

## 2 Corinthians 8

Title ideas:  
The Proof of Your Love!  
Give Yourself to the Lord!  
Abound in this Grace!  
Abound in the Grace of Giving!  
Living Abundantly!  
The Sincerity of Your Love!  
Sincere Love!

## 2 Corinthians 8:1-24 - Give Yourself to the Lord!

Scriptures:  
Luke 19:9-10 - Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."  
9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;  
10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Acts 20:35 - I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

<sup>1</sup>Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the

grace of God bestowed on the churches of

1325 – to be granted

Macedonia:

Notes:  
Context: A famine had taken place in Israel. The Christians in Jerusalem were mostly Jews who had accepted Christ. To the Jews of that time, there was nothing worse than turning away from Judaism. Often resulted in separation of family, loss of occupation, and other forms of persecution. The famine would have exasperated this persecution.

When times are tough, most people think only of themselves and those closest to them. As Christians, we are called to think of others in need in spite of our own need.

"There is a wonderful principle that runs all through this chapter, the principle of brotherly fellowship with those in need." (Ironside, 1938) page 416

When we sense Christ's grip upon our soul, our grip upon worldly possessions and wealth is loosened.

"So we understand, theologically, that authentic salvation changes our orientation to wealth. If our professed salvation has not loosened our grip on material things so that we have become giving people, we are not saved, despite our protestations." (Hughes, 2006) page 156

'grace of God' = the gracious inclination to give (Hughes)

This grace, as with all graces, flows out of our reconciliation to God through Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-6:1).

The word grace 'charis' appears eight times in chapters 8-9.

'churches of Macedonia' – Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea – were poor churches

"Because ours is a society that is preoccupied with 'getting,' we often fail to experience personally the truth of Christ's saying, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive(Acts 20:35).'"

Scriptures:

Mark 12:41-44 - Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. 42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. 43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

Romans 12:6-8 - Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Philippians 4:4 - Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 - And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

<sup>2</sup> that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of

4183 -

1382 -  
examination

2347 - trouble,  
distress,  
oppression,  
tribulation

4050 - very great

their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the

4432 -

4052 - plentiful

riches of their liberality.

4149 -

572 - generosity

Notes:

'affliction' They were under immense pressure from the surrounding culture trying to squeeze them into its shape.

Their poverty and affliction was not an excuse, but an opportunity – to express joy in their salvation and generosity in their giving.

What are we using as an excuse not to rejoice in our salvation and to express generosity, even in our poverty?

"Giving is a grace." (Ironside, 1938) page 417

"I do not think that means that they gave large sums. They probably did not have large sums to give, but the little was regarded by God as a larger gift than if very much more had come from people far more wealthy than the Macedonians." (Ironside, 1938) page 417 (Luke 12:44 – widow's mites)

Scriptures:

<sup>3</sup> For I bear witness that according to *their* ability,

Notes:

1411 -

yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were*

freely willing,

830 – pertaining  
to one's own  
initiative, of one's  
own accord  
Also v17

Scriptures:

<sup>4</sup> imploring us with much urgency that we would

1189 – plead, ask,  
beg

3874 – earnest  
request

Notes:

Paul could see their deep poverty and was inclined to ask nothing of them for fear that their giving might deepen their poverty. But they would not be denying the grace of giving.

The grace of giving sees giving as a privilege to be joyously engaged in.

The Macedonians did not have to be pressured into giving. They were pressuring Paul to allow them to give. Paul may have been reluctant to anything from them because of their poverty.

The Macedonians saw an opportunity to join in God's work and they implored Paul to let them help.

"Joy and Christian growth come to those who assume the responsibility for the Lord's work gladly." (Chafin, 1985) page 256

receive the gift and the fellowship of the

ministering to the saints.

1248 – service,  
assistance

40 – 'God's  
people'

Scriptures:  
Romans 12:1-2 - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.  
2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

<sup>5</sup> And not *only* as *we* had hoped, but they first

gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to *us* by the

1325 – ‘to  
commit (trust) –  
To dedicate or  
trust entirely to a  
specific person or  
activity or cause.’

will of God.

Notes:

“Grace is first rooted in our response to God. When we know that our lives are not our own, neither will we think that our possessions are our own. It’s easy to surrender part when we’ve already given the whole.”  
(Hughes, 2006) page 158

It doesn’t really do a lot of good to give your possessions to God if you have not first given yourself to Him. In fact, doing so can do you harm. External giving can lead to religious pride. It might cause you to believe that your giving is how you please God. It gives in the hopes that God will respond. The grace of giving is generous as a response to what God has already done – it expects nothing in return.

“If I have given myself to the Lord, the rest all follows.” (Ironsides, 1938) page 418

This is a key to the grace of God. If I have not given myself to God, then all my giving is likely to be carnal and religious. Once I have given myself to the Lord, I realize that everything I ‘own’ actually is God’s. The grace of giving then can flow freely and joyfully from me, regardless of my circumstances.

“Those who give their money but not their hearts have made a lesser gift.”  
(Chafin, 1985) page 256

Scriptures:

<sup>6</sup> So **we** urged Titus, that as **he** had begun, so **he**

would also complete this grace in **you** as well.

2005 - finish

Notes:

'this grace' – the giving of a generous gift to the needy Christians in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4). This had been interrupted by Paul's detractors who were questioning his authority and authenticity.

"He (Paul) knew they (Corinthian Christians) needed to feel the responsibility for their brothers and sisters in Christ if they were to grow spiritually." (Chafin, 1985) page 251

Scriptures:

<sup>7</sup> But as **you** abound in everything—in **faith**, in

4052 -

speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in **your**

love for **us**—*see* that **you** abound in this grace

also.

Notes:

Paul is calling them to grow to maturity and saying that the grace of giving was a necessary step in that growth.

"There is no way to grow to spiritual maturity without committing your finances to the Lord. Jesus can have our money without our hearts, but he cannot have our hearts without our money." (Hughes, 2006) page 159

Paul is saying, just as the Macedonians gave, without using their poverty as an excuse, they should not wait for an opportune time to give but to give as the Spirit leads them.

Giving is a matter of the heart and is a function of faith. The Macedonians had every reason not to be generous but were.

"These words stress the truth that learning to be generous with material things is a matter of spiritual growth and maturity." (Chafin, 1985) page 254

Scriptures:

<sup>8</sup> **I** speak not by commandment, but **I** am testing

2003 - order

1381 -  
examination

Notes:

Paul did not have a direct command from Jesus about this collection, but the passion of the Macedonians desire to give was a measure of faith that could be compared to the Corinthians.

Generosity is an evidence of faith.

the sincerity of **your** love by the diligence of

1103 - genuine

4710 - eagerness

This is not speaking about our regular giving to the local church. It is specifically referring to generosity toward other churches.

others.

Scriptures:

John 1:16 - And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 10:14-17 - I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. 17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

John 15:13 - Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

<sup>9</sup>For **you** know the grace of **our** Lord Jesus Christ,

that though **He** was **rich**, yet for **your** sakes **He**

4145 -

became **poor**, that **you** through **His** **poverty** might

4433 -

4432 -

become **rich**.

Notes:

Paul uses Jesus as the highest example of the grace of giving.

The Macedonians had been struck with the beauty of Christ's grace of giving and felt compelled to follow His example.

Christ gave Himself for us. We receive His grace, and then give ourselves to Him and to others in His name. This response of grace includes what we have.

It is incongruent that someone who calls themselves a Christian would struggle with the concept of sacrificial giving. God sacrifices His own Son (John 3:16). Jesus laid His life down for us (John 10:15). Christians should be willing to do the same (John 15:13).

A paradox: giving becomes a joy when it is a sacrifice.

"Paul lays down the principle that people who give generously out of love for the Lord and for His church grow and mature in their faith because they don't count the cost." (Chafin, 1985) page 255



Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 - Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. 3 And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. 4 But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

10 And in this **I** give advice: It is to **your** advantage

1106 - opinion

4851 – it is good

Notes:

not only to be doing what **you** began and were

desiring to do a year ago;

Scriptures:

11 but now **you** also must complete the doing *of it*;

Notes:

Past performance does not prove faith. Real faith is active today!

that as *there was* a readiness to desire *it*, so *there*

also *may be* a completion out of what *you* have.

Scriptures:

<sup>12</sup> For if there is first a willing mind, *it is* accepted

4288 – eagerness,  
readiness

Notes:  
“Strong emotions, deep sweet feelings, and condience in forgiveness are valid only if they open our hands.” (Hughes, 2006) page 163

according to what one has, *and* not according to

what he does not have.

Scriptures:

<sup>13</sup> For *I do* not *mean* that others should be eased  
425 - relief

Notes:  
The quantity of your giving will  
match the quality of your changed  
heart.

and *you* burdened;

Scriptures:

<sup>14</sup> but by an equality, *that* now at this time *your*  
2471 - fairness

Notes:

abundance *may supply* their lack, that their

abundance also may supply *your* lack—that there

may be equality.

Scriptures:

15 As it is written, “*He who gathered much had*

Notes:

Exodus 16:17-18 - Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. 18 So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need.

*nothing left over, and he who gathered little had*

*no lack.”*

Scriptures:

16 But thanks *be* to God who puts the same earnest

Notes:

As Titus ministered to the Corinthians as Paul had directed him to, a bond of love was developed. That is often the case. We get involved in service in some way and we discover that God does a work on our heart. My story in Children's Ministry is an example of that.

care for *you* into the heart of Titus.

Scriptures:

17 For *he* not only accepted the exhortation, but

Notes:

being more diligent, *he* went to *you* of his own

accord.

Scriptures:

18 And **we** have sent with him the brother whose

Notes:

praise **is** in the gospel throughout all the churches,

Scriptures:

19 and not only *that*, but who was also chosen by

Notes:

the churches to travel with **us** with this gift, which

is administered by **us** to the glory of the Lord

Himself and *to show* **your** ready mind,

4288 – eagerness,  
willingness

Scriptures:

<sup>20</sup> avoiding this: that anyone should blame **us** in

Notes:

Paul was always above reproach and he went out of his way to let people see the integrity of how he handled the money that had been given by the Macedonians.

It appears that Paul did not handle the money himself. This is also a practice within our church. I do not handle the offering at any point, nor am I aware of how much anyone in the church gives.

“The Lord knows what we do with the money, but he (Paul) says, ‘That is not enough; we want God’s people to know also.’” (Ironsides, 1938) page 420

this lavish gift which is administered by **us**—

Scriptures:

<sup>21</sup> providing honorable things, not only in the sight

Notes:

of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

Scriptures:

<sup>22</sup> And **we** have sent with them **our** brother whom

Notes:

Two anonymous men were sent with Titus to carry this large sum of money to the believers in Jerusalem. Heaven will be filled with anonymous servants who did great things for God, but remained unknown to the rest of the world.

**we** have often proved diligent in many things, but

now much more diligent, because of the great

confidence which *we have* in **you**.



Scriptures:

<sup>23</sup> If *anyone inquires* about Titus, *he is* my partner Notes:

and fellow worker concerning *you*. Or if *our*



brethren *are inquired about, they are* messengers

of the churches, the glory of Christ.

Scriptures:

Galatians 1:3-5 - Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore show to them, and before the

churches the proof of  your  love and of our

boasting on your behalf.

Notes:

Paul is telling them to prove to these three men that the things that Paul said about them was true. To prove it they were to give the grace of giving they had earlier committed to.

“The proof of love is giving.”  
(Ironside, 1938) page 421