

## Sermon Notes

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 1.12.2025

## GRACE-DRIVEN GENEROSITY - PART 1

### I. INTRODUCTION

- This series is seeking to address what I consider to be one of the greatest discipleship challenges believer's face and a roadblock in our spiritual growth and formation.
  - That is, our perspective and attitude about money and possessions and the things we devote our time and energy to that impacts our lives in the areas of generosity, hospitality and service.
  - It's important because Scripture has a lot to say about these things.
  - It's important because we desire to be a church of radical generosity, hospitality, and service that brings glory to God and advances the gospel.
  - We want to live open-handed lives so that God can use us and so that we could be a blessing to others both in and outside the church.
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- Today, our focus is on generosity and how the gospel of Jesus Christ motivates us in the area of our giving.
  - Our goal is that your motivations for giving, for being generous with what God has entrusted you with, would be informed by the grace of God.

### **2 Corinthians 8:1-10**

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. 6 Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace. 7 But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. 8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. 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 by his poverty might become rich.

- You will not find in the NT explicit teaching about how much we should give or whether or not Christians are supposed to tithe.
- What you will find are principles taught in the apostolic letters that informs and motivates our giving.
- Apart from our Lord's teaching in the gospels, one of the greatest examples of these principles are found in Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth.

## II. AN EXAMPLE OF GRACE-DRIVEN GENEROSITY

- Paul, an apostle of the Lord, writes to the church at Corinth. This is his second letter to them.
- In the eight chapter, Paul writes about a collection that had been started by the Gentile churches to help the struggling believers in Jerusalem who were facing severe famine (Acts 11).
- And he calls their attention to the commitment they made, the amount they pledged to contribute to collection. He also reminded them of that in his first letter (1 Cor. 16:1-3).
- This passage was like a final nudge to fulfill what they had pledged to do.

### THE EXAMPLE OF THE MACEDONIAN CHURCHES

- Paul's nudges and motivates them with a powerful example of generosity by highlighting the efforts of the churches of Macedonia.
- 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.
- Paul wants them to know about the grace of God that has been given among these churches.
- Grace is prominent in these two chapters; ten times in connection with sacrificial giving and generosity.
- Grace is a divine enablement from the Lord that resulted in a richness of generosity.
- While facing severe affliction and suffering here is what they expressed: Abundance of joy + extreme poverty = overflowing wealth of generosity
- How does that make sense? It makes sense because of the grace of God.
  
- Paul goes on to say in v3 they gave above and beyond their means, of their own accord.
- In fact, they begged for the opportunity to take part in the relief effort.
- This blew Paul away, he was not expecting the generous outpouring of gifts.
- V5 But then Paul realizes that they did this because of grace, they gave themselves first to the Lord.
- They gave in response to God's grace that first overflowed in their lives.
  
- This is an important principle of grace-driven generosity. The grace of giving is not an obligation, it is a response.
- When you are gripped by grace you lose your grip on stuff, and there is no greater manifestation of you being gripped by grace than your giving.
- We see that in Luke's gospel with Zacchaeus. (Luke 19)
- Grace-driven generosity does not look at the bank account balance, the debt that is owed, all of the limitations of why one should not give, and make excuses for not giving.
- You would not expect the phrase "abundance of joy" when you're talking about people who were undergoing a severe test of affliction and extreme poverty.
- Yet in the midst of hardship, trials, persecution, affliction, poverty and lack, they are driven by God's grace to give sacrificially, willingly, and generously.
- They gave in the midst of adversity not prosperity, they gave in the midst of hostility not peace, and that was a sign that the grace of God had

filled their heart with joy.

- The Macedonian believers were graced to do this because they first gave themselves to the Lord.
- They were wholeheartedly committed to Christ. They were able to give sacrificially because they gave themselves to Christ, and everything else followed, including their wallet.
- Give yourselves wholeheartedly to Christ and your wallet follows.
- Money follows treasure. If Christ is your supreme treasure, you have no problem giving sacrificially to his mission, to advance gospel work, to support the local church, and to help your brothers and sisters in need.
  
- You need to ask yourself, if you're not giving sacrificially, if you're not giving beyond your means it is likely that your relationship with Christ is not as strong as you think it might be or want it to be.
- You will spend sacrificially for things you love.
- Paul points out that an indicator of the genuineness of a Christian's love for God is how generous they are.
- 8:8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. And then in 8:24, So give proof before the churches of your love...
- The response to overwhelming grace is an overflow of worship and love that is demonstrated in the act of grace giving.
- As we stated last week, how you view and use your possessions reveals the condition of your heart.
- Lack of giving proves that one loves money more than God.
- Sacrificial grace-driven generosity proves one's love for Christ is genuine.

## THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST'S GENEROSITY

- Paul provides the most compelling example for grace-driven generosity.
- As awesome as the Macedonian example was, there's an even better one—Jesus!
- In Jesus we find the greatest example of radical, sacrificial, lavish, overwhelming generosity!
- 8:9 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 by his poverty might become rich.
- The grace of God, the divine favor shown to us in Christ, is the supreme motivation for all giving.
- The sacrificial love of our Savior is our motivation for giving.
- The riches we have in him are not about material wealth, the riches are knowing Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance. We were spiritually poor and bankrupt and now in Christ we are rich beyond measure.
  
- God is the greatest Giver. He is the supreme Giver.
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things.
- Christ's example is all the motivation we need for a life of radical, sacrificial generosity.
- Grace-saved people are grace-driven givers.
- A stingy Christian is a walking contradiction.
- Sacrificial giving naturally follows grace. If a believer is not giving sacrificially that means they need grace.
- If you struggle with giving, ask God for grace. Ask God to help you to respond to grace.

- Paul's aim here is not guilt but rather to teach believers that giving is a spiritual act and a manifestation of God's grace in them and evidence of the genuineness of their love for Christ and others.

### III. AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO GRACE-DRIVEN GENEROSITY

- 8:7 But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.
  - This was a gifted church in many ways. They would have considered themselves spiritual people.
  - Paul says, "Here's something that you need to excel in also, this act of grace-driven generosity."
  - Giving is a spiritual act like any other, it is an act of worship.
  - 1 Cor 10:31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
  - Giving is to be done to the glory of God. It is an expression of all-of-life worship.
- If you consider yourself a spiritual person, are you excelling in the act of grace-giving?
  - Does your bank statement reflect sacrificial generosity?
  - Here's the thing about being generous, you can tell if you are and so can others.
- There are many reasons why you should give generously.
  - You should give as an overflow of God's grace and goodness in your life.
  - You should give because it is the tangible manifestation of the principle of God's ownership of your life and your stuff.
  - When you give, you are demonstrating that money is not your idol and that greed and covetousness does not control you.
  - If you struggle with greed or covetousness, the antidote is giving.
  - The rich young ruler claimed to love God but he really loved money and possessions (Luke 18).
  - Every time you give generously, you are striking a blow towards any heart idolatry or tendencies towards greed and covetousness.
  - When you give you are supporting the ministry of your local church and the advance of gospel work in the areas of missions and mercy ministries.
  - Galatians 6:6 and 1 Timothy 5:17-18 lay out our responsibility to support the teaching ministry of the local church.
  - Galatians 2:10; 6:10; James 2:14-16 exhort us to take care of the poor and help meet the needs of those of the household of faith.
  - Romans 15:20-29 Paul implores the roman church to support his missionary work as he wants to take the gospel to Spain.
  - Ministry and missions need money and if God's people don't give it doesn't happen.
  - Are you giving generously to your church for its ongoing work?
  - Are you giving generously in support of missions and mercy ministries?
  - Evaluate if you gave generously to support your local church. Only you will know if you did.
  - When you give, your heart is filled with joy.
  - When your heart has been gripped by grace, giving isn't a duty but a delight.

- Imagine what God could do through our small church, if we all lived open-handed, because we've all been gripped by grace and gave generously to God's work for God's glory?
- If you are stagnant in your spiritual walk. I implore you to evaluate whether or not you are living a generous life.
- God has given so much to us, he has done so much for us.
- And the natural overflow is that we now live our life loving God more than all of the money and stuff that God has given to us.
- May we respond gladly in our giving in a manner that reflects our gratitude for God's grace and generosity in giving us the greatest gift of all —His own Son!

## **APPLICATION AND REFLECTION**

In light of today's message...

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?