

Go Farther – Give Farther

8/17/25

2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15

Sunday AM

A \$1 bill and \$20 bill were standing in line to go out of circulation – talking about their lives in circulation when the \$20 bill said, “You know, I’ve had quite the life. I’ve traveled the world, been to finest hotels and restaurants, taken in Broadway shows and all kinds of sporting events – it’s been amazing.” To which the \$1 bill sighed, “That sounds so exciting. I’ve only ever been to church... over and over again.”

We laugh, but sadly – there’s too much truth in this story as for some people, too many people, a \$1 bill is the only missionary they’ve ever sent out.

OUCH! Of course – **if you can’t say amen say ouch!**

Truth – giving is one of those topics that can be a bit touchy – like talking about someone’s *cooking*, their *driving*, or their *politics*. Yet Jesus spoke about *money* and *stewardship* more than He talked about heaven and hell combined. Not b/c He wants something FROM us, but b/c He wants something FOR us.

This is why the H.S. inspired Paul to write...

Whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:6–8

When Paul penned these words, I can assure you that he wasn’t talking about funding church programs as much as he was talking about ***fueling the mission of the Gospel to all nations***. He was teaching us that stewardship isn’t about God raising money – but about God raising His people to live open-handed, generous lives so His work can go farther to touch more lives.

WTM – I want us to take a few min. to look at giving the same way God sees it – not as an ***obligation***, but as a ***joyful act of trust*** that connects our lives to His heart, His mission, and His promises – **and how our generosity in response to His generosity can grow us and His Kingdom.**

In case you’ve not been here, we’ve been talking about our missional focus for this year in which we’re focusing on **going farther to further the Gospel**. In week 1, we discussed the mission of the G.C. that we’re all witnesses of God’s grace called to make disciples of all nations, tribes, and tongues. Last week, we focused on the need of *praying farther* if we’re to further the Gospel. Today, I want to talk about the necessity of ***giving farther*** to further the Gospel.

To be sure – in the G.C., Jesus called all of His followers (not a select few), including you/me to *make disciples of all nations* – which is a commission that inherently pushes us beyond our own *circles, cultures, churches, comfort zones, and conveniences*.

Meaning – to **give farther** requires us using our personal resources of our *time, talents, treasures, tongue*, and *testimony* as God-given tools to fuel the spread of the Gospel to make disciples both near/far.

But for this to occur, it’ll involve our intentional investment of ourselves to God’s global agenda, even if it requires *sacrifice, delayed gratification, or personal risk*. Yet this will never occur until we each comprehend/apprehend that we’re just stewards of our gifts/blessings and **not owners** – called to manage these blessings in a manner that ¹ honors God, ² seeks first His Kingdom, and ³ centers on God’s will. ***Sound familiar... that’s b/c how we pray is how we steward.***

In 2 Corinthians 8–9, we find Paul was urging the Corinthians to complete a collection they'd promised for the church in Jerusalem. In his encouragement, Paul pointed to the example of the Macedonians, who gave generously despite their own poverty, as a model of grace-filled generosity. Teaching us that our giving should be *voluntary, cheerful, and proportionate to one's means*, but never under compulsion/obligation.

In doing this, Paul was connecting generous giving to the broader mission of the Gospel urging His followers to understand that sacrificial generosity ¹ strengthens the unity of the church across regions/cultures, ² removes barriers to ministry, and ³ testifies to God's love by meeting the physical/felt needs of others to earn the right to speak the truth of God to them in love.

In this way, Paul was framing the need for generosity as a vital part of advancing the Gospel to all nations to support those who go and to meet the needs of people on the field to display God's grace in a tangible way.

We want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of extreme trials, their overflowing joy and poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded w/ us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. So, we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 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. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it w/ the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you thru His poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

As it pertains to G.C. stewardship, I believe it includes more than one's financial blessings – it also includes our *time, talents, tongue, and testimony* as well.

Meaning – every blessing we've received, whether *material, relational, or spiritual* – is a trust from God we're to be investing to advance His kingdom.

TBC – this is biblical stewardship and it begins w/ this wonderful blessing known as the **TITHE** – which is giving to God the 1st and best 10th of our *time, talents, treasures, tongue, and testimony* – and never the least and leftovers for the purpose of ¹ honoring God, ² seeking 1st His Kingdom/righteousness, and ³ striving to see His will accomplished on earth as in heaven.

Yet the tithe is just the starting point (the doorway to every other areas of our lives) b/c everything we have and are belongs to the Lord and we're simply managers of these blessings. Thus, I'm not just to give the tithe, I'm to steward the other 90% in a manner that honors Him, seeks His kingdom, and desires His will.

SO – when we talk about *giving farther*, it becomes clear that we're not just talking about generosity in a comfortable, convenient, local sense – but of a gospel-shaped, kingdom-prioritized generosity of everything we have and are that reaches beyond our personal limits, local boundaries, and short-term thinking to be a part of something greater than ourselves for Him.

Stewardship isn't a subcategory of the Christian life – **it is the Christian life**...and God evaluates how we regard what He has entrusted to us and what we are doing w/ it. *Randy Alcorn – Treasure Principle*

SO – to *give farther* means to live w/ an open hand and open heart to see that all we have as an assignment from God is to advance His mission. It's to invest our blessings/gifts – w/out reservation and beyond borders – in ways that honor God to draw people to Christ. Giving not only when it's comfortable or convenient – but even sacrificial – **until the mission is achieved**.

God-ronically – this idea came up this week in my **GROW Groups**. Unplanned – all of my groups just happened to be reading the *Olivet Discourse* in Matthew 24. The O.D. is when Jesus shared a message w/ the crowds about the end times to encourage them to live each day in light of His future return. In the discourse, Jesus offered (3) connected parables – the *Parable of the 10 Virgins*, the *Parable of the Talents*, and the *Parable of the Sheep/Goat* – each packed w/ truth for today/tomorrow – relevant to our lives.

In particular, the *Parable of the Talents* is relevant to this message today. In this parable, the owner (God) entrusted (3) servants w/ a large sum of money and then went away on a journey promising to return. He gave to one (5) talents, to another (2) talents, and to one (1) talent (*according to their ability*). Two of them got to work and double their talents while the 3rd guy buried his talent – that is, **he did nothing w/ it**. Then, when the owner returned, he rejoiced w/ the two who made the most of what was entrusted to them, while to the 3rd guys, even though he had had lost nothing – He called him wicked and disciplined him.

Don't miss the **main point** of this parable. It's to remind us that while we wait for Christ's return – we're not called to wait passively (or for ourselves) but actively for Him – fully engaged in G.C. service by stewarding God's blessing to us for His glory.

1 – God has **ENTRUSTED** us w/ gifts | opportunities

W/ more than money – God has put into us *resources, gifts, abilities, talents, opportunities*, and more for the sake of ¹ honoring Him, ² building His kingdom and ³ accomplishing His will. These blessing are for His glory not yours – on loan from Him to you.

Each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms... so that in all things God may be praised thru Christ. To Him be the glory and the power forever. 1 Peter 4:10-11

2 – God **EXPECTS** us to multiply these blessings

The first (2) servants *immediately* put to work what was entrusted to them – showing us that faithful Christians don't sit by idly, but instead, use whatever they've been given to ¹ bless others, ² share the gospel to make disciples, and ³ to strengthen God's church.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

3 – One day – He will **EXAMINE** our stewardship

The 3rd servant's issue wasn't that he did something **bad** – it was that he did **nothing w/ what he had** – excusing his laziness as a fear of failure. But in reality, he was trying to justify that he was more concerned for himself than about the Master's priorities.

Point – we're not bury our talents, but put them to work for God glory, kingdom, and will.

In WWII, as the allies were liberating a French village, the town's church was damaged and their beloved statue of Jesus was shattered into pieces. Hoping to restore it, the townspeople carefully collected the fragments and went to work repairing it. Oddly enough, they managed to repair everything except the hands. Some in the town wanted to make new ones, but the pastor said, “No. Leave it that way. Let it stand as it is, b/c it'll remind us that **we are now His hands.**” Today, if you visit Strasbourg, France, you'll find this statue still standing w/ a plaque reading – *I have no hands but your hands to do my work today. I have no feet but your feet to lead men on the way. I have no tongue but your tongue to tell men how I died. I have no help but your help to lead them to my side.*

God has **entrusted** us w/ His work, and He **expects** us to serve His Kingdom and will, b/c one day, He will return to **examine** what we've done w/ every blessing, every gift, and every opportunity He has given to us.