

The Generosity of Grace – Part 2

Introduction and Review

- ❑ Paul used the example of small, poor, suffering churches to motivate a large & wealthy church in giving (2Co. 8:1-7).
- ❑ Because of grace, affliction resulted in abundance of joy; joy and poverty resulted in financial generosity (v. 1-4).
- ❑ These poor believers first surrendered themselves in obedience to God & then to church leaders before giving in faith (v. 5).
- ❑ The Corinthian church is exhorted to excel in everything, which includes generous giving like the Macedonian churches (v. 6-7).
- ❑ Excellence for Christ in everything is to be the goal for every Christian.

I. Giving Proves Genuine Love (v. 8-9)

A. Generosity is not commanded (v. 8)

Paul urges, exhorts & persuades the Corinthian Christians to give generously, but he does not command them. True generosity must come from the heart as a result of love for God first & then love for people (Mt. 22:37-39). True generosity must not & cannot be commanded by church leaders. It is a work of grace in each believer's heart!

B. Christ is our example of generosity (v. 9)

Christ is both our model & motivation for giving generously from a heart of love. The poverty of Jesus in this life was much more than financial, it was spiritual (Phil. 2:6-8). He did it all willingly out of love for us that we might "know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"! All believers become rich spiritually because of His spiritual poverty & generosity!

II. Giving Benefits the Giver (v. 10-15)

A. Giving that is acceptable to God (v. 10-12)

The Corinthian Christians began to give generously & then they stopped. God had given them both the desire & ability to give generously by grace (v. 10). The grace of God was still available for them to generously support the gospel work of God's people (v. 11). God is pleased when believers give generously based on convictions & circumstances in each person's life (v. 12). This benefits the giver: honors

God (v. 10), brings joy & fulfillment in finishing the work of God (v. 11) and gives a clear conscience in pleasing God (v. 12).

B. Giving that supplies needs (v. 13-15)

Believers may misunderstand the purpose of giving financially to help others – "For I do not mean". Out of a desire for fairness or equality, believers should give generously to help those who do not have the necessities of life (v. 13-14). Grace gives the desire for fairness & reciprocity. Example: God feeding Israel in wilderness (v. 15; Ex. 16:1ff). Believers must learn to see other believers as equal in value to God & worthy of help to meet their needs. Paul is not saying that financially stable believers become unwise & overly zealous in attempts to help other believers (v. 13).

ILL: I had a neighbor whose company needed to cut expenses & layoff an employee. My neighbor volunteered to give up a day or two of work to save a fellow employee who had a family & needs just like him. They both received less, but had all their needs met.

APPL: The same is true in the kingdom of God; we should give generously so that we can help others who do not have the necessities of life (especially brothers & sisters in Christ).

CONCLUSION

Therefore my brothers & sisters will you accept the fact that giving generously proves that you have genuine love for Christ & His people? Will you accept the fact that giving generously benefits the one who gives as well as the one who receives? Are you consistent in your giving or do you start & stop like the Corinthian church members? Is God pleased with the amount & the way you give? Do you have a clear conscience & peace with God about your giving? Do you see all believers as equally valuable to God & worthy of your financial support? I certainly hope you will honestly answer these questions before Christ & let the Spirit of God freely search your heart now. Jesus Christ is here to set you free from any fears or worries you might have about money; free from the deception & confusion about money. Prove the genuineness of your love for Christ today. Give Him complete Lordship over your money & He will make you a generous giver by grace!

And if you are not a Christian, you must prove your love for Christ too. God has already proved His love for you (Jn. 3:16). Now how will you respond to His love? If want to experience & receive this love from God you must come to Jesus in faith first; you must believe in Jesus...

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