

2 Corinthians 8

Jesus

I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything!
Paul's Faith in Corinth was based on Paul's Faith in God

- IOWs I believe *God is working in you...and others*

I. Gracious Privilege of Giving

1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the **grace of God** bestowed on the **churches of Macedonia**: 2 that in a great trial of **affliction** the abundance of their **joy** and their **deep poverty** abounded in the **riches** of their **liberality**.

I want you to know: God's Grace has been poured out in Macedonia

- **Macedonia:** Grecian churches of Thessalonica, Philippi, Berea etc.
- **God's Grace Bestowed?** Their Opportunity/Willingness/Privilege to give to others

The Church in Macedonia was Hurting Financially
Yet gave w/Joy anyway...Resulting in True Riches/Genuine Freedom

3 For I bear witness that **according to their ability**, yes, and **beyond their ability**, they were **freely willing**, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would **receive the gift** and the **fellowship** of the ministering to the saints.

They gave sacrificially according to what they had *then gave more*
They gave of their Finances/Gave of their Service.

Not only willing but Freely Willing...

Context: Collecting money for the poor Saints in Jerusalem

Acts 11:29 [Common practice]...the disciples, each **according to his ability**, determined to **send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea**.

Romans 15:25 [Gal 2:10 Paul was exhorted to remember the poor]I am going to Jerusalem to **minister to the saints**. 26 For it pleased those from **Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor** among the saints who are in Jerusalem. [Gal. 6:10 Household of faith first]

Macedonia gave sacrificially...Maybe not as much as others
But, more than they were able as they trusted Jesus...

Mark 12:43 [Jesus of the widow's penny] ...this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury ...**44** ...for they all put in out of their abundance, but she **out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood**."

Sacrificial Giving
Proving God by Trusting Him as your Provider

- **Ministering:** *gr. diakonia lit. Bringing Relief*
- Natural/Supernatural Ministry: Not only finances. Car repair ministry, Food, Afghans etc....

5 [They ministered] And not only as we had hoped, but they first **gave themselves** to the Lord, and **then to us** by the will of God.

Macedonia willingly/freely gave more than we hoped
Key to their Cheerful Giving? Giving themselves to God before giving their gift to others

v4 Result? They pleaded w/Paul to receive their gift on God's behalf

6 So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also **complete this grace in you** as well. 7 But as you abound in everything—in **faith**, in **speech**, in **knowledge**, in all **diligence**, and in **your love for us**—**see that you abound in this grace also.**

- **V6 Grace:** Read *Privilege to give back* **7X** this section
- **Complete this grace in you as in Macedonia...**

IOWs Since God has graciously blessed you by giving to you
See that you graciously bless others in turn

- **1 Corinthians:** They were commanded to give/Promised to give

1 Corinthians 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have **given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also...**

Corinth is no longer Commanded but Encouraged
Enjoy the Grace of Giving Back to God/Gracious Privilege of Giving to God's Work

II. Jesus the Giver

8 I speak not by commandment, but **I am testing the sincerity of your love** by the **diligence of others.**

Commanded to give in 1st Corinthians/Challenged to give in 2nd Corinthians
Challenge: Your love **in word** vs Macedonians love **in deed**
I'm not commanding just testing the sincerity of you love?

9 For you know the **grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**, that though He was rich, yet for **your sakes He became poor**, that you through His poverty might **become rich.**

Jesus gave it all for us to become Spiritually/Eternally Rich/Enriched!
Sinners Redeemed/Forgiven/Saved/Sanctified/Glorified

10 [Back to earth...] And in this **I give advice**: It is to your advantage not only to be **doing what you began** and were **desiring to do a year ago**; 11 but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have.

Advice from the Apostle Paul: This is your Advantage...
Finish what you start...IOWs Do what you said you were going to do

- A year ago you said you would give, but who's counting

Talking about being ready to do something is not actually doing something. Desiring to do something you've talked about doing is not actually doing something. Actually doing something you've talked about desiring to do ...now that's actually doing something. [NJC] Definition of integrity.

12 For if there is first a **willing mind**, it is **accepted according to what one has**, and **not according to what he does not have**.

How do I determine the amount God desires me to give
A willingness to give is the first step. The Holy Spirit will lead.
Not more than we can. IOWs no borrowing or loans

13 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; 14 but by an **equality**, that now at this time **your abundance may supply their lack**, that **their abundance also may supply your lack**—that there may be **equality**. 15 As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack."

- Not Socialism/Communism

We don't give to those refusing to use their abilities to work
We lift up those who do what they can...but still have need

Exodus 16:18 [Everyone told to gather Manna for food] So when they measured [the Manna] ... he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need.

Everyone gathered what they could, some more and some less; but they all shared what they gathered. [Guzik]

Jesus our Example of Giving

III. Collection for the Saints

16 But thanks be to God who puts the **same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus**. 17 For [Titus] not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, **he went to you of his own accord**. 18 And we have **sent with him the brother** whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, 19 and not only that, but who was also **chosen by the churches**

to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your **ready mind...**

Titus not only agreed that this grace though giving needed to happen
He actually went to you on his own accord

We sent him to you w/an outstanding unnamed trustworthy brother
So? When they get there... So show them your **ready mind** with your **ready gift**

It's not who you are underneath, but *what you do* that defines you. [Rachel Dawes to Bruce Wayne: *Batman Begins*]

...20 avoiding this: [IOWs this is why we are sending a trustworthy brother...] that anyone should **blame us in this lavish gift** which is administered by us— 21 **providing honorable things**, not only in the **sight of the Lord**, but also in the **sight of men**. 22 And we have sent with them **our brother** whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which we have in you.

- **Unnamed brother**

1. Accompanied Titus in Corinth
2. Well known/praised in all churches
3. Providentially kept from recognition for his own good

He would keep everyone accountable re. receiving of the gift
Everything out in the Light in the Sight of God and Man

23 If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. 24 Therefore **show to them**, and before the churches, the **proof of your love** and of **our boasting** on your behalf.

v8 I am testing the Sincerity of your Love. v24 Looking for Proof of your love
IOWs Put your money where your mouth is

Ecclesiastes 11:1 Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days.

Collection for the Saints
Saints are awaiting your help/One day you may await theirs

2 Corinthians 9

Jesus

I. Ready and Willing

1 Now concerning the **ministering to the saints**, it is superfluous for me to write to you; 2 for **I know your willingness**, about which **I boast of you**

to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority.

- **Ministering repeated:** *gr. diakonia* lit. Bring Relief

The early church in Jerusalem experienced severe financial need primarily due to a widespread regional famine [44-48 AD], heavy persecution that led to the loss of property and livelihoods, and the unintended depletion of their own community funds. [GQ]

- **Superfluous** [unnecessary] to remind you...**but I am reminding you?**

I boasted about your willingness/zeal to give?

We think Paul is being sarcastic here because if the Corinthians really were such great examples in giving, and if their giving prompted others to give, then Paul would *never have to give them as much instruction and encouragement as he does in 2 Corinthians*. [Guzik]

3 Yet [even thought you are zealous to give and have inspired so many others...**I have sent the brethren**, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may **be ready**; 4 lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should **be ashamed** of this confident boasting.

Listen. None of us want to be ashamed

I don't want to come w/some from Macedonia/Find no gift ready

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and **prepare your generous gift** beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a **matter of generosity** and **not as a grudging obligation**.

Safety Net/Safeguard/Failsafe against Embarrassment

Just in case I will send brothers beforehand to *help you prepare* the gift you promised

Ready and Willing? Don't miss the Blessing

II. Hilarious Giving No Reserves

6 But this I say: **He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly**, and he who **sows bountifully will also reap bountifully**.

Proverbs 11:24 There is one who **scatters, yet increases more**; And there is one who **withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty**.

The Law of Sowing/Reaping is a thing...

7 So let each one **give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity**; for **God loves a cheerful giver**.

God loves a cheerful Giver, so...
Purpose [bring forth] from your heart to give cheerfully

- **Don't give** if it feels forced [Sorrow/Heaviness]
- **Don't give** because other are [Guilt/Distress]

Giving Tests the Heart. Is God your Provider? Prove it.
Give Cheerfully: gr. *hilaros*. God loves a *Hilarious* Giver

8 And God is able to **make all grace** abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an **abundance for every good work.** 9 As it is written: "**He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.**"

When God gives grace, He does not reluctantly open a little finger and maintain a clenched fist full of gifts. I would tell you today that God's hands are nail-pierced hands and they are wide open. This fountain of grace is always pouring itself out with no limitation on heaven's side at all. [Redpath]

As we give generously God's abundant provision brings us contentment
We did our part/God did His/People were blessed/Everybody's happy

Proverbs 22:9 He who has a **generous eye will be blessed...**

Deuteronomy 15:7 "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren...in your land which the Lord your God **is giving you**, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother ...**10 You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him**, because for this thing the Lord your God will **bless you in all your works** and in all to which you put your hand.

Proverbs 11:25 The **generous soul will be made rich**, And **he who waters will also be watered himself.**

- Tithing is not for today?

We Observe Tithing Throughout the Entire Bible
Before the Law, Within the Law *and* in the NT Church Age of Grace

- **Tithing before the Law:** Abram tithed to Melchizedek Pre-Law Genesis 14:18
- **Tithing within the Law:** Firstfruits given to God as per OT Law Leviticus 27:30

Proverbs 3:9 Honor the Lord with your possessions/with the firstfruits of all your increase

- **Tithing in the Church Age:** Jesus...

Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For **you pay tithes** of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, **without leaving the others undone.**

1 Timothy 6:18 [To the rich] Be **ready to give**, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

1 Corinthians 16:2 [Giving on Sunday was a thing] On the first day of the week let each one of you **lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper...**

Luke 16:11 [Matter of the Heart/Gage of Future responsibility] ...if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

Proving God by Trusting Him as Provider

Malachi 3:8 [Withhold what is God's likened to stealing from Him] Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' **In tithes and offerings.** You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. **Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,** That there may be **food in My house,** And **try Me now in this** [lit. heb. *bāḥan* Examine/Try/Prove],” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not...

*Open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it*

- Not our motivation but beautiful promise
- **Our motivation:** Compelled by our love for Jesus
 1. **To Glorify God:** All things are from Your gracious hand
 2. **To Keep Ourselves:** From covetousness which is idolatry/slavery
 3. **To Maintain Ministries:** in/of the church.

Jehovah-Jireh: The LORD Will Provide

God knows our needs both Physical/Spiritual. He Promises to provide Abundantly...

Philippians 4:19 ...my **God shall supply all your need** according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Psalms 34:10 ... those who seek the Lord shall **not lack any good thing.**

Matthew 6:33 ...**seek first the kingdom** of God and His righteousness, and **all these things shall be added to you.**

10 [Paul prays] Now may **He who supplies seed** to the sower, and **bread for food,** supply and **multiply the seed you have** sown and **increase the fruits** of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

Feeding of the 4000/5000 began w/little to work with, yet...
In Jesus hands the increase was more than Sufficient/It was Abundant

12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the **needs of the saints,** but also is abounding through many **thanksgivings to God,** 13 while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the **obedience of your confession** to the gospel of Christ, and for your **liberal sharing** with them and all men, 14 and by their prayer for you, who **long for you** because of the **exceeding grace of God in you.**

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

People Satisfied/God Glorified
The **Gospel in Word** becomes the **Gospel in Action**

15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Thanks be to God for His Indescribable Gift!
For God so love the world *that He gave...*

Giving: Never out of guilt/always compelled/motivated by our love for Jesus/others. Not the giving *our* riches, but giving back to God what He has graciously given to us, demonstrating our faith in God as our Provider. [NJC]

Hilarious Giving w/out Reserve
Proving God by Trusting Him as our Provider