

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (October 31, 2021)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

I received a card recently in honor of Pastor Appreciation Week. It was clearly connected to something I said in my sermon last week. The outside of the card said, "You're the kind of person I'd want with me during a Zombie Apocalypse." On the inside it continued, "One who runs a little slower than I do. Happy Halloween." I won't tell you who sent the card, but his initials are D. I. and he helps lead our fabulous usher team. I love the card! Laughter and joy are God given gifts that fill women's retreats, community life groups, Bible classes, and conversations around Grace.

This Sunday, as we continue in our study of Paul's two letters to the first century Christians in Corinth Greece, we turn our attention to "Stewardship." When many of us think about the word "Stewardship" we think it's about money, budgets, balance sheets, and bills. For most that is somber and stale stuff. It's important for churches to be financially responsible but Stewardship is much more than that. It's about joy not duty, opportunity not obligation, cheerfulness not checkbooks. We should not feel pressured to give, instead we should feel excitement and expectation as we consider how we can participate in what God is doing in our church, our neighborhood, our community, our world.

Our giving flows from the Source of everything good. All we have, all we are, all we hope for has been given to us by God. When He calls us to give back a portion of what we have it is not because God needs anything from us ... He is the One uncreated being who is absolute, complete and self-sufficient. When He tells us to give it must be because it benefits us, grows us, heals us, draws us closer to Him and to others.

This morning we are looking at a single verse in Paul's second letter. This verse corrects misunderstandings about: rich and poor, life priorities, the reason we give a portion of what God has given us. May our giving, and this season of Stewardship, make us laugh, stir our hearts, and grow our love for God and others. Here at Grace we are on an exciting journey together. I'm pretty slow, but on this Halloween Sunday, I'm hoping I'm not the slowest ... I probably am! Easy pickings for the Zombie Apocalypse.

I'm Rich, What Now? (SERMON PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 8:9)

"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."

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. Read the passage surrounding this one verse (read chapter 8:1-15) What is the general theme of this entire section?
2. What is Paul's stated priority: That we would give financially or that we would give ourselves to God?
3. How does Paul say those in Corinth will prove their love for others? (verse 8)
4. Where does our "richness" come from?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

5. What does Paul mean when he speaks of Christ being "rich"?
6. What does Paul mean when he states, "though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor"? How did Jesus become "poor"? Why would He choose to become "poor"?
7. What does it mean that we have now become "rich"?
8. What does Paul mean when he writes, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"? What is this "grace" God offers us? Can you recall other passages in the Bible that speak about God's grace? (Consider John 1:16, Ephesians 2:4-10, Hebrews 4:16, the last verse of the Bible: Rev 22:21)

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

9. How have you experienced God's grace? What difference has the grace of God made in your life?
10. Take a few minutes and reflect on what Jesus gave up for you to be rich ... to experience God's grace and eternal life.
11. Before you experienced the grace of God in Jesus we were, despite how much money and things we have, poor. Why does Christian faith describe us as "poor" apart from Jesus?
12. How does a person become "rich" from God's perspective? What are the things in your life that make you truly "rich"?
13. How will you extend grace to those you will meet today?
14. How does God's grace affect how you give of your time, your talents, your money?

Notes: _____

Spend time in silence, praying (even if just for a moment or two). Prayer is simply a conversation with God. Be honest. If you don't know how or what to pray admit that and ask God to help you pray. Ask God to help you experience His grace. Ask God to help you live with kindness and grace in all your relationships. Ask God for a greater appreciation of all that He has given you. Ask God to help you be more generous. God does love you and He will help you.