

Giving to Complete Great Commission 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 (Pledge Sunday, Jan 23, 2005)

Illustrations:

The spiritual habits being discussed (giving, **praying, and fasting**) were practiced

We must give with a vision to evangelize the nations

— Paul understood the gospel was applicable cross-culturally, so he took the gospel to far-away regions.

— Our giving must be motivated by a vision for evangelizing the nations, recognizing it is our responsibility.

Has anybody seen a \$5 million bill? No? here is one (pass it on.) I've a bill with face value of five million! (from Jugoslavija in 1993 with head bud Nikola tesla 1856-1943) worth only about USD0.10. Accumulation of wealth of in vain:

2 Corinthians 8 *Generosity Encouraged* ¹And now, brothers, we want you to know about the **grace that God has given** the Macedonian churches. ²Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴they urgently pleaded with us for **the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints**. ⁵And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us **in keeping with God's will**. ⁶So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to **completion this act of grace** on your part. ⁷But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us - see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ⁸I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

Introduction: (verses 1-8) Giving is ...a lot more than just money.

“a grace that God has given “

“a privilege of sharing in this (His) service”

“a test of the sincerity of your love”

*Paul taught that the believers should give sacrificially (1-2) and spontaneously (3-4), with spiritual motives (5-9). What ever God gives you, use them for the glory of God. Notice, Paul was addressing to 'brothers' in the Corianthian churches since God's people have a responsibility to give, which is to make a vow to God and God's people experience the joy of giving. Guests, if not followers of Christ, and don't understand the true meaning of biblical meaning of giving, don't give. God's people don't depend on people, but only on God! Jerusalem had been impoverished through the famines in Judea in the 40s. The Corinthians had promised to give and had failed to participate. He took the Macedonian churches as examples, who experienced the *most severe trial* and are *in extreme poverty*. Yet, they had *overflowing joy* in the midst of trial and poverty, which **welled up in rich generosity!** Not only that, they pleaded for the *privilege of sharing in the service to the saints entirely on their own*. They did NOT do as Paul and Titus expected, rather we should give as the Macedonian churches did, **first to the Lord**; then to others **in keeping with God's will**.*

David testified in I Chron. 29:14, "...Everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand."

1. Why Giving? To Complete Great Commission!

2 Corinthians 8 *9For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*

10And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.

examples of grace God given to TIBC last year...— 1st Per Capita Giver among all TMBA churches, I don't know where we will be with \$1300 giving towards Lottie Moon, but most likely Top Four as usual, leader among ethnic churches – a debt free-building - setting lofty goals of the past (eg. Edna Macmillian, Annie Armstrong, collection/contribution) just seem too extravagant - how generous God is!

2. (same story in Luke 21:1-4) THERE ARE 3 KINDS OF GIVING!

A. Grudge **GIVING** --- I have to give, ... this is constraint...a command

B. Duty **GIVING** --- I ought to give, it is expected of me... this is an obligation.

C. THANKSGIVING... I want to give... opens a gate to the throne and a song in the night.

Deuteronomy 15:10, "Give generously...and do so *without a grudging heart*; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to." Proverbs 3:9-10, "*Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your income*; then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine." Luke 6:38, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap." What is all of that telling us?

3. Equal Sacrifice, Not Equal Gifts

2 Corinthians 8 *13Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, 15as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."*

*1John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and **sees his brother in need but has no pity on him**, how can the love of God be in him?*

4. A Planned, Purposed Gift

God loves to see people give with a cheerful heart. It blesses the heart of God. But there's more. Not only is God honored and pleased by your giving; but your giving causes other men to praise and honor God as well. Paul goes on in verses **2 Corinthians 8**:11, 12 and 13 of that chapter to declare: "...*11Now finish the work, so that **your eager willingness** to do it may be matched by your **completion of it, according to your means**. 12For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. 13Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality*" How about that? My giving causes other men to bless the Lord. I like that, don't you? God gets the honor and praise in it all, and that's the way it ought to be.

Giving to Complete Great Commission

The same impact still comes from giving. If you were to ask me, "John, what did you do last week?" I could legitimately reply: "Oh, I had a wonderful and productive week! On Monday, I taught a class at our Baptist seminary in Chile; on Tuesday, I was down on the Children's Home — helping in TMBA Ministry; on Wednesday, I was in Kenya, helping patients at a clinic; on Thursday, I was in Moscow, Russia, passing out Bibles; on Friday, I was in Tulsa, OK —finishing up plans on a new church building; on Saturday, I was in Sao Paulo, Brazil, preaching at a crusade; on Sunday, I was utilizing the Bible to teach English to an unreached people group in Southern China.

The response might come, "John, you have to be kidding. No man can do all of that in one week." Actually, that is just a little of what I did last week; for you see I gave God's tithe and my offerings to His work through TIBC, and I am working for Jesus through that giving all over the world within 12 days from the time you put in the offering plates. It's is a blessing to give, when you know what you give can do all of that. It is a pride to be a Southern Baptist having such a kingdom vision.

*Paul taught that they should give freely, for God values the eagerness to give, not necessarily the amount of the gift (10-15), so that they can complete the act of grace of giving. I said this before, and will say it again, . **Our Capital Stewardship Program is not the church's plan for raising money. It is God's plan for developing people.*** After all, anything I give was really His in the first place.

More than 60 years ago, neither we nor our mother church have this facility we are meeting right now. The mother church people gave what they had and could. They set a goal, established this church site. They gave generously. That giving continues to meet needs—60+ years later. The impact of that giving lives on. The fact that you are sitting where you are is a testimony to that. The benefits of their generosity can only be measured in terms of eternity.

Conclusion: God is moving to reach all peoples

- God's call is to faithfulness and obedience, despite global conflicts and catastrophes.
- God is breaking down barriers and opening doors through creative ways to enable gospel proclamation to all peoples. ON our personal level, he is constantly changing our lives and helping us breakdown relationship barriers, create unity, reaching the lost.
- The numbers of new believers, baptisms and new church starts continue to climb.
- The life and ministry of Paul are a model for the church today as it focuses on completing the task.

Invitation:

If we are to join God on mission and, in obedience, complete the task and reach a lost world in our generation, we must, like Paul, (1) look beyond ourselves and have a vision for evangelizing the nations, (2) humbly offer what we have, even in weakness and inadequacy to be empowered and used by Him, and (3) keep our eyes on Jesus.

Welcome & News

Ray Greene's update; Lilis' dad blood transfusion; Spartan students – spirit-led outreach effort

Announcements – in addition to bulletin's