

2.5 Conclusion

- God clearly put on Paul's heart the plight of his Jewish brothers and sisters. Paul could, like so many of us have rushed ahead and collected some relief money. Instead he puts together an altogether grander plan involving all the churches he has founded and in doing so realises a greater gift for the Jewish Christians. Paul certainly knew that for a plan of this magnitude to work he needed:

- i) A TEAM EFFORT.
- ii) TRANSPARENCY
- iii) Everyone to HONOUR THEIR COMMITMENTS

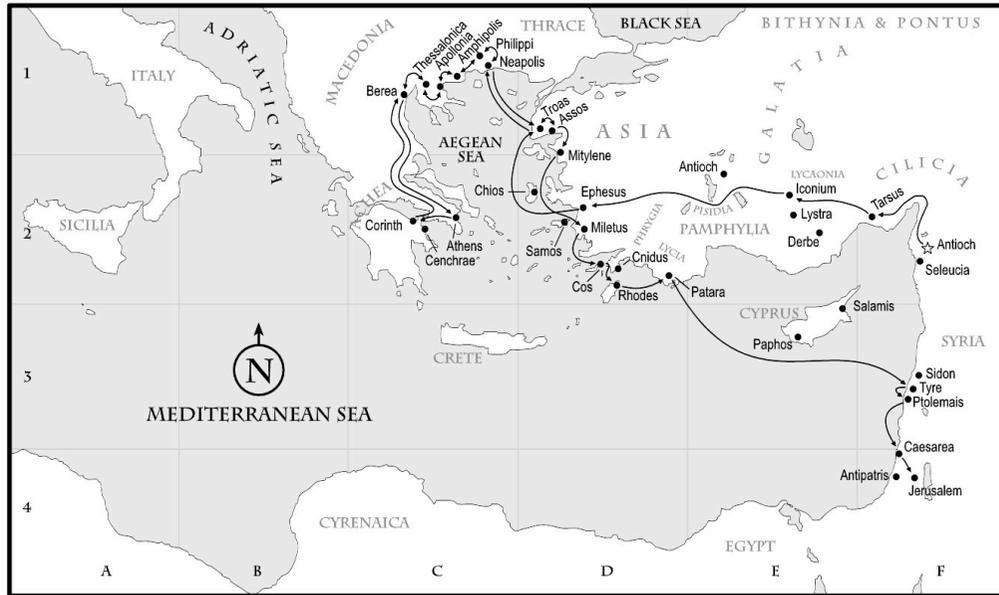
- We can all learn from Paul's example.

3. Questions to consider at home

- 3.1 What is Paul's rationale for The Jerusalem Collection? Do you agree with him?
- 3.2 Why does Paul send ahead three brothers to Corinth?
- 3.3 Do we learn any principles of planning from the way Paul executes his famine relief project?
- 3.4 What do we learn about Paul's attitude towards giving?
- 3.5 Does your church work as a team or a 'one man band'?
- 3.6 How good are you and your church at planning?

Matthew Street - 23rd September 2018

Paul's Third Missionary Journey AD 53-58



The Parish of Foxcote with Shoscombe

The Jerusalem Collection

2 Corinthians 8:16 - 9:5, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Romans 15:25-27 Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passages – 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5 & Romans 15:25-27

[16:1] Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. [2] On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. [3] Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. [4] If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me. [8:16] I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. [17] For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. [18] And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. [19] What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honour the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. [20] We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. [21] For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men. [22] In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. [23] As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honour to Christ. [24] Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it. [9:1] There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. [2] For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. [3] But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. [4] For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. [5] So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

[15:25] Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. [26] For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. [27] They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.

2. Talk Notes

2.1 The Jerusalem Collection

- How many of us have rushed into things without thinking of the consequences only to regret our haste later? How many of us have learnt the hard way that planning is the key to any projects success?
- Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States, is reputed to have said 'To fail to plan is to plan to fail' and 'By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.' Harvey Mackay a famous business writer of the 1930's wrote 'Failures don't plan to fail, they fail to plan' and Winston Churchill said during WWII 'He who fails to plan is planning to fail.'
- Paul is in the middle of planning and organising a huge famine relief project for the Jewish Christians in Judea involving all the churches he has founded.

- He is acutely aware that the famine which started at the beginning of Claudius' reign (41-54AD) is continuing to devastate large parts of the Roman world including Judea and Jerusalem: *One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.)* (Acts 11:28)
- Paul has been part of a famine relief effort before (sometime between 41 and 46AD) having been sent along with Barnabas and Titus from Antioch with money for the Jewish Christians in Judea and Jerusalem. *The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.*' (Acts 11:29)
- Paul has first hand experience of the results of the on going famine and persecution that the Jewish Christians are suffering having been to Jerusalem in AD49 (between his 1st and 2nd Missionary journeys) and again in AD53 (between his 2nd and 3rd Missionary journeys). Thus, on this his third Missionary journey (AD 53-58) Paul decides to mount a major Judea Famine Relief Project for the Jewish Christians involving all of the churches he has founded: *For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.* (Romans 15:27) arguing that the Gentiles have shared the Jewish spiritual blessings so the Gentiles owe it to Jewish Christians to share their material blessings.
- Paul knows that for this major relief project to work three things will need to be in place. These principles hold true for us today:
 - i) A TEAM EFFORT will be needed. Paul will not be able to cover all the bases himself.(2 Corinthians 8:16-19, 22-24, 9:3,5)
 - ii) TRANSPARENCY at all times will be vital. (2 Corinthians 8:20-21)
 - iii) All the participants will need to HONOUR THEIR COMMITMENT . (2 Corinthians 9:1-2, 4)

2.2 TEAM EFFORT - (2 Corinthians 8:16-19, 22-24, 9:3,5)

- Many leaders learn to their cost especially when dealing with big projects like raising money across a number of different churches, cultures and geography that they cannot do everything themselves.
- Paul has clearly learnt this lesson. From his letters and the Book of Acts we find no less than 19 missionary traveling companions of Paul's and a further 16 co-workers, or fellow prisoners and supporters:

Missionary traveling companions

Aquila	Justus	Priscilla	Timothy
Aristarchus	Luke	Secundus	Titus
Barnabas	Marcus	Silas	Trophimus
Epaphras	Onesimus	Sopater	Tychicus
Gaius	Philemon	Tertius	

Co-workers & Fellow Prisoners & Supporters

Andonichus	Demus	Lydia	Onesiphorus
Apphia	Epaphroditus	Jason	Phebe
Archippus	Erastus	Junia	Tyrannus
Carpus	Lucius	Nymphus	Urbane

- Paul speaks of three brothers (Titus plus 2 unnamed others) involved in putting together the Corinthian part of The Jerusalem Collection:
 - i) Titus (2 Cor.8:16-17) a Greek convert, referred to by Paul as *'my partner and fellow worker among you'* (2 Cor. 8:23) has known Paul and travelled extensively with him. He was part, along with Barnabas, of the Relief Fund Trip from Antioch to Jerusalem sometime between 41 and 46AD (Galatians 2:1-3, Acts 11:29). Clearly fund raising for the oppressed Jewish Christians is in Titus' blood: *'I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative.'* (2 Cor. 8:16-17). Titus, a

minister in his own right, was the bearer of the missing 'sorrowful 3rd letter' and he and his two companions are the bearers of this the 4th letter known to us as 2 Corinthians. (The first and the third letters are missing we have the 2nd and the 4th known as 1st and 2nd Corinthians)

- ii) *And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel.* (2 Cor. 8:18) - Some commentators have suggested that this might be Luke the author of the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

iii) *In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you.* (2 Cor. 8:22).

- Paul demonstrates skillful planning, leadership and self awareness by sending Titus and these two other brothers to realise the Corinthian part of The Jerusalem Collection. After all Paul cannot have forgotten in a hurry his recent disastrous surprise visit to Corinth.
- As individuals, as churches, in our workplaces and in our communities we can all learn from Paul - Good planning needs TEAMS and good leaders build, delegate and trust those TEAMS to deliver.

2.3 TRANSPARENCY - (2 Corinthians 8:20-21)

- When it comes to dealing with money, especially money given for good causes it always pays to be transparent and 'above board'. Paul wants to ensure that the money given by the Corinthian church goes to help alleviate the poor Jewish Christians in Judea: *We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.* (2 Cor. 8:20-21)
- To ensure no one can accuse him personally of pocketing the money Paul wisely:
 - i) Sends three brothers headed by Titus to go ahead and organise the collection.
 - ii) Paul tells the Corinthian Church to choose one of their own to accompany the gift from Corinth to Jerusalem: *'when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem'* (1 Cor. 16:3)
 - iii) Seven more people from different churches accompany Paul with the money as he takes it to Jerusalem: *Paul was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.* (Acts 20:4)
- Are our own church finances equally transparent?

2.4 HONOUR THEIR COMMITMENT - (2 Corinthians 9:1-2, 4)

- How often have we promised to do something in church circles and then not delivered. We have agreed to go onto a rota, but something better comes up and we fail to deliver that Sunday.
- We have been meaning for some time to get round to filling in that standing order or writing a cheque but the months go by and we fail to do so.
- The rich Corinthians are no different to us. Paul encourages them:
 - i) To give a little week by week: *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.* (1 Cor. 16:2). Paul encourages financial planning. How wise!
 - ii) To honour their initial commitment to the project: *For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action* (2 Cor. 9:2). Paul gently reminds the Corinthians to put their money where the mouths are!
- However despite his strong encouragement Paul does not want the Corinthian gift to be given grudgingly - he wants them to give 'from the heart': *Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.* (2 Cor. 9:5)