



POWER IN WEAKNESS!

The Epistle of 2 Corinthians

The Indescribable Gift!

2 Corinthians 9:1-15

Message #11 of 17 – S886

Sermon given on March 8, 2020



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Indescribable Gift!

2 Corinthians 9:1-15

Opening Comments

- For you watching online, welcome – we are glad to have you with us
- At the end of the service we will be partaking of Communion – get prepared and then join us
- Turn to **2 Corinthians 9**
- Today we continue our journey through **2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness!**
- Some people tend to get very uncomfortable when the church talks about giving
- Let's be honest, some churches talk about giving far too much
- As we study through chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians, we see Paul was quite comfortable talking about giving
- In fact, he makes it clear that it is not only appropriate but necessary that the church talk about giving
- Christians are called to be generous people because God is generous
- When God's people are generous, they are imitating one of God's greatest characteristics
- One of the reasons this is hard to talk about is because we live in a getting culture, not a giving culture
- Paul will tell us in this chapter that generous people get something from being generous
- Let's pray and then get into our text
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Indescribable Gift!**
- The context of chapters 8 and 9 is that Paul is reminding the Corinthians that they had already committed to being generous
- Paul had told them about the famine in Israel and that the Christians in Jerusalem were suffering
- They eagerly committed to sending them some financial aid
- The Corinthian church was doing pretty well

- Paul was writing from the area of Macedonia where the Christians were poorer and experiencing persecution
- Paul wrote in chapter 8 that the Macedonians had been generous, giving more than Paul imagined they could
- Paul was sending three men to Corinth to remind them to be prepared to do what they had said
- **2 Corinthians 9:1-2**
- Achaia is the region around the city of Corinth
- When Paul left Corinth and went to Macedonia, he told the Macedonians about how eager the Corinthians were to help
- The eagerness of the Corinthians stirred up the Macedonians to be generous
- When the church or people in the church are generous it stirs other people and churches to be generous
- **2 Corinthians 9:3-4**
- Paul was sending people to Corinth to remind them to prepare themselves to do what they had said
- He wasn't trying to manipulate them into giving
- He was trying to save them the embarrassment of having representatives from the poor churches in Macedonia showing up to the prosperous church in Corinth and them not being ready to be generous after a year
- **2 Corinthians 9:5**
- Generosity is a matter of the heart and faith
- Paul had already told them why they should be generous **2**

Corinthians 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

- As Christians we have been given great riches of God's grace **2 Peter 1:2-4**

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

- If you are a Christian, you have received the infinite grace of God

- It takes faith to believe that – once you do it becomes a matter of the heart
- That is what Paul is saying when he says ‘as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation’
- ‘grudging obligation’ has the idea of greediness and avarice
- When we give, whether it be our regular weekly offering or when the needs of others are brought to our attention
- It is an opportunity to examine our heart
- All giving should be generous giving
- It should be an expression of love and faith
- It should prove your love for God and that you care about the things He cares about
- It should also be an expression of faith
- Walking in faith means trusting God in ways that might make you uncomfortable
- Trusting God and being generous might mean giving a little more than you are comfortable with
- Paul says that was what the Macedonians did **2 Corinthians 8:3-4**
For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.
- Being generous is an expression of love and faith and it might make you uncomfortable
- Paul follows that thought with an illustration out of agriculture
- **2 Corinthians 9:6**
- The idea is if a farmer plants only a few seeds, he will get a small crop – lots of seeds = large crop
- Notice the word ‘bountifully’ - literally = ‘with blessings’
- True generosity always has as its object to bless others
- Could read ‘he who sows with blessings will also reap blessings’
- Generosity is not focused on what reward might come by our giving
Matthew 6:3-4
But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.
- But it does recognize that “God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” as Hebrews tells us

- There is a false doctrine taught in some churches that if we are generous financially, usually to those churches, that God will bless us financially – that is not biblical
 - God uses His perfect knowledge and chooses how to bless His people, and when He does, He does it ‘bountifully’
 - Paul wraps up this thought
 - **2 Corinthians 9:7**
 - Turn to **Deuteronomy 15**
 - Paul is saying that our giving should be thoughtful, intentional, and deliberate
 - Not only that, it should be done cheerfully – Greek word = hilariously
 - This call to cheerful giving is ancient
 - **Deuteronomy 15:10-11**
 - Notice ‘the poor will never cease from the land’
 - Turn back to **2 Corinthians 9**
 - Jesus said the same thing **Mark 14:7**
- For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always.**
- God is calling all Christians to be generous and cheerful givers
 - I have had people tell me they don’t give because they can’t do it cheerfully – and they say it like that is okay with God
 - What they are admitting is that their heart is not right on this matter
 - And the right response ought to be repentance
 - Notice ‘God loves a cheerful giver’
 - Does not mean that He loves them more, but differently
 - A cheerful giver and a Scrooge are loved equally by God – no favorites
 - But a cheerful giver is open (hand open) to receiving God’s bountiful blessings from God while the tight-fisted Scrooge is not
 - Paul goes on to explain why we can trust God and be generous
 - **2 Corinthians 9:8-9**
 - One key aspect of the grace of generosity is the belief that God is able to provide all that we need
 - ‘all sufficiency’ = enough to meet our needs
 - And an abundance for every good work – enough to be generous

- God is always working in this world – and He chooses to use His people to do a lot of that work **Ephesians 2:10**

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- God gives us what we need and then He gives us extra so that we can be generous and do the good things in the world He created for us to do
- God has given everyone enough to be generous
- The poor widow in Mark 12 only had two pennies, but she gave them to God trusting Him to take care of her
- This world, this community, this church would be a totally different place if God's people exercised the grace of God in generosity
- **2 Corinthians 9:10-14**
- When the people of God are generous God is glorified because those who benefit are thankful
- Not only that but it creates a bond between the giver and the recipient
- God's people should be generous because God is generous
- God's people should be generous as a response to the grace of God they have received
- Especially because of the grace that exceeds human language
- **2 Corinthians 9:15**
- 'indescribable gift' = Jesus Christ and His sacrifice
- He gave His perfect life so that we can receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life
- Humble, thankful, cheerful generosity is a reasonable response for what Jesus did for you
- We are going to partake of Communion this morning
- We do this to remind ourselves of this indescribable gift
- It should also be a time when we examine ourselves
- And one of the things we should examine is if we are responding to Christ's gift in faith through our giving
- Ask God to speak to your heart, are you be generous with what He has given you for His work
- If yes, praise Him – if not, ask Him to help you to walk in faith and obedience as a cheerful giver
- **Pray!**