same material hardships.

II. The Macedonian believers gave generously vs. 2

1. To determine if we are giving generously we do not look at the amount we give, instead we look at the amount we have left after we give. For one believer, ten pesos might be a generous offering, but for another believer, one thousand pesos might be very small (Mk.12:41-44; Acts 4:34-37; Lk.21:1-4).

III. The Macedonian believers gave sacrificially vs. 2

1. The Macedonians did not just give what they could afford. They gave more than they could afford. They believed that if they would take care of God's work then God would supply their needs and take care of them (**Phil.4:10, 14, 19; Matt.6:33; Lk.6:38**). The fact is, if we will be faithful to take care of God's work and put God first, then God will always take care of us.
2. In the "Faith Promise Mission Offering" we commit ourselves by faith, to support God's work of world evangelization, even if it requires great sacrifice. We do this because we believe that God and His work is worthy of our sacrifice.

IV. The Macedonian believers gave willingly vs. 3-4

1. They were not forced to give. In fact, at first it seems Paul did not want to accept their offering because of their deep poverty. Paul tried to discourage them from giving, but the Macedonians insisted that Paul accept their offering so that they could have a part in God's work. These believers gave greater importance to the needs of others than to their own personal needs (Phil. 2:3-4).
2. **They were not ashamed of their poverty.** They knew their poverty was not a result of sin so there was no reason to be ashamed.
3. **They did not pity themselves and look down on themselves.** They still had self-respect in the midst of their poverty.
4. **They did not want Paul and his companions to pity them.** Often when people are poor they try to get others to pity them and feel sorry for them.
5. **They knew it is more blessed to give than to receive, no matter how little they could give Acts 20:33-35.**

V. The Macedonian believers gave devotedly vs. 5

1. How could believers who were suffering for their faith and in extreme poverty give to God's work? How could they give joyfully, generously, sacrificially and willingly? Before they gave materially to the work in Jerusalem they first gave their lives.
2. **They had already devoted themselves to the Lord.** When a person is surrendered to the Lord and devoted to following Him it is much easier to give his material possessions.
3. **They had already devoted themselves to the servants of the Lord.**
4. The widow of Zarephath is a good illustration of this because she put God first before her own needs were met (*1 Kings 17:8-16*). She was willing to feed God's servant before taking care of her own needs. We should always remember that once we surrender ourselves to the Lord, it is much easier to give our material possessions also.

Conclusion:

1. The Macedonian churches are a tremendous example of how even poor believers can take part in the “Faith Promise Mission Offering.”
2. If we will first give ourselves devotedly to the Lord, we also can give to His work generously, sacrificially, willingly and joyfully.
3. **Remember: “Extreme financial difficulty is not an obstacle to giving to the Lord, it is an opportunity to express your faith!”**