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## Joyful Generosity

By Jeff Bedwell on February 6, 2024

### **TODAY'S READING:** 2 Corinthians 9

Chapters 8 and 9 are part of one large section of this letter that focuses on the grace-filled generosity and financial giving that flows from a heart that has been truly transformed by the love and truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

After talking about the advance arrangements to prepare for receiving the relief offering (vv. 1-5), Paul writes about the qualities of grace-filled giving. Our giving is to be done with bountiful generosity (vs. 6) and cheerful willingness (vs. 7) One whose life has been transformed by the inexpressible grace of Jesus Christ will never be a tight-fisted Scrooge when it comes to the handling of their personal finances. Their lives will be marked by a joy-filled, radical generosity that reflects the grace they have personally received.

Paul goes on to talk about the personal benefits of this type of grace-filled giving. First, sufficiency for any generous deed to which God calls us: *"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work"* (2 Corinthians 9:8, ESV). Secondly, Paul talks about a righteousness that endures forever (vv. 9-10). Paul did not suggest that we earn righteousness by our giving, because the only way to get righteousness is by faith in Jesus Christ. He does point out that if our hearts are right, our giving will be used by God to make our character righteous. Grace-filled giving shapes Christian character.

There are also church-wide benefits to this type of living and giving. Needs will be met (vs. 12), thanksgiving and glory will be given to God (vv. 12-13), and God's people will be united in a bond of affection expressed through giving and prayer (vs. 14).

This chapter concludes as Paul points us to the inexpressible gift of Jesus Christ (vs. 15)! Paul calls us to contemplate Christ's giving as the example for our giving—His embrace of poverty that we might become rich. It is not a call to legalistic observance but to grace, as Paul's repeated mentions of grace throughout these two chapters emphasize. It is a call to demonstrate by our giving that our faith is genuine and transforming.

What does your level of giving and your attitude around giving say about how you are treasuring and responding to the inexpressible gift of God's grace in Jesus Christ?

**PRAYER:** Father, help me today to contemplate the "inexpressible gift" of Jesus Christ. Help me to become, more and more, a grace-filled giver whose life is marked by joyful generosity.

**TOMORROW'S READING:** Galatians 5

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