

2 Corinthians 9:6-15
Being Generous With Purpose

Christmas was the beginning (if we can use such a term) of the changing of everything. An awesome privilege that has come as a result of His coming is the refashioning of those who place faith in Him into an image that delights him.

My son is beginning to draw. I say draw, it is really just scribble, complete nonsense. But those little scribbles for me are beautiful, because they are my son's scribbles. Now, if he stays a scribbler it will be an issue, but the scribbles are the beginning. Just imagine a life of nothing but scribble, what would be accomplished? Very little. If you come to me, and you are a reasonable age and present a scribble to me, I will not be impressed. No one is meant to scribble their way through life. But through Jesus, God has taken our scribble and said that is not good, take my drawing instead, and His is perfect - it can't get any better.

This is the awesome privilege of being His - his conforming purpose. Romans 8:29 says, *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* In other words, His coming means that through Jesus (the perfect union of Humanity and Divinity in one person) God is refashioning, reorienting the world to Himself! We, the subjects of this great work, get to express this heart work with the way we live, the way we love, where we go and what we give, everything that we are, shaped by the reality of His salvation.

Of all the ways that we get to express the reality of our salvation, giving takes a special place in revealing what we confess. Truly the measure of a man is determined by what he treasures. As our Lord said, you cannot serve both God and money, where a man's heart is there his treasure is also (Matthew 6:24, 21).

The concern of God is your heart, and money is an expression of the heart. This is the reason that Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit, takes the opportunity in 2 chapters to instruct the Corinthians concerning giving, and also the reason that not one time does he use the term "money." Scripture is encouraging a group of saints then with the timeless principles of God to be generous, and as such, God today through Scripture has a word for us.

Let's turn our attention to hear it:

READ TEXT

Did you hear it? God is encouraging us to be generous with purpose. Why? Through a life of generosity, we make a true confession of who God is - a God abounding in grace and generosity.

So, just two major headings for our purposes today about our confession when we are purposefully generous, and I am going to do something that I normally, don't do, I am going to give them to you right away:

When we are purposefully generous we confess:

1. Our Help (all the good that we have) Comes From the Lord (6-11)
2. God is Worthy of Praise (12-15)

1. Our Help Comes From the Lord (6-11)

- Right away we are faced with the divine principle of reaping and sowing. This is one of God's orders to the universe and God has recorded it and made this reality known so that we could order ourselves wisely to the way the world is. Around what do we order our ways? *Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly.*
- Do you see the wonder of this revelation? You and I don't always see how the parts make up the whole, but God sees every deed, every inclination of our hearts, and gives us boundaries by which to order our lives. One of those boundaries: "You reap what you sow."
- Jesus said, *"Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put in your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."*
- Such thoughts of God's sovereignty cause this heart to desire to stay close to the one who knows my heart. Such thoughts keep my heart praying, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any previous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"* (Psalm 136:23-24)
- Truly such a thought of how meticulously concerned with our affairs God is forces us to *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.* (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- Can't you see how overcome we would be with concern and care if we did not trust in His sovereignty? Trust that right now He is upholding the universe by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3).
- Oh, but that is the issue with our entire lives isn't it; the confrontation that we have with trusting that God is in control?
- This is why Paul says the point is this - God is in control! Any good you have comes from Him. Any hope that you have comes from Him. Trust in Him. He is your help!
- Look again at verse 6:
- See the word that just sticks out? Bountifully.
- If the Lord is sovereignly in control and we are to trust in this, what kind of bounty is there?
 - A. A Heart Approved by God (7)
 - Verse 7 does not mean apart from God's gracious refashioning. Christ is our life. The fact that we Christians get to consider giving is on account of His work in our life.
 - Remember what has already been said, and it is interesting how the foundation is said as an afterthought (2 Corinthians 8:9). The fact of His coming is now the basis for our life.
 - Look at verse 8
 - B. A Heart Overflowing with Good Works (8-9)
 - God makes grace abound for a purpose - good works. Good works are always a testimony of His salvation.
 - Being content with the one who is sovereign is the key to a heart overflowing with good works, and being content is on account of His work of grace. And what is His work of grace? You know: 2 Corinthians 8:9

- We perform good works because the greatest work has been done for us by the one who came for our sake and our salvation
- C. Never Ending Righteousness (10-11)
- Just as Psalm 112 assures us, the one who fears the Lord, who orders his life around trusting with God, will never be shaken, his righteousness (which is an expression of Christ's righteousness) endures forever!
 - After considering such great truths of God, how could you be concerned? If you are ordering your steps in wisdom, walking with the Lord, trusting in Him in all things, how could you see things any other way that to confess in all of your life - God is in control. My help, my trust is not in things; my help is in the one who made heaven and earth. As we go outside, on these cold winter nights, we will see beautiful scenes of starlight. When we look at the stars, we know the name of the one who made the stars. We know that the one who upholds the stars is upholding all of our life, and nothing, not sickness, not debt, or even death will keep him from fulfilling his purpose for us. His purpose for us who believe in Him is a life filled with worship and obedience.
 - As worshipers were approaching the Temple in the City of Jerusalem, one of the Psalms they would sing was Psalm 121. Listen to it:

*I lift up my eyes to the hills.
 From where does my help come?
 My help comes from the LORD, who
 made heaven and earth.
 He will not let your foot be moved; he who
 keeps you will not slumber.
 Behold, he who keeps Israel will
 neither slumber nor sleep.
 The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade
 on your right hand.
 The sun shall not strike you by day,
 nor the moon by night.
 The LORD will keep you from all evil;
 he will keep your life.
 The LORD will keep your going out and
 your coming in from this time forth
 and forevermore.*

- Now as the worshipers were confessing Psalm 121 they were on their way to worship. As they were coming from all corners of the earth to gather for worship, they were confessing to all along their path that there is more to this life than what is seen, than just the day by day, living dying etc....

Why does the Lord give this abundance to us? So that our generosity will confront the rest of the world with the fact: There is more to life than things, there is an eternity awaiting all men. The Lord desires us to be generous so that others will see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

In other words, the Lord gives us all this abundance so that we can live our lives generously for the sake of others who need to know Him. When we live generously we confess:

2. God is Worthy of Praise (12-15)

- Perhaps you are reading verses 6-11 in light of yourself. As if this is some sort of secret to success. Perhaps you are seeking to exploit the grace of God. You may have this idea that, "if I give more then I get more." But, the principle is generosity, not greed.
- It's the same thing that we often do with that verse in Romans that tells us to be kind to our enemies and in so doing our kindness will heap hot coals on their heads. We aren't to be kind for vengeance sake but for kindness sake!
- We aren't to be generous to get, we are to be generous to give.
- Greed gives to get, which is not giving.
- Generosity gives regardless, and God, the rewarder of man, sees the generous heart and gives.
- Take Solomon for example: Solomon was told of God, ask and I will give you. What does Solomon ask for? Wisdom so that he can govern others! What does God do then? Give him wisdom AND riches! (2 Chronicles 1)
- See how quickly the tone of the text changes from you to them from verses 11-12?
- Man's greatest need is to worship God, to have our hearts refashioned in light of the reality of the one who came for our sake and our salvation.
- The thrust of Scripture is contained in Psalm 67 - *Let the nations be glad and sing for joy...*
- The gladness of the nations comes from praising God for Jesus, to confess verse 15, to say, *Thanks be to God for his indescribable, inexpressible gift!* Heaven will be an eternity of us singing v. 15. All of the anthems of eternity will never exhaust the anthem of praise due this one who for our sakes became poor so that by his poverty he might make us rich (2 Cor 8:9).

It is truly better to give than receive. We know this because the greatest, the unfathomable matchless God, has given us the greatest gift - Redemption through Jesus Christ. Can you express verse 15? If you know Jesus you can. If not, you can say it today perhaps for the first time, but you must believe. Believe that this God is worthy of all things, worthy of worship, praise, adoration. Trust Him.