

# Giving Faithfully

Believers show trust in God by using their resources to meet the needs of others.



The Transformation for Adult LifeGroups

2 CORINTHIANS 9:1-15

March 17, 2019/ March 20, 2019

## TODAY'S TEXT

**Text: 2 CORINTHIANS 9:1-15**

*There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. <sup>2</sup> For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. <sup>3</sup> But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. <sup>4</sup> For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. <sup>5</sup> So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. <sup>6</sup> Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup> Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. <sup>9</sup> As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever." <sup>10</sup> Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. <sup>11</sup> You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. <sup>12</sup> This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. <sup>13</sup> Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. <sup>14</sup> And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. <sup>15</sup> Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*

## FIRST THOUGHTS

St. Patrick was generous with his very life, using all the resources at his disposal to share Christ with a lost country, despite the way they had treated him. Today as we look at what Paul has to say about giving faithfully with our money, we can learn a lot from the example of St. Patrick and the selfless life he lived.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

God uses money to expose the condition of our hearts. Jesus made statements like, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21) and "you cannot serve both God and money" (Matt. 6:24). Paul said, "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). Christians should view money through a different lens. Rather than being greedy and grabbing all we can get, we should be generous and give to others in need.

To understand this week's Bible passage, it is important to recall the historical background. The Jerusalem church faced significant challenges, including heavy financial burdens for ministry among the poor. The believers in the Jerusalem church did their part to share and support each other financially (Acts 2:44-45), yet more was needed. A famine hit Judea that added to the need, and churches sent gifts to the Jerusalem believers by way of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:30).

When Paul first met James, Peter, and John in Jerusalem, they asked him to "remember the poor." Paul "eager to do" so (Gal. 2:10). Wherever he went, he levied his apostolic influence to raise money in support of the needy saints in Jerusalem. Why? Because Gentile believers were indebted to the Jerusalem church, the epicenter from which the gospel spread into the world. Paul said to the Romans, "For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings" (Rom. 15:27).

In 1 Corinthians, Paul encouraged the Corinthian believers to take up a collection for the believers in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1). He wanted this to be ready when he came (1 Cor. 16:2). Apparently, however, tensions between the Corinthians and Paul, as well as the negative influence of the false teachers, hindered the collection and halted giving. So Paul reengaged the issue, bragging on the Macedonian churches for their generosity and calling the Corinthians to recommit themselves to giving to this need (2 Cor. 8:1-15).

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### CONFIDENCE EXPRESSED

> Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-5

- What did Paul understand about the Corinthian believers' attitude toward giving? How may this attitude be expressed today?

- How might we be held accountable for giving today?

## BENEFITS FOUND

### > Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

- How are giving and financial planning related?
- What are the benefits of giving willingly?
- You have probably heard the phrase “You can’t out-give God.” Or “Where God guides, He provides.” Does anyone have a story to share about a time you did not know how you were going to make something happen and God provided? Perhaps through a job loss or something He called you to do that seemed impossible to pay for?
- What blessings might the one giving receive?
- How does generosity promote further generosity?

## ADORATION GAINED

### > Read 2 Corinthians 9:12-15

- How does giving reflect God’s grace and honor Him?
- How does our generosity as a church or as Christ-follower impact our witness?

## SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

The truth is most people are either spenders or savers. If you are always putting money in the bank, sticking to a household budget, buying everything on sale, or spending a lot of time planning for the future, then you are exhibiting habits of a saver. But if you never have enough money in the bank, buy what you need or want without any regard for price, order whatever you want in a restaurant, rarely construct your household budget, and believe life is for here and now, then you are a spender. Spenders are also typically more generous.

Both a saver and a spender can be givers. If you are married, you probably married the opposite of what you are. There are strengths and weaknesses to both. It is important to communicate and challenge each other to save and to give. Ask yourselves what are some habits of a generous person? A generous couple? A generous family? What changes can we make to sow the seeds of generosity? What did or does your family do to encourage generosity?

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- What should be our attitude toward giving? How does our giving impact the needs of people both inside and outside of the church?

**Personal Challenge:** Consider whether you give your tithes and offerings grudgingly or joyfully. Understand that God looks at the attitude of your heart and not the amount you give.

## PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; 13:2-8
- How did the thorn in Paul’s flesh impact his life?
- How has God used a difficulty in your life for His greater purpose?

## READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

**17th** – Deuteronomy 32-34; 1 Corinthians 2 | **18th** – Joshua 1-2; Psalm 37; 1 Corinthians 3 | **19th** – Joshua 3-6; 1 Corinthians 4 | **20th** – Joshua 7-8; Psalm 69; 1 Corinthians 5 | **21st** – Joshua 9-11; 1 Corinthians 6 | **22nd** – Joshua 12-14; 1 Corinthians 7 | **23rd** – Joshua 15-17; 1 Corinthians 8