

2 Corinthians: Encouragement in Troubling Times
"The Grace of Giving" Pt. 1, # 17
2 Cor. 8:1-9
8-21-16 Sun AM

One of the major ministries of Paul was taking up a special "relief offering" for the poor Christians in Judea. Unfortunately, the Christians at Corinth were not doing their part in financial relief of the poor. They were not carrying out on their promise they made a year ago.

Q- What was the cause of their delay?

1. The low spiritual level of the church. When a Christian or church is not spiritual, they will not be generous.
2. The false teachers probably siphoned off as much money as they could (11:7-12, 20).

Q- What was Paul to do? He taught them that giving was an act of Grace!

Even though we believe in the tithe and the offerings, it is not to be legalistic or out of duty, but it is to be motivated by grace.

What would church finances look like if every Christian really believed that giving is more blessed than receiving? How do we know our giving is motivated by grace?

TT- Seven Evidences of grace giving.

1. Grace Giving is in Spite of Circumstances (8:1-2).

v. 1: Paul's concern to defend his apostleship shifted to his concern for a monetary collection to benefit the poor Jewish believers in Jerusalem.

Paul urges the Corinthian church to complete the collection they started a year ago and Paul used the churches at Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea) as an example in grace giving.

v. 2: They were in "deep poverty" or "rock bottom destitute." They lost jobs because of their faith and were black-balled from employment at the trade guilds because they refused to have anything to do with idolatry.

"riches of their liberality" They gave beyond their financial ability even though they were in deep poverty, yet with joy and liberality.

Grace giving does not consider strikes, layoffs, and economic prices. In difficulty, the world's economics says save and hoard while God's economy says give.

No pen or computer could figure out this formula: affliction + poverty+ grace = joy and liberality. When you have experienced the grace of God in your life, you will not use circumstances as an excuse for not giving.

1. Grace Giving is in spite of Circumstances (8:1-2).
- 2. Grace Giving is with Enthusiasm (8:3-5).**

We see three characteristics of the Macedonian giving:

1. v. 3- They gave sacrificially on their own.

They did not give because they had to or were obligated, but gave out of their poverty and exceeded their ability.

2. v. 4- They pleaded with Paul for the opportunity to give.

The Macedonian churches begged to be included in the giving and to participate in the "fellowship of ministering to the saints." **Q-** Is our fellowship biblical or sincere if we are not willing to share!

A church member said, "The preacher said I should give until it hurts, but for me, it hurts just to think about giving."

The grace of God will open your heart and that opens your hand. Giving will be voluntary and spontaneous.

3. v.5- Their giving was a result of giving themselves to the Lord.

We recognize that all we have and all that we are is from grace. We willingly give our lives to Christ understanding the truth of ownership and stewardship.

Jesus is always our example to follow whether it service, suffering, or sacrifice.

Gal 1:4, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Gal 2:20, I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

1. Grace Giving is in Spite of Circumstances (8:1-2).
2. Grace Giving is with Enthusiasm (8:3-5).
- 3. Grace Giving is as Jesus Gave (8:6-9).**

v. 6: Paul exhorted Titus to return to Corinth and complete the offering they began a year ago. They were so gifted in many areas and Paul urged them to express these gifts in the form of a monetary offering.

Those who have experienced abundance of grace from God should abound in giving as well.

vs. 7-8: Like Christ, the Macedonians gave motivated by Love.

What a rebuke to the Corinthians who were so blessed and gifted (1 Cor. 1:4-5). They were so wrapped up in the gifts of the Spirit that they neglected the graces of the Spirit.

vs. 8-9: Like Christ, our giving is to be sacrificial.

The ultimate reason for giving is the example of Christ. Our giving is connected to how much we appreciate His giving Himself and our response to the grace of God.

Prosperity gospel teachers teach that Jesus was rich and he wants you to be rich materially as well!

Q- But what ways was Jesus rich? He was rich in His person, possessions, position, and power.

"yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through his poverty might be rich"

Q- How did he become poor? At His incarnation and His birth in Bethlehem. He gave up His possessions, position, and power to take on a human body and be a servant. He had no place to lay His head and became sin for us on the cross.

Q- Why did He do it? That through his poverty you and I might become rich.

We were totally bankrupt before we met Jesus, but now once we believe we are rich!

Paul's point... How can we refuse to give to others?