

## **SERMON NOTES ON 2 CORINTHIANS 9:1-6 and 8:1-15**

### Introducing The Circumstances

While 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 specifically deal with Paul's letter to the Corinthians about a particular collection for the saints in Jerusalem, it also provides the richest and most detailed model of Christian giving.

At the time Paul wrote this letter, the people in Jerusalem and Judea were suffering under arid, near-famine conditions due to a prolonged drought. Poverty and hunger were especially severe among the believers, because both the Jews and the Romans ostracized the Christians. That rejection came with loss of jobs, influence, opportunities and friendships. That situation prompted Paul to solicit for help from Gentile churches to the churches in Judea and Jerusalem.

Paul urged the Corinthian church to fulfil their pledge (2 Corinthians 9:1–6). It's as though he is saying, "Don't put me to shame. Ensure that what you promised is ready when my emissaries come along, because I already boasted to the Macedonians about your willingness to give."

Paul advances **seven** arguments or principles in 2 Corinth. 8 to exhort the Corinthians and us about generous giving.

**1. Verse 1** The first principle Paul wants his readers to note is that **GENEROUS GIVING IS AN ACTIVITY OF GRACE. (God's Riches At Christ's Expense)**

Generosity is a thermometer of our understanding and appreciation of God's grace. You are giving, not because you want something back but as an expression of what you have received. See Deut. 8:18 and 1Corinth. 4:7,

**2. Verses 2-3. GIVING GENEROUSLY IS A SACRIFICIAL ACT.** The Christians in Macedonia gave in spite of their difficult circumstances, similar to that of the Jerusalem Christians. They also gave joyfully. See the account of the widow's giving in Luke 21:1-4.

**3. Verse 4. GENEROSITY IS VOLITIONAL.** These Christians gave of their own accord, meaning they did so voluntarily. They begged to be able to take part in the relief of the Jerusalem Christians and their giving was beyond what Paul and Titus expected (8:5).

**4. Verse 5. GENEROUS GIVING FOLLOWS PERSONAL DEDICATION.** When we grasp the truth that our lives are not our own, then we will also see that our wealth and our possessions are not our own, we are stewards.

**5. Verses 7 and 8. GIVING OR GENEROSITY SHOWS OUR LOVE FOR GOD** Love is shown through our actions. Our generosity to others shows our love for God.

**6. Verse 9. IMITATE THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS.** Though rich in all things, He became poor for our sake so that we can inherit the riches of God through his death and resurrection. As followers of Jesus Christ who bear his image, as our hearts are opened, so should our wallets.

**7. Verses 10-15 YOU HAVE IN ABUNDANCE SO THAT YOU CAN GIVE.**

**Five guidelines emerge here:** (1) Your attitude, willingness to give cheerfully is more important than the amount you give. (2) fulfil your pledge. (3) You should give because of your love for Christ, not for anything you can get out of your action. (4) Give from what you have. We do not need to go into debt to give. (5) The equality principle (verses 13-15) helps us decide which needs require our immediate attention.

## **CHALLENGE**

Salvation is freely given and received. You can't purchase it. Christ did that for you on the cross when He died in your place. However, if you are the recipient of His grace and want to please Him, respond by being generous in your giving.

We are stewards of God's mercies, time, money, talents, you name it. Is our stewardship of God's earthly gifts **proving** worthy of His trust?

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

**Opener.** With what are you generous: Your money, Time, Talents, Toys? Why?

- If you were to evaluate your zeal for God in the light of your bank account, what grade would you give yourself from 1-5, 5 being the highest?
- What from Jesus' example ([2 Corinth 8:9](#)) prompts you to be generous with your money, time and energy? How can the equality principle (verses 13-15) help you decide which needs require your immediate attention?