

J.J.

THE GRACE OF GIVING
2 Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9

ANNOUNCEMENT :

Missions

INTRODUCTION :

Last week, we talked about Partnering with Christ through the Great Commission.

Matthew 28: 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

I also touched on how you can go and make disciples by being a missionary.

Three types of missionaries : The goers, The senders, The equippers

One of the ways we participate in the Great Commission if we cannot go ourselves is we "send" or "equip" And one of the ways, we send or equip is through the GRACE OF GIVING.

Today, we will talk about giving. I know when this is the topic, it makes the listeners squirm and sometimes, it's not a topic that is comfortable for the pastor because he's afraid that the might think he is only after the money of the members.

Personally, I'm not scared nor squirming. It's because I know it's such a privilege that we are able to give back to God what He has given us. God knows I have no secret agenda.

I also praise God that although DCF is small, we are a church of givers. If I can only mention their names but it's more important that their names are known by our Lord Jesus Christ rather than us. I've always mentioned that the body of Christ should be known as a body of givers and forgivers.

Two of the devil's deception :

1. Giving is preached too much in church.
2. Giving is not being preached in church.

But we need to teach about the spiritual discipline of giving. I say it's a spiritual discipline because we all know that the **greatest competition of God for man's faithfulness and loyalty** is not the devil but money.

Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

In order for us to be comfortable and even take great delight in giving is we have to remember THAT EVERYTHING COMES FROM THE LORD.

Psalm 24: 1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.

The world and all its people belong to him.

Listen to this Story ABOUT A FATHER AND A SMALL SON WHO are traveling on a freeway. The boy says he's hungry and would love to stop for a snack. They see the Golden Arches ahead and pull off the road. But boy sits at one of the tables in the restaurant and the father returns with a bag full of steamy, fresh French Fries. The boy's face brightens with delight! He is hungry. The father sets the fries before the boy and takes his seat opposite him. He loves his son and loves to watch him eat so heartily.

The two sit at the table together while the boy munches away at the snack. Then the dad does what all dads would do. He reaches over and takes one french fry for himself. The little boy snaps at his father, "Dad! These are mine. Why don't you get your own?"

The dad thinks about this incident on the long, silent drive home: I gave my son every fry he had....and all I wanted was one. My son doesn't understand something. He doesn't know that I could take all those fries away in an instant. Or, if I felt it best for him, I could add to that bag of fries so abundantly that he'd be overwhelmed by them. He thinks that they are his. How did he forget who bought them and brought them to him?

The father gave his son the French fries out of love. It's kind of ridiculous to think that the son would take it against him if he asks just a part of those fries.

2 Corinthians 8 : 1 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. 5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 6 So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you - see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

PRAY

We are going to a quick overview of chapters 8 and 9 in the book of 2nd Corinthians.

But before I talk about on how to give, let me emphasize how the Bible described giving.

*1 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given
7...see that you also excel in this grace of giving.*

We have to remember, it is by God's grace that we can give. The Bible is very explicit when it says that everything belongs to Him as we read earlier (*Psalm 24:1*) and He's also the one who has given us the ability to work or produce money. (*Deuteronomy 8:18*)

Deuteronomy 8 : 18 But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

Quote : We are not doing God a favor when we give. It is because of God's favor that we are able to give.

The Macedonian church understands this.

2 Corinthians 8 : 1 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

It's because some people say to me, "Pastor, I promise, I will give to the church if I win the lotto or if I get a better job. I tell you the truth, that will not happen. Why? Let's say, you are earning \$4,000 a month and you can't even give let's say, \$400 a month. What makes you think that if you win \$60M, you will give to the Lord \$6M?

THE GRACE OF GIVING

I. GIVE ACCORDING TO YOUR ABILITY

3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able,

Look at what the Bible says on the discipline of giving.

1 Corinthians 16: 2 On the first day of the week, each of you should set aside some income and save it to the extent that God has blessed you, so that a collection will not have to be made when I come.

Notice : To the extent that God has blessed you. So how much has God blessed you? You give according to that.

Illustration of the man who wanted to take away tithing. There was once a man who said to his pastor. Pastor, can you pray that I will be given a job and I promise that I will be faithful in tithing? So the pastor prayed for the man to have a job and God gave that man a job. Then the man went to the pastor and said, "Pastor, can you pray that I will have a bigger salary and I pray that I will be faithful in tithing and will even give to missions aside from the tithing." So the pastor prayed for a bigger salary and God granted the request. God has blessed the man so much that his salary grew and grew until one time the man approached to the pastor. "Pastor, can I give less than the 10%. It's because I'm now earning \$100,000 a year and giving \$10,000 a year to the church, I think it's too much." The pastor replied, "I don't think I have the capacity to give that permission because it's not the church's or the pastor's commands but it's the Lord command that we tithe. But here's what I'll do for you. I'll pray to God to take away your job so that you don't have to tithe."

Some people say, tithing is an Old Testament law and not in the New Testament.

Two things :

Luke 11:42 "What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore justice and the love of God. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. (NLT)

This is the reason why Paul said,

it to the extent that God has blessed you,

Which brings us too...

II. GIVE SACRIFICIALLY.

3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. 5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

Giving sacrificially means giving what you have a little more beyond it that it hurts a little.

Illustration : One time, there was this rich man who was boasting to a fellow church member who was an old lady. He said, "You know what? I gave 5,000 dollars today and it's nothing to me. It didn't hurt." The old lady replied, "Then you should start giving more until it's something to you and it starts to hurt."

2 Samuel 24:24 I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

One of the things that God has given us the grace when we became Christians is we promised the Lord to give 10% of whatever we earn, whether we have plenty or some times when we are lacking. One of the things I do before when we know we will be short of money, is to give more.

To Whom Should People Give?

1. To the local church

Galatians 6: 6 Now the one who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with the one who teaches it.

1 Timothy 5:17 Elders who provide effective leadership must be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching. 18 For the scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and, "The worker deserves his pay."

2. Organizations and individuals

This would include missions, para-church groups and individuals who are involved in these ministries
3 John 5 Dear friend, you are being faithful to God when you care for the traveling teachers who pass through, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church here of your loving friendship. Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that pleases God. 7 For they are traveling for the Lord, and they accept nothing from people who are not believers. 8 So we ourselves should support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the truth. (NLT)

3. Believers in Need

James 2: 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? (1 John 3:17; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 10:33-34; 13:1-3 with 2 Thess. 3:6-10)

4. Unbelievers in Need

Galatians 6:10 So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who belong to the family of faith

III. GIVE EXCELLENTLY.

7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you —see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Giving excellently means giving our best to the Lord.

Etymology : excel "KJV abound" perissuo – abundantly, to be over, to exceed a fixed number

Illustration : In one church that had a special need the people came to the front with their offering. One young girl came with hands cupped and gave a ring. Later, the Pastor brought it back to her and she said, "I gave it to the Lord, not to you."

I love this story in the Bible :

Our Lord commanded Moses to build a sanctuary for Him. Moses called on the people for skilled volunteers but also for offerings so they could carry out the work. What happened is the people were bringing freewill offerings every day. So the workers said to Moses

Exodus 36: 5 and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done."

6 Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, 7 because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work.

Look at the promise of the Lord when we give our best to Him.

Proverbs 3: 9 Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; 10 then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

The firstfruits are usually the best part.

Luke 6: 38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

Proverbs 11:24 One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

IV. GIVE CHEERFULLY.

2 Corinthians 9: 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Etymology : cheerfully "hilaros", it's where we get hilarious.

It doesn't mean that we will be laughing when we are giving.

How do we know a person is a cheerful giver?

1. Giving generously.

2 Corinthians 9:6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously

See the context of verse 7 on God loves a cheerful giver.

Quote : People who are generally happy give generously.

Stats : Carl Menninger of the Menninger institute published a report stating that generous people are happy people. He also said that giving is a criteria for mental health!

You know why Christians who are happy give generously? It's because they know the generosity of God's grace in their lives. They are the ones who appreciate that God has given His own Son to die on our behalf to take the punishment for our sin. They know what that means and that's why they can give generously to the work of the Lord because they want others to know about this good news.

2. Giving eagerly.

7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

You know it's a cheerful giver, if they are giving willingly.

Illustration : In our church in the Philippines, there's this old Christian who came to visit our church. During the time for tithes and offering, what we do there is the pastor explains and exhorts people to give and then those who want to give go up in front to put in their offering in the basket at the center. I noticed that when I was up front was announcing that it's giving time and I was still explaining what giving is, the old man already brought out the envelope from his pocket and he was at the edge of his seat and was smiling. When I gave the go-signal that it's offering time, he immediately stood from his seat and just lifted up his envelope to the Lord and after he placed the envelope in the basket, I noticed that he was really thankful to the Lord that he can give. He did not need my exhortation in order to give, he was ready and eager to give.

Black Friday in church Illustration : I pray that one of these days, Christians will treat Sunday as like they treat Black Friday sale, people are already there even before the door opens and more than willing to give their money to the Lord. Note : If people are willing to give their money to Best Buy or Walmart for a brand new TV that they don't even need, it's just because it's on sale, why can't we give back to the Lord where the money will be used to save souls for eternity.

V. GIVE FOR GOD'S GLORY

11 You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

QUOTE : We have to remember that giving is an act of worship. It is part of our worship service.

One of the things that we are teaching our children is to tithe. It is because giving not only blesses them but it glorifies God.

Proverbs 3: 9 Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;

Remember the story of widow's mite :

Luke 21: 1 While Jesus was in the Temple, he watched the rich people dropping their gifts in the collection box. 2 Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two small coins.

3 "I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them. 4 For they have given a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has."

CONCLUSION :

QUOTE : Giving must be done out of love.

Some people ask, "Pastor, how much should I give? 10%? After tax or before tax?" My answer to that is this : "How much do you love God and others?"

That's why Paul said

2 Corinthians 8: 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

24 Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

In the study of this message, I believe I saw the reason why some people are givers or not.

5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

It's because they gave themselves first to the Lord. Lord, here am I, what do you want me to do?

Remember, the reason why we can give is because we have realized how much God has given us. How much?

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

We can never outlove God. We can never outgive God.

LOVE GIVES!

S.G.D.