

Giving Because You Love Jesus

2 Corinthians 8:1-15 ¹ We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, ⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵ and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. ⁶ Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. ⁷ But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. ⁸ I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. ⁹ **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.** ¹⁰ And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire to do it. ¹¹ So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. ¹² **For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.** ¹³ I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴ your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. ¹⁵ As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”

❖ Introduction

- We as a church need to be more faithful in our giving

❖ What the Giving is For:

- I could go down a list a mile long of how we use money at this church
- And how far it goes and what it accomplishes...
- But that is not the point today...

❖ Give Because You Love God

- Fundamental Principle...
- If you feel like you are forced or do something against your will..
 - You may do it, but half heartedly
- If You do something because you love it....
 - It is a whole different story....
- Give because You have had an experience with Jesus...
 - You love Him
 - Care about His work
 - Care about the Lost...
 - Love His people...

❖ The People of Macedonia loved God First

- **but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.**
 - Expound

❖ Background

- The Macedonian churches were
 - Philippi, Thesolonica, and Berea...
- Other places in the Bible that mention this situation (this is neat in showing how the Bible all goes together....And that you can trust it more.
 - Acts 19:21, 22; Paul said he had resolved to go through Macedonia.

- Romans 15:25-27 ²⁵ At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. ²⁶ For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. ²⁷ They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.
 - Notice how he says here that the OWED it to them...

❖ Important Theme

- Remember this throughout...
- He is writing this to them to encourage them to give generously, just like the other churches.
- I think that is what we should take from it for us.
- That is the Exhortation for us.

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia.

❖ The Grace of God in giving (vs1)

- **The first thing you see here is how God's grace is evident in all giving**
 - When we have an offering here at the church, it goes toward so many things.
 - It goes toward a building you can come and worship in
 - To come and learn of God in
 - A central place for ministry
 - How central to your life is church....
 - Can you imagine how different things would be without this in your life...
 - So when all of you get together and give, it shows the grace of God...
- **And not even the richest person in this church can sustain it and its ministry on their own...**
 - Everyone has to work together.
- **When People give:**
 - It is an evidence of the grace of God working in that person.
- **Can this church boast?**
 - No....
 - Why?
 - Their giving was a direct result of the grace of God in their life...
 - Without this grace...there is no
 - Joy in giving
 - Willingness in giving...
 - So it all comes from God

² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

❖ Giving in the midst of Affliction (vs2)

- **Is this a GIMICK?**
 - To get more from this church...
 - No...because Pauls tries to show it is not the amount, but rather the spirit that matters
 - If we do not give out of joy and willingness, it does not matter if we give 10x more than a church 10x our size...
 - So if we are to compete with other churches, or other individuals...let us compete to see who can be the most joyous and willing to give...not worrying about the amount!
- **The grace of God did not remove their affliction did it?**
 - The affliction was still there, but there was greater joy and overflowing generosity.

- LOOK AT HOW PAUL describes their situation in such dramatic terms...(needed)
- **Severe Affliction**
 - We know that they went through great affliction and persecution...
 - The Philippian church for example, Paul says
 - Philippians 1:29-30 ²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.
 - The Thessolonian church Paul said had receive the word with
 - Much affliction...yet received it anyway...
 - Chapter 2 says that they suffered the same thing from their countrymen as the Jewish believers did from their own people..
 - ◆ And we know how bad things got for many Jewish believers...even death
- **Abundance of Joy**
 - As Severe as their affliction was, the Joy was greater, it says, abundant here....
 - Isn't that how God works anyway....
 - Always giving us joy in our persecutions and troubling times... If we trust in Him...
 - And lean not on our own understanding.
- **Extreme poverty**
 - Literally...down to the rock bottom
 - The affliction that came their way likely led to this situation of poverty for them
 - Even today in some places when a person comes to know the Lord,,,they can no longer own their business....and even if they do, no one will do business with them.....
 - For being a Christian, these people probably suffered greatly.
- **Overflowing in a wealth of Generosity**
 - This is an amazing testimony....
 - Overflowing....over the top...
 - And when you would least expect it
 - Quite different from the look of the Laodicean church

³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will.

❖ Giving According to your Means (vs3)

- They gave according to what they had
- They did not hold back
- So often today we hold back from God, and give of our surplus, or of what we're not going to use...
- But they gave based on what they had

❖ Giving Beyond your Means (vs3)

- They went a step further.... Besides giving according to their means...
- They gave sacrificially.... They went above and beyond what is expected of them.
- Even though they had very little...they wanted to give abundantly.

❖ Giving of your own free will (vs3)

- **Who knows if Paul ever said anything to the churches about giving as He is here to Corinth.**
 - But He makes it seem like they came looking for what they could do to help...
 - They wanted to give, without asking
 - And maybe Paul did not ask cause He knew what all they were going through...
- But, He still sought them out to give...
- And there was no coercing, it was of their own free will.
 - And this is how we are all to give

⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—

❖ **Giving to be a part of Kingdom work (vs4)**

➤ **WHY they gave**

- They wanted to take Part in the relief of the Saints...

➤ **Relief of the Saints.**

- Voice of the Martyrs...
 - If you are looking for something extra to give...look at this web page...
 - We have prayed for some of these people before...
- It is unbelievable that in this day and age people are going through some of the things they are going through in other countries...
- Being harmed in so many ways..

➤ **Anything we give...**

- It can help in relieving a fellow saint...
- Wouldn't we want someone to do the same for us...
- Sure we would.

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

❖ **Giving by example of Jesus Christ (vs9)**

- His whole life is an example of how to be giving..
 - We can give with our life, and with our money and possessions.

¹² For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.

❖ **Giving what you have, not what you do not have (12)**

- You do not want to give what is not yours...
 - Do not run up a credit card debt to give...
 - God wants you to give from what you have, not from what others have...

¹³ I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴ your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness.

❖ **Giving out of fairness (13-14)**

- It is the fair thing to do
- **God blesses us so we can bless others...**
 - He gives extra to this person so they can give to the person He has not given as much to
 - We are given extra, not to live extravagantly, rather to live within reason...
 - And to help others with the rest.

¹⁵ As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack."

❖ **Giving for equality. (15)**

- This is in reference to the picking up of the manna...
- This is how our community should be... our whole Christian community, from here to China....
- **We have a long way to go**
 - There are missionaries, and Pastors that live right at or even below poverty levels...doing the work of God, and
 - Sometimes doing the work that other believers will not do.
 - There is so much to do

- Because so few of those who call themselves Christians are willing to go out and get something done.
- They are chasing dreams of social status, and monetary worth, instead of chasing God.

➤ So, make sure we know to give, so others will be provided for.

❖ Remember the Woman

➤ Mark 14:3-8 **3** While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining *at the table*, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; *and* she broke the vial and poured it over His head. **4** But some were indignantly *remarking* to one another, “Why has this perfume been wasted? **5** For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and *the money* given to the poor.” And they were scolding her. **6** But Jesus said, “Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me. **7** For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me. **8** She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

❖ The Bottom Line

- Remember the Church at Ephesus
 - Left their first love
 - Commanded to Remember, Repent and Do
- Faith Produces Obedience
- Disbelief Produces Selfishness