

E-VOLUTION

for Wed June 24, 2015

from Rev Jane Taylor

Dear Friends,

Today I am reading 2 Corinthians 8:7-15:

Be the best in this work of grace in the same way that you are the best in everything, such as faith, speech, knowledge, total commitment, and the love we inspired in you. I'm not giving an order, but by mentioning the commitment of others, I'm trying to prove the authenticity of your love also. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although he was rich, he became poor for our sakes, so that you could become rich through his poverty.

I'm giving you my opinion about this. It's to your advantage to do this, since you not only started to do it last year but you wanted to do it too. Now finish the job as well so that you finish it with as much enthusiasm as you started, given what you can afford. A gift is appreciated because of what a person can afford, not because of what that person can't afford, if it's apparent that it's done willingly. It isn't that we want others to have financial ease and you financial difficulties, but it's a matter of equality. At the present moment, your surplus can fill their deficit so that in the future their surplus can fill your deficit. In this way there is equality. As it is written, 'The one who gathered more didn't have too much, and the one who gathered less didn't have too little.' "

We live in a world of boundaries--and it seems that moving the border between despair and hope--the place where people feel secure and welcomed--becomes more and more difficult to cross. In this passage from 2 Corinthians, Paul expresses this movement in the Corinthians' ability to be generous in their stewardship. And for me, that's interesting, as we stand in the middle of our debt payoff campaign (we are still seeking to pay off the balance of around 45,000 or so), and our fall stewardship campaign for 2016.

Paul wants the Corinthians to excel in the ministry of grace and uses the word "charis" (Generosity, charity, gift) to describe the church's mission and response to those saints in need. Paul understands that within the life of the church there must be a fair balance, an equality, a reciprocity between those with abundant resources and those who are in need. Paul even goes so far as to imply that there must be an evenness within the body of Christ, a sharing of gifts.

The border that is so difficult to cross is the border between those who live in abundance (and there are many many kinds of abundance) and those who live on the margins. There is a responsibility for our brothers who are stuck at the borders of life.

The headlines this week give us sobering reminders of how difficult it is to navigate the journey from despair to hope. Racist hatred has become unleashed once again. Greece teeters on the verge of bankruptcy. Saudi Arabia continues to bomb Yemen. Waves of people seek better life.

For us as Christians, and for the church universal, we share the words of Jesus and the message of the New Testament: "Do not fear. Continue to believe."

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Jane Eddy and her family

Tony Woodall, Judy Story's son in law

Carrie Denny

Kathleen Garland

our church, community, and world.

CALENDAR:

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL starts this week. Sundays from 4:30-7 for 4 years through rising 7th graders. "Dare to Dream" is the theme and we are hopeful it will be loads of fun and learning as our children explore God-sized dreams!

Help Wanted: Folks willing to lead a short-term small group study with youth. Youth will be divided by age group and gender. Contact Lisa Reis if you'd like to help!