

# “The Grace of Giving”

## 2 Corinthians Chapter 8

A Little History: The beginning of the church was at the Day of Pentecost. Shavuot. This was one of the 3 pilgrimage feasts in Jerusalem. There were great numbers of visitors from other lands there to worship God. In Acts 2:41 says 3000 people were saved. Many stayed to learn of the Messiah. Jewish hospitality did not deny visitors. The church took care of these converts. The church then had “all things in common” to care for these people.

As time went on this was difficult to keep up. Then there were recorded famines that hurt the church financially.

Paul had used the conversion of the Greek world as an opportunity to share their resources to take care of the burdened people in Jerusalem.

Chapter 8 + 9 is an explanation of this request and the generous spirit of the Christian.

2Cr 8:1

1<sup>st</sup> example  
The  
Macedonians

### 1) Two Examples of the Grace of Giving vs 1-9

Now, brethren, we *wish to make known to you the* **grace** of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia,

- Paul wants the Corinthian Church to know of a wonderful GRACE.
  - The word here is Greek - *charis* = grace or merciful kindness
  - 5 times in the 9 verses he will use this word. These 9 verses we see GIVING is the context of this grace.
- Paul will mention the churches in Macedonia. Macedonia is the northern part of Greece and Achaia is the southern part. Paul is not trying to use envy or jealousy to motivate the Corinthian Church but simply using the Macedonian churches as an example of this grace of giving.

2Cr 8:2

*that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality.*

- The Macedonian churches were poor. Especially compared to the Corinthians.
- Corinth was a seaport town that enjoyed much commercial enterprise and a greater prosperity than most.
- Out of a “*great ordeal of affliction*” & “*deep poverty*” they “*overflowed in liberality*”.
  - Great Ordeal - The Romans when they conquered Macedonia, because it was the homeland of Alexander the Great, roam stripped the area of any wealth or influence.
- Jesus taught in Mark 12:41-44 “*And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.”*”

2Cr 8:3

For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord,

2Cr 8:4

begging us with much urging for **the favor** of participation in the support of the saints,

- The Macedonians gave like the poor widow, out of her ability. She gave from only what she had. But like her they gave beyond their ability what she had she gave it all.
- She trusted that giving it to the Lord would produce more than giving it any other place. Even for food.
- Not only was it wonderful that they gave to the poor in Jerusalem even though they had little, but it was their heart that desired this grace to be give. They begged for the opportunity.

2Cr 8:5

*and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.*

- This grace to give is found first by giving themselves to the Lord. If one knows that all he is. And all he has is the Lord and for His purpose, there is no grudgingly giving.
- It is when we do not give ourselves to the Lord, or we hold back for ourselves that giving becomes a task, a commandment.
- Paul says it wasn’t that he expected them to give. It was a grace that came from lives given completely to the Lord.

2Cr 8:6 So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you **this gracious work** as well.

2Cr 8:7 But just as you abounded in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, *see* that you abounded in **this gracious work** also.

- Because of the Macedonian generosity, it was agreed to send Titus back with this letter to Corinth, for Titus had just come from there and they knew him. His going back was to nurture the same grace in giving.
- The Corinthians were known for their excess.
  - Their excess of tolerance allowed a man to have his father's wife.
  - Their excess of riches caused the wealthy to turn communion and love feast into a drunken party
  - Their excess of the spirit caused them to use spiritual gifts as a competition.
- Paul corrected these things and more in the 1<sup>st</sup> letter. Here in the 2<sup>nd</sup> he is telling them to have excess in "*this gracious work*" of giving.
- They abounded in getting gifts of the spirit but they lacked in giving to others.

2Cr 8:8 I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.

- Paul is not commanding a "*tithe*". He is showing the example of the Macedonians that here lies the example of the "*Grace of Giving*".
- "Sincerity of Love" - the grace of giving is where we can test our "love words" we speak. We talk a good game sometime, yet there is no follow thru.
- 1 John 3:17-18 "*But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*"
- Matthew 6:21 "*where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*"

2Cr 8:9 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 through His poverty might become rich.

2<sup>nd</sup> example  
Jesus

- The second example of the "Grace of Giving" is our Lord Jesus Christ.
    - He was rich (in glory, in honor, in power, in heaven)
    - For Your sake (the benefit of this grace was all for us)
    - He became poor (put on flesh, became seemingly insignificant, embraced ridicule)
- Matthew 8:20 "*Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.*"
- That you might become rich (to partake in the glory and splendor of the richness of eternal life in heaven)

## 2) The Grace of Giving Basics vs 10-24

Follow  
Through  
2Cr 8:10

The remaining of this chapter is principals about this grace. The mechanics of giving is in Chapter 9

I give *my* opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do *this*, but also to desire *to do it*.

2Cr 8:11

But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability.

- Paul is trying to help here.
- He is saying "Guys, a year ago you were willing. Now follow up on what you said you would do. You don't want to be known for being a person that talks a good game but never follows through."

Willingness  
2Cr 8:12

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

- The NKJ says "*For if there is FIRST a willing mind*" - This is how we are to give. WILLINGLY!
- We will see in the next chapter 2 Corinthians 9:7 "*Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*"

- It is based on what you have NOW. God does not expect us to give from what we do not have.
- Luke 9:12-17 "Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place." (Wrong - a do nothing attitude)

But He said to them, "You give them something to eat!" And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people." (For there were about five thousand men.) (Wrong - a we have too little to make a difference attitude)

And He said to His disciples, "Have them sit down to eat in groups of about fifty each." They did so, and had them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the people. And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, twelve baskets full." (Right - Our little is enough in the Masters hand)

- We then give out of what we have NOW. Not what we will have.
- The Lord will bless it and bless and strengthen our hearts.

## Meeting Needs

2Cr 8:13

For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality—

2Cr 8:14

at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their need, so that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your need, that there may be equality;

2Cr 8:15

as it is written, "HE WHO *gathered* MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO *gathered* LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

- This isn't about giving to a more special people. It is about having the ability to meet a need.
- At the moment, the Corinthians are well off. The Church in Jerusalem is hurting. The Corinthians ought to have a heart to touch the hurt. They have the means to do it.
- But, one day the situation may change or reverse and the Corinthians may need a touch from the Jerusalem Church

## Precautions Necessary

2Cr 8:16

But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

2Cr 8:17

For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord.

- When dealing with money the ministry must have people of the same heart understanding the Grace with which they are handling. They must not be flippant or careless with money or information as well.
- Titus was that man for Paul. Titus had a heart for this Corinthian Church. Paul didn't just send anyone to take a collection.

2Cr 8:18

We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things* of the gospel *has spread* through all the churches;

2Cr 8:19

and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness,

- The money is not trusted to one person alone.
- And all who handle money must have a reputation for being trustworthy.
- Appointed by the Churches.
- As a side note, the "brother" mentioned here and in verse 22 is not mentioned by name. Many have speculated. But if the Lord wanted us to know He would have mentioned it. Suffice it to say that this brother was faithful and trustworthy.

2Cr 8:20 taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;  
2Cr 8:21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

- The ministry should to whatever it takes to conduct its business above board and properly.
- Disclosure and honorable accounting procedures eliminate gossip and rumor. Paul is saying that his integrity is vital especially when it comes to the Grace of Giving.
- It isn't enough to be honorable in the sight of the Lord when it comes to the finances of men. The ministry must be honorable in the sight of men as well.
  - The Lord - He sees everything even the motives, the hidden purchases
  - Of men - Men falsely accuse and assume wrongdoing. The ministry accounting must be able to refute even these.

2Cr 8:22 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent because of *his* great confidence in you.

2Cr 8:23 As for Titus, *he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ.*

2Cr 8:24 Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

- These Taking up the offerings are:
  - Tested
  - Diligent
  - Confident in the People
  - Partners and Fellow Workers
  - Messengers
- Paul has laid out the Examples of the Grace of Giving and Basics of the Grace of Giving.
- He clearly asks for the offering for proof of their love and that Paul may boast concerning them.

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