Thanks Be to God

Austin Keller / General Adult

Overflow: Grace that Gives / Generosity / 2 Corinthians 9:6–15

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, the Apostle Paul appeals to the church of Corinth to become cheerful givers. Their gift for the church of Jerusalem will produce a harvest of righteousness and the fruit of the offering will bring thanksgiving to God.

[Announce text] If you have brought your bible I ask you to please turn with me to 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

[Scripture introduction] In this section of Scripture, Paul appeals to the Corinthian church regarding their pledge which they committed a year ago for the church in Jerusalem. The purpose of this gift was to be used as famine relief. With their gift in hand, Paul gives a final instruction regarding generosity for all believers to comprehend.

[Reannounce and read text] With that in mind, please read with me 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 on the cheerful giver.

[Prayer for illumination] *Lord God, you have distributed freely to your people the grace of God for our salvation. We pray for you to scatter your Word into our hearts so that we may grow a harvest of righteousness for your glory. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

[Introduction]

Preaching Illustrations from Church History Giving—Praying And

In the Newmarket church where Charles Spurgeon first served as pastor, there was an old saint by the name of Sewell. One day he could not avoid being late to a meeting to raise money for home missions that was being held, and arrived as the meeting was closing. As he entered, Spurgeon said, “Our brother who has just come in will, I am sure, close the meeting by offering prayer for God’s

blessing on the proceedings of this evening." He stood up, but instead of praying began to fumble around in his pockets.

Spurgeon remarked, "I am afraid that my brother did not understand me. Friend Sewell, I did not ask you to give, but to pray."

To which the straightforward, bluff old saint replied, "Ay, ay, but I could not pray till I had given; it would be hypocrisy to ask a blessing on that which I did not think worth giving to."

If we are going to make a meaningful difference we must not only pray for God's blessings for others, but give according to God's perfect will.

Remember the truth of the gospel, Christ emptied himself so that we become rich (2 Cor 8:9).

God does remarkable work when the church becomes generous. Whenever we give the Holy Spirit works in people's hearts. Our giving produces thanksgiving (2 Cor 9:12), and glory to God (2 Cor 9:13), and makes other Christians desire to be in fellowship with us and in return for our giving they pray for us as well.

What a beautiful exchange of giving for all people. The Lord provides. The church shares. Other believers benefit and they share their lives and draw closer to the Lord.

That's the power of God working though your giving.

[FCF] And if I believe God can accomplish his purposes through gift-giving, what should I be thinking about everything I make a gift for God?

[Scripture bond] Paul's second letter to the church of Corinth paves the way for what we should pounder every time we contribute a gift for God. He begins with the single point and explains the spiritual blessings every time open you open your hands to God.

However, it always begins with God and his gospel.

[Main point 1] Your heart of giving overflows from God's grace (2 Cor 9:8).

[Explanation] The amount we sow and reap, ultimately depends on the heart's reception of the gospel. If we love much we give much. If we love little, we give little.

But giving can't be mechanical or coerced. It must spring out of an appreciation for what God in Christ has already done for you. You are not commanded to give until it hurts. You are encouraged to become a cheerful giver.

God loves those kinds of people! We give because God's overflow of blessings downpours into our lives.

Verse eight teaches how God provides us with our needs so that we can be abound in every good work.

Then in verse nine, Paul quotes from Psalm 112:9 and in its context, it is speaking about the rich man of faith giving to the poor. This is how God functions in our world. He fills his church with spiritual and material blessings so that we share it with others.

Our hearts are overflowing like Amazon river and its blessings reaches everyone.

[Illustration] Where I am seeing this act of grace is with our giving tree near the welcome table. Many of you have already grabbed a tag, purchased a gift, wrapped it and brought it back in time so it can be given to a person in need.

When Paul says "He distributed freely, he has given to the poor" (2 Cor 9:9). It it God at work through you. Your giving makes a difference. God gives to the poor by the power of gospel inside of you. The heart delights in sharing because God offered his Son for our salvation (Jn 3:16).

[Application] So, before you leave today, grab a tag if your heart is led and bring back a gift by next Sunday. Rachel is depending on our acts of grace to increase for God's glory.

And I know you can do this because...

[Main Point 2] God's provision for others is supplied through you (2 Cor 9:10-11).

[Explanation] Paul declares that all our gifts to give originate with him. [Giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater] (Isaiah 55:10). He is supplier of all our goods and services. We are enriched in every way to be generous in every way (2 Cor 9:11).

The Lord is the provider of all our needs and the needs of others. That's why he tells the church of Corinth that He will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

When Titus was coming to collect the relief offering, Paul promises to the church that God will supply everything they needed to live out the generous life. They didn't worry about not having enough after giving, because God would care for their needs as well.

Every time you give for God's purposes, you and God are caring for others needs. In return, you will never be left wanting.

[Illustration] The feeding of the 5,000 is a perfect example on how God always has enough when we offered it to him. In John's gospel, a boy possessed five barley loaves and two fish (John 6:1-15). Imagine that day with me. Jesus and the disciples surrounds by herds of people. Hungry people.

What do you do in that situation? The disciples said, "Get them out of here. It's not our problem." Jesus on the other hand, says, "You feed them."

Then the disciples approach a boy with a sack lunch. "Hey, kid! Can we have your leftover? Our master said we need to feed all these people. Would you mind sharing with us?"

You know who was the generous one in the gospels? It wasn't the disciples. It was the boy who offered his food willingly for the Lord's purposes. In the end, everyone was fed and there was twelve baskets leftover. Jesus blessed the offering and made it go farther than it ever could because it was given in faith.

[Application] Your wealth is God's provision for you to share. Perhaps you share the little of what you have and watch how God will make it grow for a harvest of righteousness.

That's what the church of Corinth did. They kept their promise and gave an offering that changed many peoples' lives in Jerusalem. Your little gift can make a big difference.

Paul said when we give it produces something so much more. No longer is your giving a seed to be sown, but it will be a harvest to be reaped. The truth is...

[Main Point 3] Your giving will produce a harvest of blessings (2 Cor 9:12-14).

[Explanation] When the seeds of generosity are harvested. They appear in the form of thanksgiving, glory, fellowship and prayers all in the name of Jesus Christ. This is our inspiration to live the generous life.

The church of Corinth might not have recieved a financial blessing from the church in Jerusalem, but their return on investments was greater. Through their giving people connected with them and drew closer to God.

That's all I want for your generosity. That's what God wants for your giving. For the body of Christ to care for its members and for us to be unified in all things. Giving is our response because of the gospel. And that ancient gospel is what brings life to dead sinners and brings about his great harvest.

[Illustration] Over a decade ago, the Zmierski family and I attended a Christmas concerts performed by Keith and Kristen Getty. They wrote the hymn, In Christ Alone. Regardless during the middle of the show, a speaker came forward and spoke about a international Christian organization called Compassion. It's mission statement is lifting children out poverty in Jesus' name.

So at that time, I committed to financially supporting a child.

I wasn't married yet. I did not have much money. And now took on the responsibility of caring for a child in a different part of the world. What do I get out of it you say?

Now I have a child who gives thanks, glorifies God, desires to hear from me, and prays for me. This would have never happened unless I gave first. This is the harvest that God wants us to grow.

We sow the seeds of generosity and his righteousness is produced through us.

[Application] This Thanksgiving can be the perfect time to sow some generosity for God. It can be for this church. Someone you know who needs assistance. Or a person who is around the globe. Regardless. It won't grow unless you sow with a open heart.

In the end...

[Proposition] God's provision for his church overflows from your heart of generosity and through your gift-giving it will reap a harvest of thanksgiving to God.

[Conclusion] Whenever you give. Remember God's grace for you. Christ became poor so that you can be rich in faith. The Lord richly provides you with everything you need so that you can live the generous life. And by your faithful giving, you will reap a harvest of thanksgiving to God.

Thanks be to God. His righteousness endure forever.

Amen!