

"The Amazing Ways God Uses Our Giving" 6/5-6/07
 6 p.m.; 9 & 10:45 a.m.
 2 Corinthians 9:12-15

OPEN to 2 Corinthians 9:12 (**PAGE** 1803)

INTRODUCTION

In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, Paul is helping to prepare the Corinthians for his visit to actually receive the financial gifts that they had freely committed to help relieve the poverty of those who were a part of the Church in Jerusalem.

He is letting them know that he would be coming soon to receive their gift and to take it to Jerusalem.

But, before he came, Paul wanted them to understand what their giving would actually mean.

READ 2 Corinthians 9:12-15

I. Our Giving Meets People's Needs (v. 12a)

2 Corinthians 9:12a **"This service that you perform is ... supplying the needs of God's people"**

"service" refers to their sacrificial giving to help their fellow believers in Jerusalem.

And he says that their giving will:

- **supply the needs** of the believers in Jerusalem;
- i.e., help to fill the cup of their poverty.

This was so important! (providing food, clothing)

Later on in this passage he says that their giving proves that their faith in Christ is real ... just like we read in James 2:15-17:

James 2:15-17 **"Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.**

16 If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

The Corinthian's faith was genuine - they gave to put food in the mouths and clothes on the backs of their fellow believers ... ones they'd never seen or met.

Through Building on Purpose, what our giving will make possible:

Children's ministry space ... so more children can meet Jesus Christ and grow in Him.

Youth ministry space ... so more youth can meet Jesus Christ and grow in Him.

Mid-size group space ... so more adults can meet Jesus Christ and grow in Him.

Space for worship service venues ... as we are able to move existing youth and children's ministries into the multi-purpose building, we free up space in the Pavilion and Chapel to start more worship service venues ... so more people can meet Jesus Christ and grow in Him.

Athletic center ... so we can have sports outreach ministries into the community and meet needs in the congregation.

I. Our Giving Meets Needs ... it will help more and more people to hear about Jesus Christ and grow in Him.

Now Paul goes on ... and possibly because the physical part of what their giving would accomplish was so obvious, he wanted them to know that there was more to their giving than meeting the obvious needs:

II. Our Giving Causes People to Thank and Praise God (v. 12b, 13)

2 Corinthians 9:12b-13 **"This service that you perform is... overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.**

13 **Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the Gospel of Christ and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else."**

v. 12b: describes the thanks to God as **"overflowing."**

Not just filling a glass from a pitcher of water and allowing it to overflow until the pitcher is empty, but it's like filling it with a hose stretched from outside and the faucet is turned on, and the glass fills and overflows, and continues to overflow!

"overflowing!" "expressions of thanks to God."

A. Two specific things are mentioned as to why people will praise God:

v. 13b:

1. They **"will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the Gospel of Christ..."**

And in the first part of v. 13, Paul says they **"proved"** themselves; they showed that their Christian faith was genuine.

There had been deep animosity between Jews and Gentiles for centuries. The believers in Jerusalem were mostly ethnic Jews. The believers in Corinth were mostly ethnic Gentiles (non-Jews).

When the Gentiles first believed in the Lord, the Jews in Jerusalem had a hard time believing that God would actually save Gentiles.

But, the giving of the Corinthians clearly demonstrated to the Jewish believers that they were for real in their confession of Christ, **"the obedience**

that accompanied their confession of the Gospel of Christ."

i.e., The Corinthian's actions lined up with their words: their words were in agreement with the Gospel of Christ. Their actions were following the words they spoke.

Secondly,

2. v. 13b: They **"will praise God ...for your generosity in sharing with them"**

"generosity" giving that has a single and sincere purpose, not self-seeking or self-promoting.

"sharing with them" lit., **"koinonia"** partnership, fellowship, participation.

They have become partners, brothers and sisters, family, beyond their faith in a common Savior - now there's giving and sharing between them.

ILLUSTRATION

It's amazing to think that because of our giving, there will be a concert of praise all around the city and this region, and that it will reverberate into the future ...

A few weeks ago, on Commitment Sunday, we showed some pictures of the heritage of this congregation ... back to the beginnings 104 years ago.

We saw a pictures of some of those believers, the first few buildings, the march from the church location at 11th and K, to the site across the street. And we heard from some of the people who marched.

It made us feel linked with them; partners. Their giving made possible where we are today.

At the Celebration Dinner meetings, I shared the gratitude that Elvira Barse expressed for those early believers and their vision to keep reaching more people and building larger buildings to make that possible and how that created

a place for her three teenagers, and even brought her to Christ.

- How many of you have thanked God for the Pavilion, the Ark, for the ministries it has made possible for your children, grandchildren, the homeless and needy on Monday nights, and so many more ministries?

- How many have thanked God that the Pavilion was available to provide emergency services when disasters have struck our area, like the massive flood several years ago?

- Or when people were ready to enter recovery and there was a place to go to in order to receive the encouragement and support to get free from the control of drugs, alcohol, other addictions ... and to meet Jesus Christ?

- How many have thanked God that all these facilities are here, in the heart of downtown Modesto, to provide a ministry to all segments of the community, and help meet the needs of people in all kinds of situations?

- And just as we thank God for the people before us who gave, there will be people in the future who thank God because of our giving, your sacrifice, how our actions match the words we express about concern for people who are lost from Christ!

v. 13: "Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the Gospel of Christ."

v. 14: "And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you."

II. Our Giving Causes People to Thank and Praise God

III. Our Giving is a Response to God's Giving to Us (v. 15)

v. 15: "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

God has given the greatest gift ... Jesus! And He is **indescribable!!**

"indescribable:" a gift that cannot be fully or humanly explained."

How do we express or describe all that Jesus' birth, death and resurrection has meant to us?

I spent some time this week just thinking about what God's gift of Jesus has meant in my life. Because of Jesus my father was transformed from a 13-year practicing alcoholic to a man who has now accumulated more than 40 years of sobriety. His transformation made me realize how real God was, and I turned to Jesus for deliverance from my own alcoholic problems.

I met Sharon in a church college-age group. We married. But, if Jesus hadn't come, we never would have met, and even if somehow we had, we wouldn't still be married ... it's taken Jesus' strength to help us stay committed and in love with one another.

Without Jesus we wouldn't have the four children we have today, each of whom has made their own decision to entrust their lives to Christ and follow Him. And, now, our two married children are ready to have their first babies. I'll be a grandfather soon!

As I think about those grandchildren, I think of what I wanted for my own children. I'd tell them, "I really don't care what you do for a living, as long as it's honest work. I don't care how many zeros follow the first number on your pay check, or how many degrees you accumulate. What I really care about is that you trust Jesus and follow Him all your life. If you do that, everything else will be taken care of."

I'm just one person among the thousands who are a part of this church ... think of what He's done in your life, and add it to all the rest of us here, in our city, around the world!

Thank God for His Indescribable Gift, Jesus Christ!

"Heavenly Father, thank You for giving Jesus to forgive my sins and give me eternal life with You forever. I want to give generously as You did. Please show me how You want me to give so that more and more people will know about Jesus! In His Name I pray, Amen."