

The Grace of Giving

II Corinthians 8:1-24

3/10/02

Intro

- Prayer and Soup Dinner Fellowship.
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In this chapter, Paul shifts direction as he brings up a matter that had been started a year before.

Paul was deeply concerned for the church back in Jerusalem. They had been under great persecution and terrible financial burden. On his third missionary journey, Paul had started collecting a large financial gift for those in Jerusalem, and he had asked the churches he had started to help.

The church in Corinth was actually one of the first to not only start doing it, but they were one of the first to desire to do it. Somehow they lost their zeal.

Paul wants to not only remind them of the need in Jerusalem, but also to give them great insights into the heart of God in the grace of giving.

These verses give us insights into God's heart in the grace of giving.

Paul begins by telling them about the church in Macedonia, in northern Greece.

I. First, give *yourself* to the Lord.

Vs 4 **A.** They begged with much entreaty to support the saints.

- No wonder Paul used them as an example of having a right heart before the Lord.

Illus – the woman who gave her guitar and rug she slept on, absolutely insisted on having the gift be accepted.

Illus- When people gave at the mission's conference for the churches in Africa, there was an excitement to be part of what God is doing there.

B. But first, they gave themselves to the Lord.

Illus – There was new believer at a church in Africa who when the offering plate was presented asked for it to be lower, lower, still lower...

- This is that being yoked together with Christ.
- “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me..” Gal 2:20.

C. There is great joy in giving.

- “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” is right.
- Many people receive, but in is point of maturity in Christ to know the joy of giving.

II. It's about the sincerity of love.

Vs 8

A. Notice that loves comes first.

- Notice that Paul wasn't commanding them.

Illus – Ladies, what if you were engaged to a man who was wealthy and when he asked for your hand in marriage he wanted to give you a token of your love, so he...

B. Then comes the demonstration of that love.

- Where your treasure is, there your heart is also.
- Some people only give opinions.

III. If we only knew the heart of Christ.

Vs 9

A. Though He was rich, He became poor.

Illus- Jesus was born in a borrowed cradle (a manger), He preached from a borrowed boat, He rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey, He ate the last supper in a borrowed upper-room, and He was buried in a borrowed grave.

Illus – Jesus said, “Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.”

- So that we might become rich.
 - But He was speaking of spiritual riches in Christ.
- B. Out of love for Jesus, we should do the same.

IV. Finish Doing It.

Vs 11

A. There is a real danger for those who hear the Word.

- It would be easy to believe that agreeing with God’s Word is the same as doing it.

B. Happy is the one who does the will of God.

- To finish what we start shows the heart of a servant.
- This is a very important area in the life of every believer.

Illus – Finishing my upright grand piano.

Illus- Nike is right, “Just Do It.”

Conclusion

What has God asked you to do that you haven’t done? It is a great mark of love, to not only start well, but to finish well.