

**II CORINTHIANS 8:9 and 9:6-8**  
**GIVING GENEROUSLY, NOT GRUDGINGLY**

**Chapter 8** <sup>9</sup> *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.*

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**Chapter 9** <sup>6</sup> *But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.* <sup>7</sup> *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.* <sup>8</sup> *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.*

What is the meaning of the word “minister”? The word “minister” does not mean “speaker,” or “the one with a black gown,” or “boss of the church.” The word “minister” means “servant.” The minister serves God and the congregation. And next: What does the word “saint” mean? “An outwardly very good person?” “A strong believer now in heaven?” No. A “saint” is one whom the Holy Ghost “sanctifies”; that is, brings to faith in Jesus / makes holy through Christ’s blood. Every believer is a saint, sins are washed away in Jesus. Paul wrote, *To all the “saints” in Christ Jesus, who are in Philippi* (Philippians 1:1)—to all “believers” in Jesus who are in Philippi.

The text today is from Paul’s second letter to the “saints” in Corinth, Greece. In chapters 8-9, he talks about “ministering to the saints.” He is writing about a special gift being gathered in Macedonia and Greece (neighboring countries) for the needy saints in Jerusalem. In Romans regarding the same matter, *Now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia [southern Greece] to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem* (Romans 15:25-26). In other words, he would “serve” the needs of the “believers” in Jerusalem.

Gathering funds for this cause, even though it was for fellow believers in Jesus who were in need, was likely no easier for him than gathering funds for any special “cause” today. Even churches gather funds. St. Luke’s does so for preaching the Gospel here in Lemmon and vicinity, for training more pastors and teachers at ILC in Eau Claire, for funding missionaries overseas. In Paul’s case we don’t know what triggered the need in Jerusalem—drought? sickness? persecution? no jobs?

At any rate, how would Paul motivate Gentile Christians at Corinth of Greece, to help with the gift to those in need in Jerusalem? If we were reading the entirety of chapters 8-9 this morning, we would see that the gift had actually been planned a year earlier when Paul was at Corinth the first time. Then the Corinthians, being filled with joy to know that they too had forgiveness and resurrection in the crucified and risen Jesus, were very enthused to help the needy believers in Jerusalem. They promised a very large gift. However, now as Paul was returning, a year later with other faithful and trusted men to take this gift from Macedonia and Corinth safely to Jerusalem, Paul had learned that the Corinthians were having second thoughts about being so generous.

Paul, however, was not “just after their money.” If so, then he could have motivated them by compulsion, pressure, guilt—“You better keep your promise!” (although He did speak of their original joy and their first intentions). Or he also could have motivated them with a smooth pitch—“You part with some money, and you will receive special love and blessings from God! A good deal!” He was not concerned for the biggest “dollar” amount. He was concerned for their hearts and faith in Jesus the Savior, as they helped with the needs of those in Jerusalem.

<sup>9</sup> *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.* He pointed them to the Square One. Christ, the glorious Son of God, came to this earth with love—to give the most blessed gift. He came in “grace”; that is, undeserved love, a pure gift, to save. He was “rich!” He owned and owns all things. If we were comparing His status to serving coffee, we couldn’t give Him one drop more. His cup, by his own doing, was as full as it could be. There was nothing more to give Him. He was rich! Yet He came down here, humbly walked and lived, truly man—yet truly God. He became “poor”—“crouched” as a beggar before the onslaught of His enemies. He gave up even His life for us. In His beggarly-ness, you, the real beggar in rags of sin, are given full wealth and riches—full forgiveness for every sin against God, full life after the defeat of death, fullness resurrection from the grave, and full eternity in heaven. He did it *“for your sakes”* freely, no matter who or what you are. It is this Savior who desires that you *“love one another as I have loved you* (John 15:12). Paul took the Corinthian saints/believers back to Square One. Why wouldn’t you want to serve willingly and generously in this need? You are free in Jesus!

In the words between the verses of our text, Paul adds: *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; for I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened (2 Corinthians 8:12-13).* He wants their hearts to give generously, definitely not on an emotional “high” giving more than they were able. Nor was he looking to burden them so that others could be on “Easy Street.” Paul was looking for their hearts to respond to God’s love to them—saved in Jesus! ----- Are there needs in people’s lives around you? Are there needs in Christian people’s lives around you? Let the grace of God, extended to you in Jesus, lead you willingly to help provide for those in need. It’s all too easy to be stingy and think, “What’s the least amount I can get by with giving?”—but where is the love in that?

*But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.* It’s a fact, isn’t it? A farmer can’t get a bumper crop if he plants only the seed, so that he can keep the rest. A farmer or gardener stingy in the planting will save money on the front end, but will fall short at the harvest end. Paul tells the Corinthians, that if they want to be stingy in helping the poor saints in Jerusalem, it means that their relationship with Jesus is not in good order. When a business man cuts corners with his customers, his business will not prosper. He is really not concerned about his business. If a person is worried about getting the most for self, he will end up with less. Not so with the generous gift of the heart. The Bible says, *Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days (Ecclesiastes 11:1).* Even though giving bread away seems like throwing bread on the river, which is then carried away never to be seen again, that is not the case. The giver does not come up short. God returns that bread to him in His own way. Jesus said, *Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will [it] be put into your bosom. 6:38).* If one gives a bushel of wheat, for example, to help another, he will receive it back from the Lord in this-way-or-that in abundant measure—kernels pressed down to get as many in the bushel as possible, kernels shaken together to get them to align as tight and close as possible, kernels heaped up running over! Forget about getting shorted. When you shovel out of your bin, God shovels in; and God uses a bigger shovel.

Willing generosity cannot be learned too young. Parents, teach your children to be willing to help and to be generous with their help—not necessarily just financially, but with time, with labor, etc. Show them in your attitude and in your actions toward those in need. Many years ago I heard a fellow pastor say, “Generous giving is more easily caught than taught.” In other words, people can’t book-learn generosity. One of my uncles was not wealthy when he and his bride were married. He was 20 and she was 18. However, he was not wasteful of money. Some even called him “tight.” The story is when he was in high school he would ask a friend for a dime, so he didn’t have to break a quarter. Well, maybe that was all in fun. At any rate, as I grew up, I plainly saw that he was always very generous. It left an impression that I have never forgotten. His generosity-in-action was “caught.” ----- The Lord has been generous to you. He, who was rich, yet became poor for sinner, to blesses you with the richness of full forgiveness each day, a full supply of daily bread for each day, a full supply of resurrection from the grave on the last day, and a full supply of eternal life in heaven.

*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.* Whether it’s a gift to a certain good cause—and there are many—or a gift to disaster victims, or a gift to a needy neighbor, friend, or relative; give from the heart. No one can dictate to you what amounts you must give. And do not give, thinking you must. When your old Adam makes you feel like you’re forced to give, straighten him out. Be a cheerful giver. The word Greek word for “cheerful” is “hilarion,” the word from which we get hilarious. God loves a very happy giver.

*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always [all-ways] having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.* Do you notice how many times the word all or every is used? FIVE! That shows the extent to which your Father in Christ cares for you. In ALL respects! Do not be reluctant to “minister to His saints”!

Jesus’ words: *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matthew 6:19-21). Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.) For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Matthew 6:31-34 KJV).*

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---