

Series: 2 Corinthians
Title: Character, Encouragement and Motive of Giving
Text: 2 Corinthians 8: 6-11
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The Spirit of God has moved Paul to deal with the subject of the grace of giving. “Giving” is called “grace” in this chapter because it is of the grace of God. In the first 5 verse, we saw the source is the grace of God. The spirit God gives is joyful, generous and willing. And the order in which God works this in his child is to make us first, give ourselves to Christ in faith—then to our brethren.

Today our subject and outline is “The Character, Encouragement and Motive of Giving.”

After Paul told the church at Corinth how greatly God worked this grace in the churches in Macedonia to bring them to give so abundantly for the saints at Jerusalem, he said:

2 Corinthians 8: 6: Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. 7: Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also 8: I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love 9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 10: And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward [willing] a year ago. 11: Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have.

Proposition: The grace of giving is worked in us by the grace of God.

THE CHARACTER OF GIVING

2 CORINTHIANS 8: 7: Therefore, as ye abound in every *thing*, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also...

He speaks of giving as the crowning gift of the believer’s character. By irresistible grace, God makes his people abound in the gifts he gives us—*ye abound in every thing*. All these graces given by God makes up a believer’s character—

Faith—the grace of faith is given only to God’s elect. Faith is given by God’s grace and the work of his Spirit. It has Christ for its object. And true faith always works by love. If faith is not benevolent to the poor it is not true faith.

Utterance—God gives the gift speaking and explaining the word of God with clarity. But if this gift is not used to minister to those poor in spirit it is not the true gift, it is a counterfeit.

Knowledge—the believer is given a true spiritual knowledge of our triune God in Christ. We are given knowledge of the truth of the Gospel: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, preservation of the saints—in the knowledge of Christ our All. But if a man strays from the gospel, it is like giving chaff to starving man when you have a barn full of corn.

All diligence—God makes his preacher diligent to study and preach the Gospel. He makes his people diligent to hear the word, diligent to search the scriptures. He makes us diligent to observe his ordinances, diligent to

assist one another. But if we possess what our brother needs and are not diligent to give, the rest of this diligence is meaningless.

and in your love to us—God gifts his people with loving hearts toward Christ and toward one another.

1 John 3:17: But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

So having all those other graces, the apostle exhorts them to—*see that ye abound in this grace also*. Brethren, how will these other graces be justified as the real thing except by the exercise of taking care of poor and needy brethren by giving the gospel of Christ, giving our time, giving bodily service and giving our money and possessions.

Paul's argument in verses 10-11 is that their character stands in jeopardy if they do not actually give their gift—*And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient [needful and profitable] for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward [willing] a year ago. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have*.

In order to save their own creditability, it was expedient for them to finish what they had begun a year ago. Otherwise, Paul's boasting of them would be in vain. They would expose themselves to contempt and disgrace. So it was not only proper that they should perform the doing of this, but to do it willingly, abundantly and with much cheerfulness. Their character was at stake because the believer's character is that he is a cheerful giver.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO GIVING

2 Corinthians 8: 8: I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love...10: And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you,...

The encouragement which our fellow brethren give us to abound in the grace of giving is *not by commandment*—it is not by law. Believers are not under the law to tithe. Tithe is a tax by law. Believers do not tithe. Believers give willingly because they want to.

2 Corinthians 9: 7: Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Brethren, if our heart in giving or any other of these graces is that we *have* to do it, then it ceases to be grace. It is law. We are doing it from a legal motive. Believers do everything because God has given us the privilege so that we *get* to do it. I do not *have* to preach; I *get* to preach. We do not *have* to hear the gospel preached; we *get* to hear the gospel preached. We do not *have* to give, we *get* to give by God so graciously giving to us.

THE MOTIVE OF GIVING

2 CORINTHIANS 8: I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. 9: For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

The two motives given are: *by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love*—both of these are summed up in love. The believer's motive is love. The love of Christ constraineth us.

By occasion of the forwardness of others—Paul was motivated by the love of the Macedonians who proved their love by cheerfully giving so bountifully to saints at Jerusalem even though they were in such deep poverty.

Everything we do—whether stingy or benevolent—will set an example for our brethren. Believers should never be in competition nor should we sound a trumpet concerning our works. But we are exhorted to provoke our brethren to love by good works.

Hebrews 10:24: And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

So he says not only should we be motivated by the example of others but we should also “*prove the sincerity of our love.*” Our motive is not law but love: to God, to Christ, to his ministers, and to the saints, particularly the poor saints. By providing for the saints our love will be proven to be true, genuine, love which God creates in the heart in the new birth. So our motive is love: love manifest by the forwardness (willingness) of brethren by which it proves the sincerity of our love.

When speaking of willing love, he gives us the greatest example, the very Love of love—“*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” The motive of a believer being gracious toward a brother is the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ toward us--“*that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*”

He was rich—the Richest—the Creator, the Owner of all the world and all things in the world. The richest man that ever lived might make his boast of what he owned. But he could not say what Christ could say, “*Behold, all souls are mine!*”

Psalm 50: 10: For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills. 11: I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine. 12: If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

How did Christ manifest his love? How did he set an example for us to follow? *Yet for your sake he became poor.* He willingly, cheerfully, liberally, abundantly became the poorest out of love for God and his brethren! The One who made woman was made of a woman. God who owns all things had not where to lay his head. He who feeds all living things, said, “I thirst.”

But poorest of all, the Holy One of Israel *gave, gave, gave* his own body to bear our sins. When Adam saw his bride had broken God’s commandment, in his love for her, he plunged himself into sin. Adam did that in disobedience to God. Christ did it in obedience to God. The only begotten of the Father, the one who from eternity was daily his delight, suffered under the wrath of God as a substitute for sinners. At last, he gave the one remaining thing he had left to give—his life!

When Christ perceived that his brethren wondered who should be the greatest in the kingdom of God. He set a little child in their midst:

Luke 9: 48: And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

Who was least among us? Who is the greatest in glory? “*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*” (Joh 15:13) There is no greater love than Christ’s. The greatest proof of love for God and for his brethren was manifest by Christ making himself the least.

Now, we are made rich through his poverty. Can you put a price on being made the righteousness of God in Christ! What is the value of being made pure even as he is pure! Who can estimate the riches of knowing that “*as he is, so are we in this world?*” What priceless treasure to hear God say “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.*” How much is it worth to you, sinner, to hear God say, “I,

even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” (Isa 43:25)

Oh, the unsearchable riches of Christ! Riches he has freely given us by freely giving himself for us. Riches that cost us nothing because they cost Christ everything. When we survey our possessions, our profitable investments, do we realize that we owe it all to our Lord Jesus? Not only because he alone gave it to us but because he who was rich became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich.”

I don’t want to die with rusted and cankered money bearing witness that I really did not believe Christ or appreciate his great poverty for his people. Many a wealthy professing believer has made shipwreck of his faith, character, and usefulness, by being swept away by the irresistible force of unsanctified riches. *"Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world."* Oh! beware of the world!

Mark 4:19 And the cares of this world, and **the deceitfulness of riches**, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

May God make us follow Christ’s steps who emptied himself of all riches and lived in this earth in dependent poverty.

“Poverty” is a thing that frightens us. Have you ever considered that poverty saved you and me? How so? By emptying himself of all riches, Christ lived and died in righteousness and holiness trusting the Heavenly Father who promised to supply all his needs. Did he? Yes, and the need of all his elect too!

Lord, make us live a life of child-like dependence upon you. Make us cast all our care on you, knowing my heavenly Father is constantly thinking upon me and caring for me for the sake of Christ!

The Spirit of God is teaching us here that Christian liberality springs spontaneously from a conscious possession of Christ’s riches. His love for us is our constraining motive in everything we do. He would have us remember that the same mighty act of stooping love, which is the foundation of all our hope, is to be the pattern for all our conduct.

If we constantly think on the depths to which Christ sank to make us rich, it will mortify our selfish, stingy, flesh! When that old man begins to rise up, just say to yourself, *“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.”*

Brethren, be submissive to God's will. Lay-up treasures in heaven by living like Christ is your only true treasure! *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also!*

Amen!