**7/23/23 When We Give Ourselves First and Foremost to the Lord!**

**2 Corinthians 8:1-8**

* Everything in life has a priority. Where it starts and finishes is left up to each individual.
* Paul’s dedication to the Lord led him to make a decision to take up a collection for the poor of Jerusalem from churches that he had planted.
* The members of the churches at Macedonia made an evaluation of their lives, reorganized their priorities and decided to dedicate themselves to the Lord first! **Romans 15:25-32**

**1. Our history plays an import role.**

* Those in the Corinthian church saw a need at the home church in Jerusalem and volunteered to set aside money every week for an offering to be taken to the church.
* After about a year, the collections had all but stopped because the members were selfishly focusing on themselves and their individual gifts.
* Greedy traveling preachers spread rumors about Paul extorting money.

[**1 Corinthians 16:1-4**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Co+16%3A1-4)**; 2 Corinthians 8:16-20**

**2. We must trust that God will provide.**

* The Macedonian churches were poor materially, but they had a generous spirit.
* God loves a cheerful giver!
* The Macedonians begged for the privilege of sharing in the gift giving.

**2 Corinthians 8:1-4, 9:7; Matthew 10:8; Romans 15:26**

**3. God must be number one in our lives!**

* Jesus plainly tells us that “No one can serve two masters!”
* The Macedonians’ first action was to dedicate themselves to the Lord!
* The Corinthians had already made plans to do so, but Titus will help them finish what they have started.
* Paul wanted the Corinthians to refocus; many of them thought too highly of themselves because of their spiritual gifts.

**Matthew 6:24; 1 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 8:5-8**