

9:1 Superfluous to Write

ASHAMED TO APPEAR INFERIOR.

CHRYSOSTOM: Paul says this in order to win the Corinthians over to his side. Some were of such reputation that they thought they did not need advice. They would be ashamed to appear inferior to others. They would not want to fall short of others' opinions about them. HOMILIES ON THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 19.1.3

9:2 Readiness and Zeal

9:3 Boasting Not in Vain

9:4 Lest We Be Humiliated

9:5 Arranging for This Gift

9:6 Sparing or Bountiful

THE TIME FOR SOWING SEED IS NOW.

AUGUSTINE: And since the apostle himself says: "Now this I say: he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly," you should understand that now is the time, while we are still in this life, to be swift and eager to purchase the gift of eternal life, for when the end of the world comes it will be given only to those who have bought it for themselves by faith before they were able to see it. LETTER 268.10

A GOOD SEASON FOR GOOD SEEDS.

CHRYSOSTOM: Accordingly, let us not simply have the recipient in view in showing generosity in almsgiving, but consider who it is who takes as his the kindnesses shown to the poor person and who promises recompense for favors done; and thus let us direct our attention to him while showing all zeal in making offerings with complete enthusiasm, and let us sow generously in season so that we may also reap generously. Scripture says, remember, "he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly." Let us consequently sow these good seeds generously so that in due season we may reap generously. Now, after all, is the time for sowing, which I beseech you not to ignore, so that on the day of harvesting we may

gather the returns of what was sown here and be regaled with loving kindness from the Lord. HOMILIES ON GENESIS 34.8.11

9:7 God Loves a Cheerful Giver

NOT A BLEMISHED SACRIFICE.

BASIL: People who give reluctantly or under compulsion present a blemished sacrifice which should not be accepted. THE LONG RULES 29.13

GENEROUS GIVING.

CHRYSOSTOM: I think that Scripture means a generous giver, but Paul has taken it in the sense of willingness to give. HOMILIES ON THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 19.2.14

CHEERFULNESS IN GIVING.

CHRYSOSTOM: Paul's purpose was not only for money to be contributed to the poor but for it to be contributed with great eagerness. Likewise, God appointed almsgiving not only for the nourishment of the needy but also for the benefit of the providers, and much more so for the latter than for the former. For if he considered only the interest of the poor, he would have commanded solely that the money be given, and he would not have asked for the eagerness of the providers. But now you see the apostle in every way ordering by will first and above all for the givers to be joyful: the suppliers to furnish in a cheerful manner. And at one time he says, "Everyone must do as he has chosen in his heart, neither out of grief nor necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver," not simply a giver but the one who does this with pleasure. HOMILY 10.4.16: A SERMON ON ALMSGIVING.15

THE JOY OF CHRIST'S DEBTOR.

MAXIMUS OF TURIN: Blessed, then, is almsgiving, which both renews the recipient and rejoices the giver, "for God loves a cheerful giver," and for this reason it is better to give to him first. Joyful, therefore, and cheerful is the one who attends to the poor. Quite clearly he is joyful, because for a few small coins he acquires heavenly treasures for himself; on the contrary, the person who pays taxes is always sad and dejected. Rightly is he sad who is not drawn to payment by love but forced by fear. Christ's debtor, then, is joyful, and Caesar's sad, because love urges the one to payment, and punishment constrains the other;

the one is invited by rewards, the other compelled by penalties. SERMON 71 ON FASTING AND ALMSGIVING.¹⁶

9:8 Every Blessing in Abundance

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.

CHRYSOSTOM: Note how Paul does not pray for riches or abundance but only for enough to live on. Nor is this the only thing he should be admired for. He asks the same thing of the Corinthians. . . . He wants them to have enough of this world's goods but more so an overflowing abundance of spiritual blessings. HOMILIES ON THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 19.2.¹⁹

9:9 He Gives to the Poor

RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES.

CHRYSOSTOM: The things themselves do not remain, but their effects do. Therefore we should not be mean and calculating with what we have but give with a generous hand. Look at how much people give to players and dancers—why not give just half as much to Christ? HOMILIES ON THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS 19.23.²²