

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 9TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

## EXAMPLE (2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-7) THE GRACE OF GOD

Paul had just talked to them about reconciliation in chapter 7, and now, he will talk about God's grace (favor) that was given to the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea.

- **Favor is when God gives us something to use for Him. Favor is God giving us an opportunity, not a position.**

## SEVERE TRIAL FROM AFFLICTION

God had allowed some serious, next-level suffering in Macedonia. That trial had revealed the true character of the Church.

- **Sometimes, affliction is meant to show us who we really are and who we are not. It's not that God wants to leave us there, but He desires to form us into who He wants us to be.**

## ABUNDANT JOY AND EXTREME POVERTY

As they endured persecution, many lost their source of income and joined the mass of poverty. Somewhere between affliction and poverty, the Church had joy.

- **Where is that joy today? We know that following Jesus is a relationship with Him that satisfies. That joy is what holds us together between trials!**

## A WEALTH OF GENEROSITY

Their satisfaction in Christ and the joy that sustained them in trials moved them to be a part of God's mission through Paul.

- **In connection with joy, our giving reflects our satisfaction with God. Giving should flow from joy, not manipulation.**

## ABILITY AND BEYOND

According to their ability, they gave from their resources. Beyond means that some gave sacrificially.

- **Giving isn't about emotionalism; it's about intentionality. It's not about someone leaning on us to give; it's about God leading us when we have the opportunity.**

## THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

These poor Believers saw the need and gave, not because they were asked but because they desired to give. Giving was a way to express their joy in God because they had already given themselves to Him.

- **We have opportunities to give. Do we really desire to give? Why not?**

## EXCEL IN EVERYTHING

The Corinthians were getting many things right: miracle-working faith, powerful conversations, and theological understanding. But they were weak when it came to giving beyond their walls.

- **Giving should be seen as flowing from what Christ has done for us. He doesn't stop here, and neither should we.**

## RESOURCES (2 CORINTHIANS 8:8-15) GENTLE FIRMNESS

When Paul says he's not giving a command, he desires to see them give without being commanded. He wants to see them mature, not just do what he tells them.

- **Our spiritual maturity is revealed as we follow Christ in love. We will become more proactive in our actions. We will look for more opportunities to give ourselves and our resources.**

## COMPLETION

Paul reminds them that Jesus gave Himself completely so they could have riches: truth, understanding, relationship, peace, good works, and assurance of eternal life. He then challenges them to do what they said they would do: Give with an eager heart.

- **How much of our desire to give has resulted in actual giving?**

## ACCEPTABLE ACCORDING TO WHAT?

Paul again says it's according to what they have. He's not asking them to be unwise in their giving, just authentic.

- **The Bible does teach sacrificial giving; it doesn't teach impressive giving. We shouldn't be trying to impress anyone. We are trying to honor the Lord and see His ministry go forward.**

## EQUALITY

The Church in Corinth had resources, but Paul wanted them to know that it wasn't because they were better than the Churches in Macedonia.

- **We do have resources and CAN give. We must remember that what we have comes from God, and our attitude about giving reveals more about our spiritual maturity than our financial ability.**

## HONOR (2 CORINTHIANS 8:16-24) INTO THE HEART

Paul loved the Church at Corinth and had told Titus how special they were. After spending some time there, Titus developed a love for them too.

- **This love is born from experiencing God's love for us. The more we realize how much God pours His love into our hearts, the more we love others.**

## TRUSTWORTHY

Because Paul knew that Titus loved the Church, he could trust Titus to tell them the truth and not be tempted by money. We also see two others that Paul has given his complete trust. This trust wasn't based on their ability to make money or even their ability to count money. It was their Gospel Ministry.

## TESTED IN MANY CIRCUMSTANCES

Each of these men had proven themselves to be honorable, gospel-centered teachers and worthy of trust.

- **Too many teachers today are feel-good, man-centered, cause-oriented, money-focused, or pastor-driven messengers. Christ-centered teachers tell the truth about sin and how Christ came to save us from our own mess.**

## SHOW THEM WHO YOU REALLY ARE

Paul finishes this section by requesting that they be prepared to show what he knew to be true: They loved God and desired to love others.

- **We should always be ready to provide proof of what we believe. It will be our care for others in how we share the gospel and our resources.**

## FAVOR

- We want to be in God's favor.
- **When we believe that God's favor is when He chooses us to be above others, we favor ourselves.**
- **God gives us His grace, and we become givers of grace. That grace extends to all types of giving of ourselves and resources.**

## MONEY

- Money is a complex and difficult topic.
- **It's usually earned before we get it and we like to keep what we earn.**
- **We may miss the joy of giving because we have a less-than-full understanding of grace. Giving is not a replacement for serving; it's a continuation of a serving heart.**

## TRUST

- We've all heard the horror stories in churches.
- **We should be able to see the main focus of any church ministry.**
- **Money, giving, and tithing are teachable subjects, not the church's mission. When a church is gospel-centered, we can trust that the money we give will glorify God. Are we giving in a way that reveals our honest desire to give? Have we found the joy of giving?**