

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 15TH-16TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

PREPARED (2 CORINTHIANS 9:1-5) THE CORINTHIANS ARE ON BOARD

In chapter 8 Paul encourages the church to sacrificially give so others' needs can be met. In this chapter, we see that they are on board because it was "unnecessary for [Paul] to write" them because of their "eagerness."

- Paul also mentions their "zeal has stirred up" Christians in other regions as well.

"WOULD NOT PROVE EMPTY"

Paul was appreciative of their excitement to give, but he also told them to be proactive and prepare or they would look irresponsible, especially if some Macedonians came with him.

- **If we live responsibly and intentionally, we can create margin in our time and finances and be generous people.**

SLOPPINESS DOESN'T WORK IN CHRISTIANITY

When we claim to be Christians, **we are representing God in everything we do.** This doesn't call for perfection, but it does call for **diligence, honesty, humility, awareness, and excellence** to the best of our ability.

- **We must also tap into the Spirit for wisdom, guidance, and much grace!**

"A GIFT AND NOT AS AN EXTORTION"

If the Corinthians didn't prepare the gift for Paul's people before they arrived, it may appear as though they were being forced to give it.

- Paul was **appreciative, but not naïve.** He knew that people could procrastinate and change their minds, so he **encouraged them to stay on task.**

SOWING (2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-11)

"THE POINT IS THIS..."

V. 6 is important and often misunderstood. Though Paul is referring to financial giving here, this does not imply a "prosperity gospel."

- Though we are not promised wealth, **if we will trust and obey God and put effort into practicing generosity, He will take care of us in a manner He thinks is best.**
- The biblical principle of sowing and reaping goes beyond finances. If we invest in evil, we will eventually have to deal with that "harvest." The same is true for the things of God. If we invest in biblical things we get biblical results.
- **It is foolish to believe that our actions don't have consequences** (Galatians 6:7).

NOT OUT OF RELUCTANCE OR COMPULSION

When we give, it should be done with joy and wisdom. **If we're reluctant to give, we display selfishness or greed. If we give out of compulsion, we may enable bad behavior or put ourselves in a bad situation.**

- This goes back to **preparation and using wisdom and discernment.**

"GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER"

When we bless and help people, we're **demonstrating a heart that loves God and a mind that desires to do His work.**

- **God makes "grace overflow," gives us "everything [we] need," and helps us "excel in every good work" when we give with a cheerful heart.**

FAITHFUL GIVERS ARE OFTEN NOT WEALTHY

In Paul's time and even today, the most generous people were not typically the most affluent. So, the "harvest" we reap for sowing into God and others is greater than wealth.

- **Sowing into godly things yields the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5). These are far more valuable than any material possession.**

"ENRICHED IN EVERY WAY"

When we fall in love with Jesus and trust Him completely, He changes our hearts and minds. This metamorphosis helps us **recognize the value of others and creates a desire in us to be the light of God in a dark world.**

- **The Word promises our investment into God will enrich us.** Do we believe that?

HONORING (2 CORINTHIANS 9:12-15)

"EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS TO GOD"

When we minister to others, it doesn't just bless them, it inspires more people to love others, and it honors God.

- **The good news of Jesus must be spoken and practically lived out.** When we actively love people, **it builds a bridge to them having a relationship with God.**

THE "PROOF PROVIDED"

Because the Corinthians put their faith into action and **did more than just say they loved God and others,** Paul assures them they have proved their love through their ministry.

- **True faith is demonstrated by action.** If we love God and others, we will exercise that through works that honor God.

IT ALL GOES BACK TO HONORING GOD

God had changed the Corinthians. Because of salvation via the cross by grace through faith, they also possessed "surpassing grace" that inspired them to love and sacrifice for others.

- **Jesus, salvation, and the love we acquire that inspires us to be more like Him is an "indefinable gift" from God.**

SOWING AND REAPING

- We "[must not] be deceived...**For whatever a person sows he will also reap**" (Galatians 6:7).
- This principle applies to virtually everything in our lives. **To whatever level we sow into evil or godly things, we will either have to deal with the consequences or reap the fruit and benefits of our investment.**
- **We're not to give reluctantly or compulsively, but with a responsible and cheerful heart.** Reluctance to give indicates selfishness and compulsiveness may lead to compromise.
- **Becoming a cheerful giver shows that we are conforming more into the image of God.** This change will "enrich" us in every way.

LIVING WITH INTENTIONALITY

- **We are too valuable to live carelessly.** We are made in the image of God and life is a gracious, precious gift.
- If we're to reap good things and honor God and others, we must intentionally **manage our time and resources wisely to create margin to do good works for God and others.**

IT IS ALL ABOUT GOD

- When we're saved by grace through faith, we become recipients of "**surpassing grace**" that should lead us to love God and others and to demonstrate that love through godly works.
- The source of all our "indefinable gift[s]" is God, and **how we live, love, think, and act should honor Him.**