

10.6.24 / Giving with the heart of Jesus / 2 Corinthians 8.1-15

Funny about money

- *NBA Athlete \$1 -60 mil*
- *First year teacher \$43 K*
- *Bread & Specialty drink*

"We're most like God when we're giving. Gaze upon Christ long enough and you'll become more of a giver. Give long enough and you'll become more like Christ."

Randy Alcorn – *The Treasure Principle*

Really? Is God a gift giver? Generous?

Central theme from 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 is found in verse 9:

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Rich – Part of Trinity

- He had everything, created the world for us
- Light, water, land, vegetation (pleasing to eye & good for food)
- Animals, human image bearers, human companionship, gave us authority & purpose & guidance.

His riches unquantifiable! (*cost of trees, taxation or ecosystem*)

Became poor – Phil 2:5-11 – incarnation & death: *baby, seperation*

We might become rich – From sinful nature, separated from God →

- Salvation through faith in Son Jn 3:16
- Spirit (Jn 14:26, Eph 1:13-14)
- Hope (Is 65:17)
- Every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3)

The generosity of God is unfathomable! That's why Randy Alcorn says, *we are most like God when we are giving*.

In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul addresses generosity in three different churches.

Macedonians

V1-2 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

² In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

Is that amazing or what!? Trial / joy / poverty – compared to Christians in Jerusalem / generosity

V 3-4 *Privilege of sharing*

³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the **privilege of sharing** in this service to the Lord's people.

V 5

⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all **to the Lord**, and then by the will of God also to us.

Their act of generosity was evidence of their commitment **to Jesus** and to the mission that He had given Paul and his companions.

Three principles:

1. **Generosity amidst trial** – eyes on Jesus & others
2. **Generosity from joy** – overflowing b/c of grace gift
3. **Abundance mindset over scarcity mindset** – Macedonians gave while focused on the plenty that God had – focused on what they did have, not on what they didn't have

Corinthians

V 6-8 ⁶ So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. ⁷ But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ⁸ I am not commanding you, but I want to **test** the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

Test: is to examine/interpret/refine.

New workout / race

¹⁰ And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. ¹¹ Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. ¹² For if the **willingness** is there, the gift is acceptable **according to what one has**, not according to what one does not have. ¹³ Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. ¹⁴ At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The **goal is equality**, ¹⁵ as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

Three more principles that we take away from the Corinthian church:

1. **Generosity is not forced** – *willingness* – for the Macedonians, it was eagerness.
2. **Generosity is proportional not comparative.** \$25 gift - Ash
3. **Generosity aims at equality.** V14 – help the needy – not make rich richer.

What about Covenant Church?

1. Generous amidst trial
2. Generosity from joy
3. **Abundance mindset** vs. scarcity mindset
4. Generosity is not forced
5. **Generosity is proportional not comparative**. Old Testament teaches tithe. New Testament assumes tithe and urges generosity over and above the tithe. (Mt 23:23)
6. **Generosity aims at equality**