

February 22 , 2026

“Stewardship and Mission”  
Lesson 4

Acts 1:6-8  
2 Corinthians 8:3-9

### **Intro**

The two passages we’re looking at today were written about 30 years apart from each other. The first deals with Jesus’ instructions to His disciples just before He ascends (before their eyes!) back to heaven. The second is Paul’s account of the Macedonian church that gave generously to meet the needs of others.

### **Read Acts 1:6-8**

This passage is part of the last conversation Jesus has with His disciples before ascending. He has already told them in vs. 4-5 to go to Jerusalem and “wait for the gift my Father promised.” But they have a misunderstanding of part of what their stewardship and mission is to include, which Jesus must correct.

1. vs. 6: The disciples ask Jesus, “Are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”
  - This was the common view of what the Messiah would do when He appeared
  - The disciples are convinced by now that Jesus is the Messiah
  - He has done miracles, and now He is risen from the dead
  - Some OT passages (Gen. 49:10, Num. 24:17-19, Is. 11:1-6) can be read in this way
  - Jesus is going to overthrow the Romans and “restore the kingdom to Israel”
  
2. vs. 7: Jesus’ answer is that they don’t need to know this information
  - Whether this happens, or when it might happen, aren’t what they are to focus on
  - This is in God’s hands, in His timing
  - He is omniscient (all-knowing), including things that are hidden from our understanding
  - Jesus told them in Matt. 24 to keep watch for His return, but with a condition
  - They weren’t to be concerned with setting the date of His return
  - We are called to know and practice some things, and leave the rest to God
  
3. vs. 8: Jesus here gives them the plan for what they are to do
  - First, in Jerusalem they will receive the Holy Spirit, which will empower them
  - Second, they will use that Spirit power to be Christ’s witnesses
  - They are to start where they are, in Jerusalem
  - Then they are to move outward, to Judea and Samaria, and “the ends of the earth”
  - This is exactly what we see happen in Acts, as the disciples witness of Christ
  - Jesus tells them what to do, but not how to do it; no specifics are given
  - As they go further away from Jerusalem, they will need help to do Jesus’ bidding
  - This means that followers must show care, hospitality and generosity to each other

## Read 1 Corinthians 8:3-9

Paul here writes to the Corinthians about the Macedonians who gave generously and willingly to provide for those in need.

4. vs. 3: Paul is here appealing to the Corinthians to help complete his fundraising efforts  
It is to be collected by Paul and given to Christians in Jerusalem who are in need  
Paul here tells them of the Macedonian church that gave freely for this cause  
Macedonia is the region directly north of Corinth—they are in the same area  
The Macedonians were dealing with a severe trial and “extreme poverty”  
(See 2 Cor. 8:2)  
Despite their sufferings and trials, they give to help others  
Paul doesn’t say the amount they gave; he tells of their giving in two ways  
They gave “as they were able” and they gave “beyond their ability”  
They also gave “on their own”, meaning Paul didn’t brow beat them into giving  
They gave willingly, because they wanted to
5. vs. 4: These Macedonians “pleaded with us” says Paul—they begged to be able to give  
They saw their gifts as serving God and His people  
This is one way we develop and keep unity and fellowship with other believers  
We give to help others in need because they are members of the body
6. vs. 5: Paul knew the Macedonians were experiencing hard times, spiritually and economically  
Knowing that, he has a certain level in his mind of what to expect they can give  
Paul says they gave “first of all to the Lord”, meaning they gave themselves to serve Him  
This commitment to God and His people leads them to give more than Paul expected  
Paul says this kind of giving was “by the will of God”  
It was following Christ’s example, and was Spirit-led
7. vs. 6: This verse indicates that the Corinthians have begun giving, but have not completed it yet  
Titus, Paul’s “partner and co-worker” (2 Cor. 8:23) seems to have the task of collecting  
When all is collected by Titus, Paul will retrieve it from him to take to Jerusalem  
Paul says their giving is “an act of grace”  
It is not forcing them, but them giving in response to the grace they have received  
This grace is God’s forgiveness and new life in Christ  
As people who have been given grace, they are called to give grace to others
8. vs. 7: Paul says the Corinthian church has excelled in multiple areas  
Faith, speech, knowledge, complete earnestness, and love  
This is an impressive list of actions to be commended for  
Paul calls on them to excel in one more area, the completion of this giving project
9. vs. 8: What Paul asks in vs. 7 sounds like a command, but here he makes sure it’s known it’s not  
He has previously talked about the generosity of the Macedonians  
He has said their giving showed their “earnestness”, their “sincerity” of love  
Paul says if the Corinthians have a like earnestness, they will show it by their love as well

10. vs. 9: Paul's final comparison here is to Jesus Himself

He was "rich" in ways we cannot grasp

He was the divine Son of God, co-equal to the Father in the Godhead

Yet He became a servant, humbling himself to become poor for humanity's sake

He sacrificed his position, so that others could become "rich" through salvation

The implication is that giving by the Corinthians might involve sacrifice

This sacrifice will be blessed by God because it will help others in need

Application: The topic of giving is both something commanded in the Bible and a source of friction among some who attend church. God expects His followers to meet the needs of those in poverty (see Lev. 19:10, Deut. 15:11, Matt. 25:34-46, and Gal. 2:10). The best approach to the topic of giving would be first and foremost as a privileged response to God's grace. Our generosity comes from first acknowledging the generosity of God. God gave us the gift of salvation. When we show generosity to others, we are following God's lead. Our acts of giving are essentially acts of worship, if they are a reflection of our response to Christ's great love for us.

Prayer: Father God, You showed us such generosity when you gave us your gift of grace through Your Son, Jesus. May our thankfulness for this gift be shown in our heartfelt gifts. In Jesus' name, Amen.