

Giving Thanks: The Grace of Giving

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

December 1, 2019

Our giving should be motivated by the grace of God which we have received.

1. Our giving is motivated by grace when we give in spite of our circumstances (1-2).
 - a. The Macedonian churches, Primarily those from Philippi, were very, very poor.
 - i. They were from the Northern portion of Greece.
 - ii. They were struggling economically.
 1. They were experiencing “a great trial of affliction” (2).
 2. They were experiencing “deep poverty” (2)
 - b. In contrast, the Corinthian churches were very wealthy.
 - i. The poorest among them were wealthy compared to those in Philippi.
 - ii. We are like the Corinthians in that the poorest among us is more wealthy than most of the world.
 - c. Notice that God is the Focus of this passage, not the Macedonians.
 - i. The focus in these three chapters is on God and His grace (1).
 - ii. The Macedonians reflected the grace of God which they had just experienced just a few months prior.
 1. Paul received the Macedonian call, “Come over...and help us” (Acts 16:9).
 2. Now the Macedonians were consumed with helping the Jews in Judea!
 - d. Application: When you’ve experienced the grace of God in your life, you will not use difficult circumstances as an excuse for not giving.
2. Our giving is motivated by grace when we give enthusiastically (3-4).
 - a. They gave according to their ability – “For to their power” (3a).
 - i. As our income goes up our giving should go up.
 - ii. Illus: The poor give more than the wealthy because they know what it’s like to be in need.
 - iii. The OT Principle of the Tithe and the New Testament Principle of the Portion.
 1. If generosity is proportional, let’s figure out that portion!
 2. I start with the OT Principle as a baseline for my giving.
 3. Start with a portion that is given to God off the top!
 - b. They gave sacrificially (3b-4).
 - i. This contradicts the giving from the leftovers.
 - ii. We make giving to the Lord first, and make sacrifices in other areas when there is a shortfall.
 - iii. They begged Paul to take their sacrificial gift (4a).
 - iv. They wanted to enjoy the fellowship that comes from mutual sacrifice and commitment (4b).
 - c. Application: Grace not only frees us from our sins, but it frees us from ourselves. The grace of God will open your heart and your hand.
3. Our giving is motivated by grace when we give as Jesus gave (5-9).
 - a. They first gave themselves just as Christ gave Himself for us (5-6).
 - i. Christ gave Himself for us. Galatians 1:3-4 “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:”
 - ii. Christ died for us so we would live for Him. 2 Cor. 5:15 “And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”
 - b. Their giving was motivated by love, just as Christ was motivated by love (6-8; Romans 5:8).
 - i. The Corinthian church was a very gifted church (1 Cor. 1:4-5), but they weren’t mature in being channels of God’s grace (6-7).
 1. We must always remember that the ministry of our spiritual gifts is a substitute for generous giving.
 2. If you are wonderfully gifted by God to serve, you should want to give even more!

- ii. Their sincerity was in jeopardy (8).
 - 1. They made a promise that they had forgotten for over a year.
 - c. They gave sacrificially, just as Christ gave Himself sacrificially for us (9).
 - i. Jesus gave up the riches of heaven to be born in a manger as the son of poor parents.
 - ii. Jesus became poor, offering Himself on the cross, so that we might be rich, co-heirs with Him!
 - d. Application: How can we who have received the grace of God made possible by the extreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ, refuse to give sacrificially to God and others?
- 4. Our giving is motivated by grace when we give willingly (10-12).
 - a. Grace giving must come from a willing heart.
 - b. Once we've made a commitment to give, we must follow through with it.
 - c. Application: When we give willingly as God has prospered us and as we have promised, we are practicing grace giving.
 - d. Application: If you have promised God that you would tithe this year but you've been inconsistent, request a copy of your giving statement before and ask God for the grace to "catch up" before year end. You can get a copy of your giving statement by emailing Pam Boe (pbsbc2018@gmail.com).
 - e. Application: If you have trouble remembering to tithe, you can set up automatic recurring gifts by going to our website (shorewoodbaptist.com/give).
- 5. Our giving is motivated by grace when we give by faith (13-15)
 - a. The Gentiles were enriched spiritually by the Jews, so the Jews should be enriched materially by the Gentiles.
 - i. Paul was not intending to burden the Corinthians (13).
 - ii. Paul urged the Corinthians to view their abundance as an opportunity to meet a great need (14-15).
 - b. No matter how much manna the Jews gathered each day, they always had what they needed.
 - i. Those who tried to hoard the manna discovered that it would decay and smell (Exodus 16:20).
 - ii. The lesson was clear: gather what you need, share what you can, and don't try to hoard God's blessings, and God will see to it that you will not be in need.
 - c. Grace giving is a matter of faith: we obey God and believe that He will meet our needs as we help to meet the needs of others.
 - d. Even saving should be viewed as an opportunity to expand our ability to give rather than an object of our trust (James 5:1-5).
 - e. Application: Giving by faith helps us to view our possessions as vehicles for serving God and others.

Conclusion:

1. Are you using your circumstances as an excuse to give less than you should?
2. What is your attitude when you give?
3. Would you consider your giving to be sacrificial, or are you giving to God from what you have left over?
4. Have you made a commitment to give, but you haven't followed through with it?
5. Does your current level of giving demand faith?