

I. Intro

- A. Text: **2 Cor. 8:1-9**
- B. Preview (Context)
 - 1. Map

II. Grace Revealed

- A. Breaking News (**v.1**)

¹ *Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: (2 Cor. 8:1)*

- 1. Wrapping Our Minds Around Grace
- 2. **Eph. 2:7:** *“...that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”*
- 3. The implication is that the grace of God is so rich and so deep that this world couldn't contain (even its explanation).

*It's difficult for us to get our minds around the concept of grace, but we have definitions that give us nuggets:

- 4. Grace Defined
 - a. **Common Definition:** “God's unmerited favor”.
 - b. **My Definition:** God's supernatural supply for our desperate need.
 - c. **Grace (charis #5485):** the divine influence upon the heart that is reflected in life.

*The pouring out of God's influence on the heart that bears tangible fruit in one's life.

- 5. Grace Provokes a Response
 - a. *“When the day of Pentecost had fully come” (Acts 2:1)*
 - i. As a response to that grace, they displayed such an intense gratitude that their earthly possessions quickly became resources to be leveraged so that others could enjoy this grace also.
 - ii. Sold their possessions and shared the proceeds so that no one had lack (**Acts 2:44-45**).
 - b. Giving in Christ is an act of Worship

- i. At Pentecost, the early believers had a heart response to the grace of God in their lives and it showed up in their pockets.
- ii. For them, giving was an act of worship, surrender and adoration. It was the natural response to the grace of God poured out on them.
- c. As it was then... Also in 2 Cor.
 - i. In the history of the church, 2 Corinthians was written somewhere around Acts 20.
 - ii. Possibly 20 years later.

B. Abundance of Joy Outshines Tough Circumstances (**v.2**)

²that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality." (2 Cor. 8:2)

- 1. You've gotta see this:
 - a. They had great trial of affliction
 - b. They had DEEP poverty
 - c. But their joy eclipsed their afflictions and poverty.
 - i. "Happiness" from a Western point of view is based on circumstances.
 - ii. Godly joy is often DESPITE circumstances

C. Freely Willing to Give (**v.3**)

³For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing. (2 Cor. 8:3)

- 1. According to Ability
 - a. Begged for the opportunity to Give (v.3-4)
- 2. Beyond their Ability
 - a. How do you give an amount that makes Him say, Wow?
 - b. **Mk. 12-41-44:**

⁴¹Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. ⁴²Then one poor

widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. ⁴³ So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that 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.” (Mk. 12:41-44)

- i. It wasn't the amount, but the posture of the heart reflected in what she gave.

D. Money was only a fraction of the Macedonian's giving (v.5).

“⁵ And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.” (2 Cor. 8:4-5)

- 1. Themselves to the Lord.
- 2. Themselves to us.

E. Pointed toward Macedonia with motive in mind: (v.6-8)

“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. ⁸ I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.” (2 Cor. 8:6-8)

- 1. Test your love by measuring it according to the giving of others.
- 2. See God pour out the same grace in others on you.
- 3. Abound (Growth)
 - a. Faith
 - b. Speech
 - c. Knowledge
 - d. Diligence
 - e. Love

III. Conclusion: Love is easily measured by sacrificial giving (v. 8-9).

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

- A. The ultimate display of grace is the greatest of provokers; yet empowers(v.9)

“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.” (2 Cor. 8:11)

1. Jesus was rich, yet became poor for you (so that His poverty would translate into your riches).
 - a. The type of giving that pleases God the Father, He displayed in His Son:
 - b. Jesus. Jesus was rich in splendor, rich in adoration and praise, seated at the right hand of the Father in eternity past. But He gave it all up that we might share in his heavenly riches.
 - c. That's love.
2. As detailed as Paul's description of the Macedonian's giving was, he never once mentioned an amount?
 - a. He never once mentioned a percentage? Neither will I.
 - b. There is a type of giving that will move the heart of God, and it's not based on percentages. There is a selfless generosity that will move the heart of onlookers, and it's not based on our abundance.
 - c. As recipients of the grace of God, we have the liberty to give as an act of worship... not obligation.
 - d. We have the privilege of giving in a way that communicates the grace of God to those who don't know His grace and haven't yet experienced it.
 - e.
 - f.

B. Last piece of advice: Complete what you started a year ago... (v.10-11)

“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; 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.” (2 Cor. 8:10-11)

1. It's to your advantage that you finish what you started.
2. You started well. You had a readiness to desire it.
 - i. Started in grace.
 - ii. Did you go back to relying on your own strength?

- b. Now finish the deal.
 - i. Oh that even your giving would be empowered by the very grace of God.
 - ii. Oh that your giving would be a perfect picture of the grace of God