

## 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 Living Generously, Part 1

Good morning:

Here at CCV we teach chapter by Chapter verse by verse thru books of the Bible – eventually whole Bible. - Our Model of ministry.

A) So that means from time to time we are going to land in Chapters – less popular

B) Right now the Lord has us in 2 Corinthians – Today we come to Ch.8

1) **Ch.s 8-9 Are about giving!**

C) Oh Great – **help in the nursery** - I wished I would have gone to visit my Aunt –

D) I understand that especially during these tough economic times – **this is a hard subject.**

1) I even wrestled on Friday – I had great time of devos in Psalm 91 { Personally blessed

E) Lord can preach Psalm 91 this week – NO!

**Know this: My heart as we talk about this subject over the next 3 weeks – You would be blessed.**

A) **That is the Lord's heart too.** – That is why this is recorded for us.

B) The Bible is inspired by God- He included these Chapters – for our benefit – growth, maturity

**C) It is not because God wants something from us – more that He has something for us.**

1) There is a place God is desiring to take each one of us in our relationship to Him

D) And this is part of it. – So be encouraged.

**Pray**

**Setting: On his third missionary journey, as Paul traveled between the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, he took an offering — not for himself,**

A) The offering was for the church at Jerusalem which was going through hard times financially due to a famine & Persecution in the region.

B) Paul saw this as an opportunity **for a bonding** between the Gentile Christians in Greece and the Jewish believers in Jerusalem.

C) Paul was eager to take up an offering for the Jerusalem Church.

D) Yet, although the Corinthian congregation had initially welcomed the opportunity to help their brothers in Jerusalem

1) a year had passed, they hadn't raised any money in the endeavor.

E) So Paul is writing to encourage them to follow through on their promise **RD V.1-7**

**Now I want to begin by focusing on V.7 which I think really reveals Paul's heart for them**

A) God's heart for them and us on this subject!

B) **The Church in Corinth was a Church that despite its Carnality and problems!**

1) It was a Church that had great beginnings

C) **They were very blessed:** Concerning the gifts – they weren't lacking in any

D) **They were abounding in certain graces** – Paul mentions in v. 7 Faith and speech [**Boldness in sharing**] – Knowledge / diligence & Love

**But Paul declares here: See that you to abound in this grace as well.**

A) God never wants us to be in a holding pattern – always growing, always abounding { **Complete**

B) What is the grace he wants them to abound in?

1) **The Grace of giving!** Interesting he calls this a grace

C) **What is Grace?**

1) **Grace = Underserved favor** – We think of the blessings that God has bestowed upon us – coming thru the conduit of Grace

2) God's underserved favor – or that He has blessed us even though we didn't deserve it

**But why would GIVING be considered an undeserved Favor?**

A) **Think of it this way – God who doesn't need us to do His work to accomplish His ministry on the earth.**

B) **But He says to you & I - I am going to let you partner w/ me in my work!**

1) One way is thru your giving

C) **Giving of time/ talents/ energy/ resources!**

1) God could miraculously provide....Jerusalem

2) Feeding of 5,000 – passed out not appeared

**That is an amazing thing – He doesn't need us – but He blesses us by allowing us to be a part of what He is doing! Giving is a simple way!**

A)Some might say – *that is one Grace or blessing I can do w/out*

B)Such a person has no understanding of the Goodness of their Father!

C)Privilege not a duty or obligation –

**So Paul declares my heart for you is that you would abound in this grace as well.**

A)You as a body in general do that well.

B) Vargas family house burned down – word went out – you guys stepped up – Pete tell them to stop

1)Mike Rozell 42 Sponsorships – El Salvador / Shoe

**Many of you respond – you are a giving body**

A)God's heart for all of us!

B)Abounding in the Grace of Giving!

**Now Part of the way that God teaches us is by holding up examples for us in the Scripture of those who did things right.**

A)Example 10 lepers – One came back - Jesus acknowledged that Example

B)Centurion example of great faith

C) Well here the HS holds up the Churches in Macedonia as an example of what true biblical giving is supposed to look like- Note 3 things

**#1 They gave in tough times.**

A)They gave despite **their trial and their Poverty**

B)The Macedonians (namely, the churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea) were **poor.**

1)The word Paul uses for “their extreme poverty” is the word from which we derive the English word *bathysphere*—

A **deep-diving chamber** used to probe the depths of the ocean—a Jacques Cousteau kind of word.

C)We might say they were **scraping the bottom.** They were in deep poverty. They were

**dirt poor!**

**Paul also says they were afflicted:**

A) They were also “in a severe test of affliction” (v. 2).

B) The literal idea is that they were being crushed by life. {Some of you feel that way today!

C) The surrounding culture kept squeezing them harder and harder {Immense pressure!

1) They were poor and picked on.

D) Often times when we are going thru that kind of difficulty easy to become self absorbed

1) Focused on our own needs and survival

E) In those times we think – I can’t give right now – I can’t help out – I can’t pitch in.

1) In reality it is a greater opportunity to trust God

**That is what they did!**

**#2 v.3 They gave according to their ability – and even beyond their ability.**

A) In other words they gave more than they could

B) **Lk 21 Story of the widow** who gave the two mites

1) Jesus stood watching – He pointed her out to his disciples

C) So Jesus noticed who was giving – but he wasn’t paying attention to WHAT they gave but **HOW** .....

**See most of those who gave were gave out of their abundance – but the widow gave despite her poverty**

A) So her two mites – 1/8 of a cent – was really a bigger gift – she was giving all she had.

B) Jesus said for that reason – She gave more than all { Remembered

The Scot replied, “Oh, I guess I’ll be able to put in the widow’s mite.” The deacon called out in the next meeting, “Brethren, we have all the money we need. This brother is going to give fifty thousand pounds.” The man was amazed. “I didn’t say I would give fifty thousand pounds; I said I would give the widow’s mite.” The deacon replied, “Well, she gave her all, and I thought that is what you meant to give!” It is interesting that God notes what you give but also what you keep for yourself.

D) The point being – if these other poor Churches could give beyond their ability – then surely the Church in Corinth **which was doing well** could do likewise.

**They gave beyond their ability: RESULT was they were full of Joy!**

A)The Churches in Macedonia gave more than they could – but the result was it filled their heart with Joy

B)There is a Joy attached to being spent for the Lord

C)**I will never forget something that happened** here several yrs ago in the fellowship.

**Privileged to know**

1)There was a student who graduated high School  
Graduation gifts \$1000.00 most money ever had

**At that same time there was another student who wanted to go on missions trip or overseas BC –**

A)That student was short - funds -

B)The first student – took his just received 1000 – and anonymously gave 500 to help the other student

1)I will never forget – How full of Joy that student was in knowing – He helped someone else out.

C)What was interesting is there were several pp around here who could **have written a Check for 500 or even the whole amount – and not felt it**

D)This guy – Felt it – 1/2 his savings –

1)But sometimes the blessing really comes when you feel it.

**Now we will see next week where Paul says – God doesn't want us to be burdened**

A)He doesn't want us to feel pressure – Give what we can!

B)Loves a Cheerful giver

C)So we will get to that – But Starting off here – He wants the Corinthian Church to know – that the **Macedonians Gave – beyond their ability**

1)They gave more than they thought they could – and it was freeing – filled their hearts with incredible Joy

**Verse 4 is interesting: Different translations**

“They were begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints.” ESV

“They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.” NLT

A) **In other words, they were pleading for an opportunity to give.**

B) They had found that giving was so rewarding, so blessed, **so joyous, so enriching, so beneficial** that they were begging for an opportunity to give.

C) **Such is the grace of giving. It is not dictated by ability. It has nothing to do with being well-off.**

1) It is willingness that views giving as a privilege.

It is joyously enthusiastic – { **Living Generously**

E) **The reason that God records this is because that is where He desires that all our hearts would be!**

1) That is where He wants to take us - Learn – **“More blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35**

**What is at the root of such giving ?**

**#3 v.5 They first gave themselves to the Lord.**

A) **This is really a key to all service/ Giving of ourselves – Understanding the fact I belong to Christ –**

B) **Giving starts here: Giving ourselves to Christ first:**

**The Macedonian believers 1<sup>st</sup> gave themselves to God.**

A) **That is Key: If God doesn't have you, He doesn't want anything from you.**

B) **If God doesn't have the hand, He doesn't want the gift that is in the hand.**

**Interesting thing about Jesus: Did you know that Jesus spoke more about money than any other thing he taught. Why is that?**

A) **Is it because – He wants our money NO!**

B) **Jesus doesn't want our money – If He did – He would just take it**

1) **GOVT takes it right – Jesus is more powerful than the US GOVT**

C) **Jesus doesn't want our money – He wants our hearts – and He knows there is a link between our hearts and our finances.**

1) **That is why Jesus said: Matthew 6:19-21**

**"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither**

**moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**

**Now that last phrase is Key – Where your treasure is your heart will be also**

A) Not an indictment – just a fact – birds fly – fish swim – where your treasure is your heart is going to be also

B) Stocks – **You were not interested** – suddenly invest – now you are interested – little announcements on your computer screen - signals

Cc) Jesus wants our hearts to be in His Kingdom

1) Happens when we invest there

C) So Jesus isn't interested in getting our finances but He is interested in capturing our hearts –

1) When He captures our hearts – everything else falls into place

**That is the point Jesus made in Matthew 22 When He was asked if they should pay taxes to the Romans.**

A) Jesus said Show me a coin – Whose image? – Ceaser – **Give to Ceaser** that which belongs to Ceaser and give to God what belongs to Him

B) Implication: **You bear the image of God – you have been created in the image of God – Give yourself to Him**

C) Once we give ourselves to God we ready to be right in this area of our finances. –

**Jesus also said: You can't serve God and Money! Can't have two masters**

A) Now think about that statement – You can't serve God and \_\_\_\_\_

B) What would you expect Jesus to have said? Fill in the blank – **Can't serve God and Satan right? - Serving Satan would be the opposite of serving God**

C) But that is not what He said: He said Can't serve God and money

1) Serving money is the opposite of Serving God - Jesus is saying the **#1 competition** that God faces for our affections is our Stuff / money

D) But Jesus is not saying that because He wants our money – **He says that because He wants our hearts** –

1) Jesus is never trying to get pp's money – but He is trying to keep pp's money from getting them.

“Money is a cruel master – but a great servant.”

Everyone in this room knows what it is like when your Bills and debts and personal financial problems are Chasing us.

A) And we know what it is like to be gotten – Jesus wants to free us from that

B) That is why He spoke so much about money – He wants us to be free to trust God – free to invest in the Kingdom

C) He wants us to know the incredible Joy and blessing of partnering with God in this way.

D) But in order to know that Joy it starts with **first giving our ourselves to the Lord.**

This is where I want to leave you this morning.

A) I want you to ponder this point – for next week

B) In your walk – have you given yourself fully to the Lord! {Every area – submitted to you.

C) **OR – Is your testimony:** Lord I have given myself to you in every area but my finances

1) Every area but my Business / your marriage or ...

**Listen: You are still saved/ God loves you/ Going to heaven. No condemnation in Christ.**

A) God doesn't want your money –

B) But He is a Potter – He is seeking to make you complete-

1) You are Not complete

C) You will be Lacking in Joy

D) He is not going to force you {not his style

1) Maybe scared – Lord I want to be there help me

Strengthen my faith