**2 Corinthians 8-9**

Chapter 8:1-15

* In chapters 8 and 9, Paul writes about the collection he has been taking up for the Christians in Jerusalem, and encourages the Corinthians and all the Christians in Greece to add to the collection.
* Paul begins with the example of the churches in Macedonia - probably including Philippi and Thessalonica. He reminds them that they have suffered but insisted on being generous to the Christians in Jerusalem who were suffering through a famine.
* Who has been an example of generosity in your own life? What about them has inspired you to be generous?
* Paul then puts generosity into the list of spiritual gifts, knowing that this is a topic important to the Corinthians - he is reminding them that their gifts should all be used for the whole body of Christ. Do you consider generosity to be a spiritual gift? What does that look like?
* Paul wants to make very clear that he is not demanding a certain gift or that this is the cost to be welcomed into the church, but that generosity is a matter of faith and response to Christ.
* His understanding of the center of his faith - the death and resurrection of Jesus - requires a response of generosity, and Paul is teaching that to the Corinthians.
* The Corinthians have stopped taking up money for the collection for some reason, and Paul is encouraging them to restart it so that the unity of the whole church might be maintained.
* How does your own faith affect your generosity? In what ways does the story of Christ motivate you in giving of yourself?

Chapter 8:16-24

* Paul completes his earnest entreaty to generosity with an accounting of the practicalities of taking up this collection. This includes mentioning the people who will be bringing this letter to the Corinthians and will be taking the collection back.
* He mentions Titus, who the Corinthians know well, as well as two other people. One of them has been sent by the churches, and is therefore not someone Paul had been traveling with. This would provide some security to the Corinthians that he was not taking all this money for himself, as other traveling preachers might be doing.
* When engaging in the work of the church, how do we build relationships of trust among each other, as Paul was doing with those he was sending these others on?

Chapter 9:1-15

* This chapter may be the exhortation to give from a different letter Paul wrote, or he may be shifting his focus to all the churches in Greece, rather than just in Corinth. Either way, he is still focused on the “ministry to the saints,” and encouraging giving.
* He says he has boasted about them to the churches in Macedonia, and he doesn’t want his boasting to be in vain.
* Paul ends his appeal to their generosity by speaking about generosity as a matter of faith. He encourages the people to give cheerfully and remember the promises of God to all followers of Christ while they decide what to give.
* In making connections between the churches in Macedonia and and the churches in Greece, Paul is reminding the churches that they are part of one larger body of Christ.
* How do you feel connected to the larger body of Christ? What ways could you be more connected with the church in our area, our country, or the world?