

The Stewardship of Grace Pt. #2: 2 Corinthians 9:6-14

Preached @ Harambee Church by Pastor Michael Gunn on September 20th, 2009

"Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!!"

Intro

As we continue our series on stewardship, we must remember that our giving of our time, talent and treasures is a consequence of the joy we have in Christ due to the riches He has lavished upon us. It is first because of His grace and mercy and love shown to us, that we can give with the same motivation and desire to bless others with our giving. If we give grudgingly out of guilt or pride or fear, we are not practicing biblical worship in our giving; we are simply giving to ourselves and for ourselves. Last week we saw that giving is linked to joy and grace (**2 Corinthians 8:6**). In today's passage we see that this "Grace act" is a result of a heart change that God does to us (See **2 Corinthians 8:16**), for the glory of God (**2 Corinthians 8:19**).

From the Head...

Biblical Giving Is An Act of Praise, Not An Act of Desire (**2 Corinthians 9:5**)

This little phrase by Paul here I think is important to unraveling some of the rest. Paul is sending "Brothers" ahead of him to determine if their giving was "Willing" and not an "Exaction." He has been encouraging them, and saying that they are ready to give, but he needs to make sure that this gift was being given as a response to God's grace in their lives (**2 Corinthians 8:6-9**), and not as a way to gain something for themselves. The two words "Willing" (*eulogian*) and "Exaction" (*pleonexian*) are important here. The word *eulogian* means "Blessing or Praise." As a consequence of God's grace, we give as an act of praise, not as an *pleonexian* "Desire to have more."

Giving To Get Thwarts God's Blessing of Joy (**2 Corinthians 9:6, 8, 11**)

It is the previous verse (As well as **vv. 9+11**) that gives us key context here, so we don't extract this verse and interpret it too widely and selfishly. The context gives us its interpretative limits. All too often this biblical truth is used to preach a self-centered principle of sowing. It is true that as we sow, we will reap, but the question is what are we reaping here? Poor sowing (As we saw last week) may be a sign of a disingenuous faith, which results in a joyless act. When we don't understand the gospel of grace, we look to other things (People, events, status, etc.) to give us joy. Since most of us turn to money as a key to secular joy, we are reluctant to part with our money, and therefore are robbed of the joy that we get (Not just for giving) from knowing that we have been truly graced by God (See **2 Corinthians 8:9**). I have heard the adage giving is the link to joy and happiness, but I think it misses the point by one step. Giving to get joy makes joy the object of our desires, whereas biblical giving sees God's glory as that object, and gains the joy from knowing that the act glorifies Him, which is our highest object of affection. When we give like that, God's blessings are overwhelming, sufficient, and full (**2 Corinthians 9:8, 11**).

Biblical Giving Must Be A Result of What God Has Placed In Your Heart (**2 Corinthians 9:7a**)

Ten percent is not a bad place to start our giving, but for some it is too small. The "Tithe" (Which is an OT idea) was actually more than ten percent. After the "Tithes and offerings" it came out to more than thirty percent. New testament giving is a "Heart" thing, not a law thing.

Biblical Giving Needs To be Freely and Cheerfully Given (**2 Corinthians 9:7b**)

If your giving is "Under compulsion," then most likely you are giving for the wrong reasons. Whether we give of our time or treasures, our giving ought to be the result of God's grace and cheerfully done. If we are doing it for the praise of men, or in order to manipulate God into blessing us, we are not giving biblically.

God Blesses Us To Be A Blessing (**2 Corinthians 9:8-15**)

First we are a blessing to those that we show generosity to (**2 Corinthians 9:8-11a**). God blesses us, so that we can give more, which leads to the second blessing, which giving leads to God being thanked and praised (**2 Corinthians 9:11b-12**). Lastly, it leads to the goal of the gospel, the demonstration of the glory of God (**2 Corinthians 9:13**). When people see us "Submitting" our time, talent and treasures for the benefit of others, they see the reality of the "*Confession of the gospel of Christ*" in your giving.

...to the Heart

Paul ends this chapter on his knees with the phrase of praise, "*Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!!*" Do you see the gospel as that, or are you looking for more? What is it in your heart that acts as a blockade toward being a blessing to others? What idols are you holding on to, that forces you to hold on to your belongings so tightly? Is your gospel teaching you that you need God in order to get more, or is your gospel teaching you that you have everything you need in Christ, and therefore you can use what God has given you to give back to Him for the sake of His glory!!