

I. Intro

A. Text: **2 Cor. 8:1-9**

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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 8:1-9)

A. Recap

1. We Give Because of Love
 - a. Love God → Love People
 - b. Rich Young Ruler
 - i. You don't love me like that.
 - ii. Lay down your idols.
 - iii. Peter: “We have left all to follow you.” (Mk. 10:28)

²⁹ So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, ³⁰ who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. (Mk. 10:29-30).

- 2. We Give Because of Gratitude
- 3. We Give God First Place
- 4. We Bring Our Giving Into the House

B. Clarification:

- 5. **Mistake:** *"The church currently has 3x the financial resources and 9x the manpower to complete the great commission."*
- 6. **Correction:** *"The church currently has 3,000 times the financial resources and 9,000 times the manpower to complete the great commission."¹*

C. Question: When tithing, should we give 10% of gross or net pay.

D. Preview (Context)

- 7. Map
 - a. Paul had just left Ephesus with plans to travel to Achaia (**Corinth**).
 - b. But things were a little shaky in Corinth, so he sent his team (Titus) on ahead with a very severe letter, while he visited a while in Macedonia (**Philippi**).
 - c. Paul was stopping in Macedonia only until he received back word that things were well in Corinth.
 - i. And then he'd be on his way.
- 8. During Paul's wait in Macedonia, Paul picked up a pen and began writing what we call the 2nd letter to the church in Corinth.
 - a. In this letter, Paul was divinely led by the Holy Spirit to approach the sometimes-intimidating subject of giving.

II. Grace Revealed

A. God's **Grace** Poured Out on a **People** is Worth Pausing (**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. Whatever was going on in Macedonia was so powerful that it was worthy of being mentioned over and over again.
 - a. We are still talking about it today.
 - b. You got to check out what grace looks like.
2. Wrapping Our Minds Around Grace
 - a. Tangibly witnessing grace may at first seem troubling, because our view of grace is limited at best.
 - i. We have a mental ascent to its reality, yet have great difficulty understanding it.
 - b. Grace is so rich and multi-faceted that God Himself will have to reveal its depths to us. **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” (Eph. 2:7)

- i. The implication is that the grace of God is so rich and so deep that we couldn't possibly understand it fully in this world.
- c. Grace (charis #5485): *to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior, to have pity on another, to show unmerited favor toward another, that which produces joy and delight, God's inexhaustible resource that supplies our desperate need.*

3. **Grace Provokes a Response:** The pouring out of God's favor, power, influence on the heart always produces tangible fruit in one's life.
 - a. **Acts 4:33-34:** ³³*And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.* ³⁴*Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought them to the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.*
 - b. As a response to unmerited grace, the early church displayed such an intense gratitude that their earthly possessions quickly became mere resources to be leveraged so that others could enjoy this grace also.

- c. Abundant grace poured out usually produces hearts that've been moved to abundantly give so that others can experience that grace as well.
- 4. Giving (at Pentecost) was an act of Worship
 - a. Our early brothers and sisters had a heart response to the grace of God in their lives and it showed up in how they treated their pocketbooks.
 - i. For them, giving was an act of surrender and adoration.
 - b. As it was then (Pentecost)... so it was in Macedonia (in 2 Cor. 8)
 - i. Possibly 20 years later.
 - c. By then (20 years), giving could have easily been reduced to a tradition or ritual.
 - i. Which makes Paul's discovery of the Macedonian's giving so refreshing.

B. Abundance of Joy Outshines Trials of Affliction (**v.2**)

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

- 1. Paul used the Macedonians (a despised people in Corinth) to show what grace looks like in the lives of otherwise oppressed people.
- 2. It wasn't all pretty in Macedonia.
 - a. They had real life issues.
 - b. The Macedonians had great trial of affliction
 - c. They had DEEP poverty
 - d. But their joy eclipsed their afflictions and poverty.
- 3. Joy despite the circumstances would have been great, but they had an ABUNDANCE of joy!
 - a. I'm convinced that the Macedonians got a revelation of the magnitude of the gift they had in Christ.

- b. I'm further convinced that the revelation of the grace of God in their lives produced a joy unspeakable.
 - i. And as their joy grew, their selfless lifestyle grew.
 - ii. Poverty and trials were still there, but their joy was based on the grace of God, not on temporary circumstances.

C. Grace Empowers To Give According to Ability (v.3)

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

- 1. They faithfully gave according to the resources that had been entrusted to them.
- 2. Macedonian Problem: They didn't really have any resources. They didn't have much of anything to give.
 - a. So Paul, on his way to take up a collection for the church at Jerusalem may have been intending to pass them by.
- 3. Begged for the opportunity to Give (v.3-4)

³For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing. ⁴Imploring us with much urgency that we would receive, the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. (2 Cor. 8:3-4)

- a. Could you imagine a people protesting... complaining that their money was still in their own pockets and the end of a meeting?
 - i. *"You can't close the service until you collect my little change".*
 - ii. *"Don't you dare count me out because of my circumstances. Don't you dare pass me by."*
- b. They demanded that their money be included and gave according to their ability.
- c. The Macedonians gift was tied to their passion for fellowship.
 - i. Fellowship: *sharing, community, joint participation.*

D. Grace Empowers to Give Even Beyond Ability

³For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing. (v.3b)

1. Giving according to their ability would have shown extreme dedication and faithfulness.
 - a. But they were freely willing to give beyond that.
 - b. They gave in a way that didn't make human sense.
 - c. They gave in a way that boasts not about them, but about the God who had empowered them to do so.
2. How do you give in a way that makes God say, Wow?
 - a. Numbers don't impress Him.
 - i. **Ps. 24:1: The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof...**
3. There is a giving that even impresses God
 - a. David (**2 Sam. 7**)
 - b. Widow (**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. ⁴³So 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; ⁴⁴for 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)

- c. Jesus was sitting in a strategic seat that gave him access to see everything. (v. 41)
- d. This one little widow walks up and humbly cast in two mites. (v.42)
 - i. Mite was the smallest coin in circulation in Roman occupied Palestine.
 - ii. Only worth 1/8 of a cent.
 - iii. It was probably both humbling and embarrassing as she heard the clang in the plate.

- e. Jesus immediately stopped everything... called his disciples to look. (v.43)
- f. This unnamed woman gave her livelihood (v.44)
 - i. Livelihood (bios #979): life, living, that by which life is sustained.
 - ii. This type of giving moved the heart of Jesus and caused him to stop and take notice.

4. Back to the Macedonians:
 - a. Much like this widow's giving caused Jesus to stop and take notice, the Macedonian's giving caused Paul to stop and take notice.

E. Grace Empowers A Sacrificial Lifestyle (v.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. 8:5)

- 1. Themselves to the Lord, then to us.
 - a. The Macedonians gave a part of their very lives.
 - b. Their giving cost them something.
 - i. It was a true sacrifice... encased in love.
 - c. Their giving was very similar to giving a kidney away to someone you don't even know.
 - i. You can give away one kidney and still function, but you are gonna forever remember that it's gone.
 - ii. And the person that receives the kidney is forever going to be impacted (knowing that you gave of your very livelihood).
 - iii. You gave out of genuine love.
 - d. The Macedonians giving was a giving of their very livelihood.
- 2. Repeat: They gave themselves first to the Lord. Then to us.

F. Macedonians Mentioned with Motive in Mind: (v.6-8)

"So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. 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. As you abound (grow) in your... grow you in this grace also (v.7)
 - a. Faith
 - b. Speech
 - c. Knowledge
 - d. Diligence
 - e. Love

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

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

- A. Test the sincerity of your love by measuring it according to the giving of others: The Macedonians. (v. 8)
 1. The Corinthian’s heart toward giving was so scarred that Paul wouldn’t even receive travel and accommodations from them (2 Cor. 11:8-9).
 - a. 2 Cor. 11:8: “*I robbed other churches taking wages from them to minister to you.*”
 - b. If I lacked anything (in ministering to you), brothers came all the way from Macedonia to supply.
- B. Let me provoke you by another display of grace (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. 8:9)

1. Jesus was rich, yet became poor for you.
 - a. Out of His poverty, He sowed into us that we might become rich.
2. The type of giving that pleases God the Father, He displayed in His Son: Jesus.

- a. As a measuring stick that measures the type of giving that would move the heart of the Father, I present to you Jesus.
- b. He not only gave up the comforts of His heavenly throne.
 - i. He took on the poverty of walking around as a rejected rabbi with no salary and no earthly home to lay his head.
 - ii. But He gave his very life.
 - iii. Taking on all of our sin, all of our reproaches, all of our shame.
- c. And then He gave us His righteous standing before the Father. He gave a gift that we could never repay.
- d. That's love.

3. Jesus' giving on the cross is not only the standard, but the source of grace-filled giving.

- a. The Father doesn't ask us to try to measure up to His giving (in our own power).
- b. Instead, he asks us to enjoy His grace on our hearts and allow Him to do in (us) broken vessels, what we could never do in our best efforts.
- c. That's the type of giving that moves His heart.

4. There is a type of giving that will move the heart of God.

- a. This selfless generosity will also move the heart of onlookers, and it's not based on our abundance.
- b. As recipients of the grace of God, we have the liberty to give as an act of worship... not obligation.
- c. We have the privilege of giving in a way that communicates the grace of God to those who don't comprehend His grace and haven't yet experienced it.

5. I believe that God wants to use us to stop outsiders in their tracks and point to a visible display of love and adoration that is undeniable.

- a. With the evidence coming from the unlikeliest of all places: Our giving.
- b. As a result of the grace of God in our lives (not out of compulsion), we gladly give our livelihood.