

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 16TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

## MINISTRY TO THE SAINTS (2 CORINTHIANS 9:1-5)

### CHECK OUR HEARTS

Paul made the point previously that **it is not the amount given that is important but the manner of our giving.**

- God gives freely without an attitude of grudging obligation, and being made in His image, **we should be willing and eager participants in giving.** Sacrificial giving will vary but **each person must evaluate their heart before giving.**

### WE ARE SAINTS

The Greek word for "**ministering**" is translated as **relief** (Acts 11:29) to the saints and is the same word to describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:8-9) to provide **relief and comfort.**

- Paul was talking about the saints in Jerusalem, but **the idea here is the collection of funds to benefit all Believers.**

### DESIGNED FOR A PURPOSE

Christ is the physical representation of the unseen God (Colossians 1:15) and as His followers, **we are to be the salt and the light of the world** (Matthew 5:13-16), **providing relief and comfort.**

- **The church is designed to care for those who belong to the household of faith, then those outside the church as we have opportunity** (Galatians 6:10).

### FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT

Paul stated it was "**unnecessary for [him] to write to [them],**" essentially saying, "I know I don't have to tell you this, but I'm going to say it anyway."

- It is possible that with a touch of sarcasm Paul is trying to encourage them by telling the Corinthians that **he believes that they will do the right thing.**

### PROPERLY RESPONDED

Paul boasted of the Macedonians' willingness to give (8:1-5) but here **he tells the Corinthians that he had boasted in them to the Macedonians.**

- Was this more sarcasm? **Paul may have boasted about their willingness to respond to correction of what he had written to them previously.**

### SPEAKING THE TRUTH WITHOUT BEING ABRASIVE

Was Paul being disingenuous when **he said their zeal stirred the majority?**

- I have trouble believing Paul is being sarcastic and essentially insulting them as motivation to give, but he is **encouraging them to follow through in giving, spurred on by their zeal to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord.**

### NOT WANTING TO BRING SHAME

Paul was hopeful, but he was not naïve in thinking the Corinthians could decide not to follow through with their commitment to give.

- **To avoid shame on his part and the Corinthians',** Paul sent others ahead of him to collect the special offering so it could be received as a **generous gift and not extortion** when he came on his own.

## GRACE OVERFLOWING (2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-9)

### SCATTERING SEEDS

The principle is simple, **if we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly, but if we sow generously, we will likewise reap generously.**

- The heart behind our giving should be like that of a farmer planting seeds. **The farmer doesn't sparingly place seeds in the ground but generously places seed after seed with the expectation of a future harvest.**

### SOWING AND REAPING

This principle about sowing and reaping is **not saying that if you generously give of a resource God will generously multiply and return that resource.**

- If we generously use the resources God has given us for His glory and Kingdom, **we will generously see the work of God, resulting in the advancement of the Kingdom.**

### HONEST EVALUATION AND COMPLETE TRUST

Paul said previously that **we are not required to put ourselves in a place of hardship for the relief of others** (8:13).

- We are required to **evaluate our situation and decide in our heart what we can give cheerfully** and not out of compulsion, trusting **God will provide all of our needs according to His riches** (Philippians 4:19).

### GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER

God does not want us to give in a grudging way because we feel obligated or manipulated into doing so. Instead, **God wants us to give cheerfully.**

- The Greek word for cheerful is *hilaros*, which is where we get the word hilarious. God delights in us when we give as He gives—happily. **Biblical giving comes from a joyful heart and should create joy in our hearts.**

### GIVING IS REWARDED WITH GRACE OVERFLOWING

**The smallest gift given with the right heart will be graciously rewarded** (Matthew 10:42).

- God graciously gives us **freedom from a heart of greed and materialism.** He, by grace, shows the cheerful giver **how to be content in all things.** **God graciously gives for us to be channels of blessings and grace, not reservoirs of blessings and grace.**

## PROVIDING SEEDS (2 CORINTHIANS 9:10-15)

### "THE ONE WHO PROVIDES THE SEED"

God is the one who has supplied everything we have to give.

- Though meeting needs is great, our giving does so much more. The gifts we give will give a **reason for the recipient to give thanksgiving to God** and is **personal evidence of God's work in us.** **The goal of the Christian life is to live to the glory of God and the good of others.**

### SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

**Confession, or a profession of the gospel of Christ, will be evident through obedience.** Paul referenced this principle on many occasions in his writings (Romans 6:1; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:8).

- In a sense, if a person does not have a generous heart, **they may not be obedient to the confession of the gospel of Christ.**

### "THANKS BE TO GOD..."

Ending the discussion of giving, Paul wants to remind us that **God is the greatest giver.**

- Salvation is a gift that we must receive through obedience and active faith in Jesus Christ, who is also a gift from the Father (John 3:16). Since **we cannot adequately describe this gift from God nor can we earn it, all that is left is to thank God for it.**

### WHAT IS BEING ASKED?

- We *are not* asking you to start giving or increase giving out of obligation or duty.
- We *are* asking you to honestly evaluate your relationship with God if you are not giving.
- **"Each person should do as he has decided in his heart"** (v. 7). As Christians, we should all be givers. Even with little resources, it is important that we give with the right heart.

### SOWING AND REAPING

- **Are we storing or scattering seeds?**
- **What good are stored seeds?** The farmer who stores seeds may have more seeds in his barn, but the farmer who generously sows seeds will see the fruit of a harvest in his barn.
- Though we do not reap the same as what was sown, God can receive our resources and turn them into transformed lives.