

2 Corinthians 8:1–9

¹ Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:

² that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

³ For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing,

⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

⁵ And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

⁶ So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well.

⁷ But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.

⁸ I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.

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.

Grace **2 Corinthians 8:1–9**

INTRO:

By way of introduction, several observations must be made. First, the key word in this text is ***“grace.”*** Second, the Apostle Paul was not going to get a dime from this collection. There is no self-motivation here. Third, the real issue in this whole chapter is Christ. How deep is our love for the Lord Jesus?

Here is our direction. Because of their great love for the Lord Jesus, the Macedonians give far beyond their ability to give. Therefore the people who received so much grace from God should give to God too. The Lord Jesus Christ has set the example of giving.

I. The Macedonian Example (v. 1-5)

II. The Application to Corinth (v. 6-8)

III. The Only Legitimate motivation (v. 9)

I. The Macedonian Example (v. 1-5)

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 ***“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 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. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”

A. Paul entered the subject of the collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem with the example of the Macedonians. The Macedonians were near neighbors to these Corinthians. However, Macedonia was an area that had endured much hardship under the Romans. They were not wealthy people. The evidence of God’s unmerited favor given to these folks was their generosity to the Lord.

vs.1-4 *“Brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 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.”*

B. The physical gift did not excite Paul as much as the heart with which they gave. It was probable that of all the gifts the men with Paul collected, this was the smaller amount financially. Do you remember the *“Widow’s mite?”*

Luke 21:1-4 *“And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, ‘Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all. For all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.’”*

In like manner this gift was probably not large in quantity but was huge in quality. It flowed out of their love and out of the grace of God in their hearts.

C. The gift was preceded by an important commitment.

v.5 *“And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”*

Before the money they gave themselves to the Lord. These folks did not just throw money at the issue. They sought to serve the Lord in any way they could where they were and they also wanted to serve those whom God put over them. This put a question to us. Do we just give to God or do we serve Him and because we serve Him we give?

II. The Application to Corinth (v. 6-8)

2 Corinthians 8:6-8 *“So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.”*

A. Now Paul quits preaching and starts meddling. Paul cited the example of the poor churches in Macedonia to encourage the rich church in Corinth to give to the Lord

also. Although Corinth was much better off than the churches in Macedonia, giving to God was still an act of grace. They were not giving to get something from God but in recognition and appreciation of what God gave to them.

B. Paul pointed out God's blessings upon the Corinthian church to make them understand what God did for them.

v.7 *"But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also."*

These gifts God gave you are not because you deserve it. They are yours because God chose to give them to you, even though you do not deserve them. Therefore you should abound in giving though you do not deserve the privilege.

C. Why should we do this Paul?

v.8 *"I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others."*

You need to this because it evidences your love for Christ.

III. The Only Legitimate motivation (v. 9)

A. We might become like the people in Malachi and ask, why should I love like that? How has He loved me?

v.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."*

B. We love because Jesus loved. We give to God because Jesus gave.

Philippians 2:5-8 *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."*

How deep is our love?

Hymn #186 *The Old Rugged Cross*