

“The Grace Of Giving”
2 Corinthians 8:1-6

Introduction:

1. This Morning - We Are Going To Begin Looking At:
 - A New Chapter In The Book Of 2 Corinthians:
 - So Please Turn There With Me In Your Bibles:
 - 2 Corinthians 8!
 - Where Paul:
 - After Dealing With The Primary Issue Of His Relationship With The Corinthian Church:
 - From Chapter 1 All The Way Through Chapter 7:
 - Looks At A Whole New Issue!
 - And Since The Former Issue:
 - Was Settled & Resolved:
 - Because Of Their Godly Sorrow & Repentance!
 - He Could Now Move On To Another Important Topic - The Topic Of Giving!
2. And For The Next 2 Chapters:
 - Paul Will Encourage The Corinthians – As Well As Us:
 - To Give – As We Have Been Given!
 - And He Begins In 8:1-6:
 - “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; / How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. / For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; / Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. / And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. / Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also!”
 - In These Verses:
 - There Are Some Important Lessons:
 - For Us In Giving!
 - As Christians & As A Church!
 - And So - The First Thing We Find Is That:

1. *Giving Is A Great Example Of God’s Grace!*

- God’s Grace At Work:
 - In The Hearts & Lives Of His People!
 - This Is Why - While Paul Is Writing To The Corinthian Church - He Brings Up The Example Of The Macedonian Churches:
 - Which Would Include The Cities Of Philippi, Thessalonica, And Even Berea!
- And So - In 8:1-2 - Again - Paul Writes:
 - “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; / How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality!”
 - In Verse 1 - Paul Talks About:
 - The “Grace Of God!”
 - Which Describe His Divine Acts Of Undeserved Favor!
 - Not Just The General Grace:
 - Given To The World At Large!
 - But The Special Grace:
 - Given To His People! See:
 - The Reason A Christian Is Saved:
 - Is Because Of The Grace Of God!
 - Ephesians 2:8 - “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God!”
 - But Even More:
 - The Reason A Christian Is Sanctified:
 - And Has Any Growth Or Fruit In His Or Her Life Whatsoever:
 - Is Also Because Of The Grace Of God!
 - As Philippians 2:13 Tells Us - “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure!”

- So Any Growth That You Have:
 - And Any Good That You Do:
 - Comes From God & His Grace!
 - We Must Never Forget This!
- But Here - God Poured Out His Grace:
 - In A Special Way - To The Churches Of:
 - Macedonia!
 - He Moved Them & Enabled Them To Give!
 - In Fact - This Is One Way That God Reveals Himself & His Active Work Among His People!
 - Through Their Giving!
 - **IE:** This Is Something We Can See Every Week In Our Own Church!
 - But The Macedonian Churches Were A Great Example Of Giving! What Made Them So?
- The Circumstances Of Their Giving!
 - 8:2 - “How That In A Great Trial Of Affliction!”
 - The Macedonian Christians:
 - Where Living In A Completely Different World Than The Corinthian Christians!
 - Corinth Was Known As A City Of Peace & Pleasure & Prosperity!
 - But At This Time:
 - The Region Of Macedonia Itself:
 - Was Experiencing Famine, The Ongoing Fallout Of Constant Warfare, And Economic Hardship!
 - And The Christians Were Not Immune From These Circumstances!
 - And We Can Add To This:
 - Other Pressures & Even Persecution:
 - Because They Believed In & Followed After Jesus Christ!
 - But In Spite Of All These Trials!
 - And Even Through Their Afflictions!
 - God Was Still Active In His Church!
 - And His Grace To Them Was Seen - In Their Giving!
 - Also See:
 - The Condition Of Their Giving!
 - 8:2 Continues - “The Abundance Of Their Joy And Their Deep Poverty Abounded!”
 - Here We Have Two Seemingly:
 - Contradictory Conditions!
 - Joy & Poverty!
 - The World So Often Tries To Convince Us:
 - **IE:** That The More You Have, The Happier You Will Be! And The Less You Have, The Sadder You Will Be! Just Think About All The Commercials You See & Year! Life Would Be So Much Better & Happier If You Just Had X! (New Car / New Clothes / New Drug / New Vacation / On & On!)
 - But Here - Both Joy & Poverty Exist **Together** In The Macedonian Churches!
 - But They Did Not Have Just Any Joy:
 - And Any Poverty:
 - They Experienced An “Abundance Of Joy” & “Deep Poverty!”
 - They Were At The Height Of Joy In The Lord & In The Depth Of Poverty In The World!
 - They Were Dirt Poor!
 - But In Spite Of Their Condition:
 - God Was Still Active In His Church!
 - And His Grace To Them Was Seen - In Their Giving!
 - Also See:
 - The Charitableness Of Their Giving!
 - 8:2 Shows Us That:
 - By God’s Grace, Their Joy & Their Poverty Yielded Wealth!
 - Wealth Of A Different Sort!
 - A Wealth Of Generosity!
 - “The Abundance Of Their Joy And Their Deep Poverty Abounded Unto The Riches Of Their Liberality!”
 - They May Have Been Poor:

- In Physical & Material Things:
 - But They Were Rich:
 - In Spiritual Things!
- Revelation 2:9 - What Was Said To The Church Of Smyrna Could Have Been Said To Them!
 - "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich)!"
- The Macedonians:
 - Were Poor According To The World's Standards:
 - And Even The Corinthian's Standards!
 - But They Were Rich & Wealthy In What Would Truly Last!
 - And So - God Was Still Active In His Church!
 - And His Grace To Them Was Seen - In Their Giving!
- But What About Us This Morning?
 - Are We An Example Of God's Grace At Work:
 - In The Lives Of His People?
 - God's Grace Can Often Be Seen - In Our Giving!
 - Now - You Might Say - I Don't Have That Much To Give!
 - Neither Did The Macedonian Churches!
 - But In Spite Of Their Circumstances & In Spite Of Their Condition:
 - They Gave!
 - And When You Give - It May Not Appear To Be Much:
 - According To The World's Standards!
 - But When Your Heart Is In What You Give:
 - As The Song Goes - "Little Is Much When God Is In It!"
 - See This In Mark 12:41-44 - The Widow & Her Two Mites - "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. / And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. (Probably Just A Couple Of Dollars) / And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: / For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living!"
 - So - In Spite Of Your Problems:
 - And In Spite Of Even Your Poverty:
 - God's Grace To You Is Both The *Means* & The *Motivation* For You To *Give!*
 - I Also Think That This Demonstrates:
 - That God Can & Often Does Work In:
 - And Use "Small" Churches Like Our Own - Even With Limited Resources!
 - But When We Have Limitless Joy In The Lord & His Salvation & His Grace:
 - "Little Is Much When God Is In It!"
 - So Let Your Giving:
 - Be An Example Of God's Grace:
 - At Work In Your Life & In Our Church!

2. *Giving Is A Great Evidence Of God's Grace!*

- 8:3-4 - "For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; / Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints!"
 - Here - Paul Describes For Us:
 - The Evidence Of God's Grace:
 - And *How* The Macedonian Churches Gave!
 - What Kind Of Giving Does God's Grace Produce?
 - A Full Giving!
 - 8:3 - "For To Their Power, I Bear Record, Yea, And Beyond Their Power!"
 - "Power" Here Means "Ability!"
 - They Gave What They Could:
 - And Even More Than, It Seemed Like, They Should!
 - It Seems - When Paul Arrived In Macedonia:
 - He Could *See* Just How Little They Had!
 - And So The Collection He Was Taking Up In His Travels, For The Jerusalem Church, Did Not Seem Like Something They Needed To Participate In!
 - But Once Again - God's Grace & Their Generosity:
 - Was Evident!

- And Their Contributions Exceeded All Expectations!
 - This Is What Grace-Filled Giving Will Look Like! Also:
- A Free Giving!
 - 8:3 Continues - “They Were Willing Of Themselves!”
 - Their Offering Was Not Something:
 - Paul Demanded Or Expected!
 - It Was Given Spontaneously & Freely - By Their Own Personal Choice - Enabled By God’s Grace!
 - This Too Is How We Should Give!
 - Later In 9:7 - “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver!”
 - We Are To Give Freely & Cheerfully! It Was Also:
- A Fervent Giving!
 - 8:4 - “Praying With Much Entreaty!”
 - Again - Because Of Their Poverty:
 - It Seems That Paul Was Reluctant To Receive Such A Sacrificial Offering:
 - From Their Hands!
 - Shows His Own Heart!
 - Not Greedy!
 - Not Harmful!
 - Paul Always Sought To Be A Good Steward Of The Resources That God’s People Gave!
 - But The Macedonian Churches:
 - **Insisted** That Paul Take Up Their Offering!
 - They Knew That Other Brothers & Sisters In Christ Were Suffering & In Need As Well!
 - Later - Paul Would Write To The Roman Church - Romans 15:26 - “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem!”
 - And So - According To 8:4 - The Macedonian Christians:
 - Considered It A Great Privilege:
 - To Participate In This Special Opportunity To Minister To & Serve Their Brothers & Sisters In Christ!
 - 8:4 - “That we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints!”
 - And We Need To See That This Is What Christian Giving:
 - Is All About!
 - It Is An **Opportunity To Serve!**
 - Christ & And Other Christians!
 - And It Is Always A Privilege To Participate In This Ministry!
 - When You Give To The Church:
 - You Participate In The Ministry Of This Church:
 - No Matter How Much You Give!
 - When You Give To Our Missionaries:
 - You Support & Participate In The Ministry Of Those Missionaries:
 - No Matter How Much You Give:
 - And No Matter Where They Serve!
 - So Let Your Giving:
 - Be An Example Of God’s Grace:
 - At Work In Your Life & In Our Church!
 - Give Fully!
 - Give Freely!
 - Give Fervently!
 - Even More - Give Faithfully!
 - Because:

3. **Giving Is A Great Effect Of God’s Grace!**

- Not Just Giving From Your Purse Or Wallet:
 - But First - The Giving Of Yourself - To The Lord!
 - See This In 8:5 - “And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God!”
 - The Reason They Gave So Much To Paul For His Collection Was Because:

- God Had So Much Of Them!

- They “First Gave Their Own Selves To The Lord!”
 - Does This Describe Our Church This Morning?
 - Does This Describe You This Morning?
 - This Is Where A Truly Generous Heart Begins!
- But What Does This Mean?
 - To “Give Yourself” To The Lord Means That:
- Your First Desire:
 - Is For the Lord And His Will!
 - Even As Our Lord Jesus Christ Pursued After:
 - Not His Own Human Will, But The Divine Will Of His Father In Heaven!
 - Hebrews 10:9 - “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!”
 - And So We Too Ought To Pray & Say:
 - Matthew 6:10 - “Thy Will Be Done!”
 - Is The Lord’s Will:
 - Your First Desire?
 - To “Give Yourself” Also Means That:
- Your First Delight:
 - Is In The Lord And His Word!
 - As Job - Job 23:12:
 - “I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food!”
 - As Jeremiah - Jeremiah 15:16:
 - “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts!”
 - Is The Lord’s Word:
 - Your First Delight?
 - To “Give Yourself” Also Means That:
- Your First Devotion:
 - Is To The Lord And His Way!
 - To Be Taught His Way!
 - Psalm 86:11 - “Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name!”
 - To Live According To His Way!
 - Isaiah 2:5 - “Let us walk in the light of the Lord!”
 - Is The Lord’s Way:
 - Your First Devotion?
 - To “Give Yourself” Also Means That:
- Your First Dedication:
 - Is To The Lord And His Work!
 - Proverbs 16:3 - “Commit thy works unto the LORD!”
- All Of These Things Were True:
 - In The Hearts & Lives Of The Madeconian Churches!
 - And Their Giving Was Just The Final Expression:
 - Of What They Had First Given:
 - To The Lord!
 - “Their Own Selves!”
 - After All - This Is What The Lord:
 - Wants Most From His People!
 - As We See In 8:5 - This Is God’s Will For You!
- And When You Give Yourself To The Lord:
 - Then All That You Have:
 - Belongs To The Lord Anyways!
- **IE:** There’s A Saying Often Used About The Sacrifices Our Soldiers & Sailors Make For Their Country - “All Gave Some – Some Gave All!”
 - When You Remember That:
 - Jesus Christ Gave His All For You:
 - And Made The Ultimate Sacrifice For Your Redemption!
 - You Will Come To See That It Is No Great Sacrifice:
 - To Give Back To The Lord:

- What Already Belongs To Him!
- Your All!
- Your Own Self!
- And Even Your Some!
- Your Offerings!
- And Like The Macedonian Christians:
 - You Will Make An Entire Dedication Of All That You Have & All That You Are To Your Divine Master! (Hodge)

Conclusion:

1. And This Is Why Paul Writes In:
 - 8:6 - "Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also!"
 - Not Only Did Paul Send Titus:
 - So That The Corinthian Church:
 - Would Respond To God's Word!
 - He Also Sent Titus:
 - So That The Corinthian Church:
 - Would Reveal God's Continuing Work Of Grace Within Them!
 - It Seems That Titus:
 - Had Gone To Corinth A Previous Time:
 - To "Begin" The Collection!
 - But For Some Reason The Collection Had Stopped!
 - Probably Because Of The Strife & Division That We Read About In Chapters 1-7!
 - But Now Titus:
 - Could Go And "Finish" The Collection!
 - Which Is Here Described As:
 - "The Same Grace!"
2. This Was A Renewed Opportunity:
 - For The Corinthian Church:
 - To Respond To & To Reveal:
 - God's Work Of Grace In Their Hearts!
 - And Show Whether Or Not They Had Given "***Their*** Own Selves" To The Lord!
3. And So - The Question I Want To Leave You With This Morning Is This:
 - ***Does The Lord Have You?***
 - Does The Lord Have ***All*** Of You?
 - God Often Uses The Example:
 - Of His Work Of Grace In The Lives Of Others:
 - To Enhance His Work Of Grace In Our Lives!
 - One Way To Know:
 - Of God's Grace:
 - In Your Life & In Our Church:
 - Is Through Giving!
 - Giving Is An Opportunity:
 - For You To Respond To:
 - And Even Reveal The Active Grace Of God:
 - In Your Heart & Life!
4. So - In The Words Of:
 - 9:7 - "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver!"

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
 4245 North 200 West
 Greenfield, Indiana 46140
 317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com