

10/21/12

**SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A MAN OF GOD, WEEK 34**

**TITLE: A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE FOR GIVING**

**TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 8:1-5**

**INTRODUCTION: (1) IN ACTS 20:35, WE HAVE THE ONLY DIRECT QUOTE FROM JESUS' EARTHLY MINISTRY RECORDED OUTSIDE OF THE GOSPELS. IN IT JESUS SAID: "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE."**

**\* NOW I WONDER HOW MANY OF US HERE TODAY REALLY BELIEVE THAT. AND YES MOST OF US ACKNOWLEDGE ALL THE WORD OF GOD TO BE TRUE.**

**\*\* BUT HOW MANY OF US REALLY BELIEVE THAT TRUTH TO THE EXTENT WHERE WE NOT ONLY ACKNOWLEDGE IT, BUT PRACTICE IT?**

**\*\*\* NOW THE REALITY OF THE MATTER THIS MORNING IS, MANY OF US HAVE BEEN SO INFLUENCED BY OUR CULTURE, OUR FALLEN WORLD SYSTEM, THAT WE THINK THINGS AND MONEY BRING HAPPINESS.**

**\*\*\*\* MANY HAVE BEEN DECEIVED IN THINKING THAT IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GET THAN TO GIVE, THAT YOU ARE WHAT YOU OWN, AND SUCCESS IS COMMUNICATED BY WHAT KIND OF CAR YOU HAVE, WHAT KIND OF HOME YOU LIVE IN, HOW YOU DRESS AND WHAT KIND OF JOB YOU HAVE.**

**(2) AND HOW UNFORTUNATE THAT THINKING IS, BECAUSE IT LEADS TO A LIFE OF DISSATISFACTION AND AN ENDLESS CIRCLE OF DISCONTENT, PROVERBS 27:20, LUKE 12:15 (QUOTE THEM).**

**\* ECCLESIASTES 2:10&11 –**

**V. 10 - ALL THAT MY EYES DESIRED I DID NOT REFUSE THEM. I DID NOT WITHHOLD MY HEART FROM ANY PLEASURE, FOR MY HEART WAS PLEASED BECAUSE OF ALL MY LABOR AND THIS WAS MY REWARD FOR ALL MY LABOR.**

**v. 11 - THUS I CONSIDERED ALL MY ACTIVITIES WHICH MY HANDS HAD DONE AND THE LABOR WHICH I HAD EXERTED, AND BEHOLD ALL WAS VANITY AND STRIVING AFTER WIND AND THERE WAS NO PROFIT UNDER THE SUN.**

**\*\* YET OUR SOCIETY COMMUNICATES THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT SOLOMON SAID, FOR THE KEY PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE THAT IS TRANSMITTED IN OUR CULTURE IS THIS: ONLY AS YOU ACCUMULATE ENOUGH ASSETS TO SATISFY YOUR PARTICULAR STYLE OF LIFE CAN YOU REALLY BE HAPPY.**

**\*\*\* AS A RESULT OF THAT, PEOPLE ARE CRAZY IN THEIR DESIRE FOR THINGS. AND WE ARE EGGED ON BY THE MEDIA, PROMOTIONS AND**

**ADVERTISING THAT PROMOTES DISCONTENT,  
SELF-GRATIFICATION AND SELF-  
CENTEREDNESS.**

**\*\*\*\* AND EVEN SOME FALSE TEACHERS TODAY  
EQUATE BLESSINGS WITH TEMPORARY THINGS  
AND THAT MATERIAL GAIN IS GODLINESS  
RATHER THAN GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT  
IS GREAT GAIN, I TIMOTHY 6:6-8.**

**\*\*\*\*\* AND BELOVED, THE BOTTOM LINE IS MANY  
CHRISTIANS HAVE BOUGHT INTO THIS ERROR  
THAT GAIN IS GODLINESS AND ARE CONSUMED  
WITH SELFISHNESS, SELF-GRATIFICATION AND  
LIVING FOR THINGS, THINGS THAT WILL PASS  
AWAY, THINGS THAT WILL NOT BRING  
HAPPINESS!**

**(3) AND THEY AUTOMATICALLY EQUATE  
BLESSING WITH MATERIAL GAIN.**

**\* YET AS WE GO BACK TO THE VERSE I STARTED  
WITH TODAY, JESUS SAID IT IS MORE BLESSED**

**TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE, NOT IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GET.**

**\*\* AND THE WORD BLESSED IN ACTS 20:35 IS THE EXACT SAME GREEK WORD THAT IS USED 9 TIMES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT IN THE BEATITUDES THAT LIT. MEANS HOW HAPPY, HENCE TRUE HAPPINESS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HAPPENSTANCE AND CIRCUMSTANCE, AND HOW MUCH YOU HAVE.**

**\*\*\* FOR TRUE HAPPINESS COMES FROM GIVING, FOR GIVING IS A GOD ORDAINED MEANS TO GROW HIS CHILDREN.**

**\*\*\*\* AND BEYOND THAT GIVING IS A PART OF OUR WORSHIP, FOR WORSHIP IS HONOUR AND ADORATION DIRECTED TO GOD. IT IS GIVING HIM OUR PRAISE, IT IS ASCRIBING GLORY AND HONOUR TO HIM.**

**\*\*\*\*\* AND PROVERBS 3:9 SAYS WE ACTUALLY HONOUR OR GLORIFY THE LORD WITH OUR**

**SUBSTANCE, WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS OF ALL OUR INCREASE.**

**(4) AND GIVING MONEY TO THE LORD IS A WAY OF EXPRESSING OUR GRATEFULNESS FOR ALL THAT HE HAS DONE FOR US. AND OUR GIVING IS A WAY TO MEASURE OUR THANKFULNESS, TO HONOUR AND GLORIFY HIM.**

**\* FOR YOU SEE TALK IS CHEAP, BUT GIVING AND LIVING ARE AN ACTION OF A GRATEFUL HEART THAT SEES GOD AS THE SOURCE OF EVERY BLESSING AND EVERYTHING WE HAVE, SO WE RESPOND WITH THE ACTION OF GRATEFULNESS, WE RESPOND WITH GIVING MONEY TO THE LORD.**

**\*\* AND I WANT YOU TO GET THIS, GIVING IS NOT GOD'S WAY OF RAISING MONEY, FOR IN REALITY GOD DOESN'T NEED MONEY.**

**\*\*\* HE DOESN'T NEED ANYTHING OR ANYONE. HE HAS NO NEEDS. HE IS SELF-CONTAINED, SELF-SUFFICIENT, SELF-SATISFIED, HE IS GOD.**

**(5) YET IT PLEASURES GOD TO USE US. SO GOD DOESN'T NEED MONEY, BUT GIVING IS GOD'S WAY OF RAISING CHILDREN, OF MAKING US CHRISTLIKE, FOR EVERY TIME WE GIVE, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE GIVE SACRIFICIALLY, WE GIVE A LITTLE OF OUR SELFISHNESS AWAY AND GOD THEN IS PRAISED AND GLORIFIED.**

**\* AND FOLKS GIVING IS NOT A GIMMICK TO GET YOUR MONEY, BUT A MINISTRY TO BREAK THE POWER OF SELFISHNESS AND SHOW OUR LOVE FOR GOD, TO MANIFEST OUR GRATITUDE.**

**\*\* BUT WE MUST REMEMBER MONEY IS NOT AN END. GIVING, OBEDIENCE, WORSHIP AND GRATEFULNESS SHOULD BE THE MOTIVE FOR GIVING, AND WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT MONEY IS A MEANS THAT GOD USES TO THE END OF DOING HIS WORK, AND HIS WORK IS THE KEY.**

**(7) NOW I'VE SAID ALL THOSE THINGS IN PREPARATION FOR OUR TEXT TODAY. FOR IN OUR TEXT WE SEE A PROPER MOTIVATION FOR GIVING, A PROPER ATTITUDE FOR GIVING, AN**

**EXAMPLE OF GIVING, AND WHERE TRUE GIVING, TRUE STEWARDSHIP STARTS, THE KEY TO GIVING.**

**\* AND IT'S BY GIVING YOURSELF FIRST TO THE LORD. IN OTHER WORDS OUR FINANCIAL GIVING CAN NEVER BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR GIVING OURSELVES FIRST TO THE LORD.**

**\*\* AND THAT'S WHAT THE CHURCHES OF MACEDONIA DID IN NORTHERN GREECE, QUOTE V. 5.**

**(8) AND FOLKS EVERYTIME WE GIVE AND PUT THE LORD'S MONEY IN THE OFFERING PLATE WE OUGHT TO PICTURE OURSELVES JUMPING INTO THE OFFERING PLATE, GIVING OURSELVES FIRST, AND THEN AFTER THAT GIVING MONEY WHENEVER YOU ARE PAID AS A REMINDER THAT JESUS IS LORD OF OUR FINANCES. (WEEKLY, BI-WEEKLY OR MONTHLY)**



**\* WELL, THE MACEDONIANS DID THIS, JESUS WAS LORD OF THEIR FINANCES, THEY SACRIFICIALLY GAVE THROUGH THEIR CHURCHES TO THE OFFERING FOR THE POVERTY STRICKEN SAINTS AT JERUSALEM AND THEY GAVE OUT OF THEIR OWN DEEP POVERTY.**

**\*\* AND OUR TEXT TODAY FURNISHES US A MODEL, AN EXAMPLE OF TRUE STEWARDSHIP, AND THAT MODEL IS THE CHURCHES OF MACEDONIA.**

**\*\*\* THEREFORE I'VE TITLED OUR MESSAGE TODAY, "A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF GIVING."**

**(9) AND UNDER THAT TITLE, USING THE EXAMPLE OF THE MACEDONIANS, WE'LL LOOK AT 3 THINGS IN II CORINTHIANS 8. NO. 1 GIVING IN SPITE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, VV. 1&2; NO. 2 GIVING ENTHUSIASTICALLY, VV. 3&4; AND NO. 3 GIVING OURSELVES, V. 5.**

**\* AND WITH THAT OUTLINE IN MIND LOOK AT V. 1 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE GIVING IN SPIRE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.**

**I. GIVING IN SPIRE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, (READ V. 1)**

**A. NOW SOME BACKGROUND HERE WILL BE HELPFUL IN UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF II CORINTHIANS 8 AND 9. PAUL AS HE IS WRITING THIS SECOND INSPIRED LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS IS TRYING TO MOTIVATE THE CORINTHIANS, PRIMARILY GENTILES, TO FOLLOW THRU WITH AN OFFERING FOR THE POOR SAINTS AT JERUSALEM, JEWS, WHICH THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY COMMITTED TO.**

**\* FOR YOU SEE MANY OF THE JERUSALEM SAINTS, JEWS, THROUGH WAR, FAMINE AND PERSECUTION HAD BECOME POOR AND WERE IN DESPERATE NEED AND THIS WOULD BE A WAY TO BRING ABOUT UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST. A UNITING OF THE JEWS AND THE**

**GENTILES, THE GENTILE BELIEVERS TAKING UP AN OFFERING FOR JEWISH BELIEVERS.**

**\*\* SO PAUL RECOGNIZED THE NEED AND DETERMINED TO TAKE UP A LOVE OFFERING FOR THE JERUSALEM CHURCH FROM THE CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR AND EUROPE.**

**\*\*\* IN FACT, IN ROMANS 15:25-27 PAUL SAID:**

**v. 25 - BUT NOW, I AM GOING TO JERUSALEM SERVING THE SAINTS.**

**v. 26 – FOR MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA HAVE BEEN PLEASED TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION FOR THE POOR AMONG THE SAINTS IN JERUSALEM.**

**v. 27 - YES, THEY WERE PLEASED TO DO SO, AND THEY ARE INDEBTED TO THEM. FOR IF THE GENTILES HAVE SHARED IN THEIR SPIRITUAL THINGS, THEY ARE INDEBTED TO MINISTER TO THEM ALSO IN MATERIAL THINGS.**

**\*\*\*\* AND BELOVED WE CAN SEE PAUL WANTED TO STRENGTHEN THE SPIRITUAL BOND**

**BETWEEN THOSE LARGELY GENTILE CHURCHES AND THE JEWISH CHURCH IN JERUSALEM.**

**1. PAUL ALSO KNEW THAT THIS LOVE OFFERING WOULD HELP EASE THE TENSIONS, THE HOSTILITY, THE SUSPICION AND BITTERNESS, WITH WHICH JEWS AND GENTILES GENERALLY REGARDED EACH OTHER.**

**\* I MEAN IT WOULD TANGIBLY EXPRESS THE BIBLICAL REALITY THAT THROUGH HIS DEATH, THE LORD JESUS “BROKE DOWN THE DIVISION AND BARRIER OF THE DIVIDING WALL” BETWEEN JEWS AND GENTILES, MAKING THEM ONE IN EPHESIANS 2:14.**

**\*\* NOW PAUL HAD BEEN ORGANIZING THIS OFFERING FOR QUITE A WHILE UP TO THIS TIME. IN FACT THE CORINTHIANS HEARD ABOUT THIS OFFERING AT AN EARLIER TIME AND ASKED PAUL WHAT PART THEY MIGHT HAVE IN IT, SO PAUL RESPONDED TO THEM CONCERNING THIS OFFERING IN I CORINTHIANS 16:1&2 (QUOTE THEM).**

**\*\*\* NOW THE CORINTHIANS' REBELLION TOWARD PAUL HAD TEMPORARILY HALTED THAT OFFERING BUT SINCE THE RELATIONSHIP WAS RESTORED THROUGH THE TEARFUL SEVERE LETTER THAT TITUS DELIVERED, PAUL INSTRUCTED THEM TO PICK UP WHERE THEY LEFT OFF, SO PAUL TRIES TO ENCOURAGE THEM, TO MOTIVATE THEM IN II CORINTHIANS 8&9 TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH WHAT THEY HAD COMMITTED TO DO.**

**1. NOW ONE OF THOSE MOTIVATIONS OR EXAMPLES WAS THE CHURCHES OF MACEDONIA WHICH WOULD BE THE CHURCHES AT THESSALONICA, BEREAS AND PHILIPPI.**

**\* AND PAUL USES THE CHURCHES AT MACEDONIA AS AN EXAMPLE AND BEGINS IN V. 1 BY SAYING, "BROTHERS WE MAKE KNOWN TO YOU, WE INFORM YOU, WE WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN AND EXHIBITED IN THE CHURCHES OF MACEDONIA (AGAIN PHILIPPI, THESSALONICA AND BEREAS.)**

**\*\* AND THE GREEK WORD FOR GRACE IS USED 10 TIMES IN CHAPTERS 8&9, A KEY WORD IN THESE CHAPTERS. AND ONE OF THE EFFECTS OF SAVING, TRANSFORMING, SANCTIFYING GRACE IS A DESIRE TO GIVE TO THE LORD'S WORK, ESPECIALLY TO OTHER BELIEVERS THAT HAVE GENUINE NEED, WHICH IS WHAT THIS OFFERING IS ALL ABOUT.**

**\*\*\* AND NOTE THAT THE GRACE OF GOD WAS THE MOTIVATION AND THE MEANS WHERE WITH THE MACEDONIANS COULD GIVE AND BE EXAMPLES AS THEY WERE. AND THAT GRACE WAS FROM GOD WHICH WAS THE POWER, ABILITY AND DESIRE TO DO HIS WILL, WHICH TAKES AWAY PRIDE. IT'S ALL OF GRACE. A PARAPHRASE OF V. 1, "ABOUT THE GRACE**

**THAT GOD HAS GIVEN THE MACEDONIAN CHURCHES.**

**2. WELL THE CHURCHES OF MACEDONIA WERE EXAMPLES OF GOD'S GRACE FOR LOOK WHAT IT SAYS IN V. 2.**

**B. READ V. 2. NOW THE MACEDONIAN CHURCHES THAT PAUL WAS USING AS AN EXAMPLE HAD EXPERIENCED SEVERE DIFFICULTIES THEMSELVES, AND YET THEY HAD GIVEN GENEROUSLY AND HAD AN ABUNDANCE OF JOY.**

**\* AND THE POINT I WANT TO MAKE IS THEY HAD EXPERIENCED A GREAT TRIAL OF AFFLICTION, THEY WERE IN DEEP POVERTY THEMSELVES, AND DEEP POVERTY HERE LIT. MEANS ROCK-BOTTOM DESTITUTION. THE WORD DESCRIBES A BEGGAR WHO HAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING AND HAS NO HOPE OF GETTING ANYTHING.**

**\*\* AND THEN THE WORD AFFLICTION LIT. REFERS TO PRESSURE AS IN CRUSHING**

**GRAPES AND FIGURATIVELY IT DESCRIBES THE SPIRITUAL PRESSURE THEY WERE GOING THROUGH FROM THEIR POVERTY AND POSSIBLY PERSECUTION BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH.**

**\*\*\* FOR THEIR DIFFICULT SITUATION MAY HAVE BEEN CAUSED IN PART BY THEIR CHRISTIAN FAITH, FOR THEY MAY HAVE LOST WORK OR THE ABILITY TO TRADE GOODS OR BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE TRADE GUILDS BECAUSE THEY REFUSED TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IDOLATRY.**

**1. BUT WHATEVER CAUSED THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES, THEIR DEEP POVERTY DID NOT HINDER THEM FROM GIVING. IN FACT THEY GAVE LIBERALLY ACCORDING TO V. 2, AND THEIR DEEP POVERTY DID NOT AFFECT THEIR JOY, FOR THEY HAD AN ABUNDANCE OF JOY, A SURPLUS OF JOY, AN OVERFLOW OF JOY.**

**\* NOW NO COMPUTER PROGRAM COULD ANALYZE THEIR AMAZING FORMULA WHICH WAS: GREAT AFFLICTION AND DEEP POVERTY**



**PLUS GRACE, EQUALS ABUNDANT JOY AND LIBERAL GIVING.**

**\*\* AND THE FORMULA IS THERE FOR US, FOR WHEN WE HAVE EXPERIENCED THE STRENGTHENING GRACE OF GOD IN OUR LIVES, WE WILL NOT USE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES AS AN EXCUSE FOR NOT GIVING.**

**\*\*\* IN FACT TO BE A REALIST I MIGHT ASK, ARE CIRCUMSTANCES EVER AN ENCOURAGEMENT FOR GIVING, EVEN WHEN THE ECONOMY IS HUMMING?**

**\*\*\*\* I MEAN THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING THAT MONEY NEEDS TO FLOW OUT FOR, A CAR THAT'S BROKE DOWN, YOU NEED A NEW WATER HEATER FOR YOUR HOUSE, THE CHILDREN ARE SICK, THE CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN NEED SOME NEW CLOTHES, CHRISTMAS IS COMING, WINTER IS COMING SO HIGHER UTILITY BILLS OR SUMMER IS COMING AND ITS VACATION TIME, OR YOUR CHILDREN ARE IN COLLEGE OR THERE IS A WEDDING COMING UP, OR YOUR HAVE A PAY CUT OR HAVE LOST YOUR JOB OR**

**YOU COULD LOSE YOURS SOON, AND ON AND ON I COULD GO.**

**2. AND WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS ITS NEVER CONVENIENT TO GIVE, BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD WE SHOULD!! GIVING IN SPIE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.**

**\* AND DEVOUT CHRISTIANS GIVE NO MATTER WHAT THE SITUATION, BECAUSE EVEN IN GREAT FINANCIAL TRIBULATION, NOTHING CAN HINDER THEIR DEVOTION TO JESUS CHRIST.**

**\*\* AND THE MACEDONIANS HAD THAT KIND OF DEVOTION, FOR IN SPIE OF THEIR OWN DEEP POVERTY THEY GAVE LIBERALLY. AND I THINK IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT NOT ONE PERSON HERE TODAY IS LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY. MAYBE POVERTY DEFINED BY AMERICAN CULTURE, YES, SOME FOLKS THAT HAVE VERY LITTLE ACCORDING TO AMERICAN STANDARDS, BUT CERTAINLY NOT IN COMPARISON TO THE REST OF THE WORLD AND THAT DAY.**

**\*\*\* AND MY POINT IS IN WHATEVER ECONOMIC SITUATION WE ARE IN, WE SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN GRACE GIVING, BEING GRATEFUL FOR HOW GOD HAS BLESSED US AND IN LOVE FOR HIM AND IN WORSHIP TO HIM WE GIVE LIBERALLY. WE SHOULD GIVE IN SPITE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH LEADS TO OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, WE SHOULD GIVE ENTHUSIASTICALLY. LOOK AT V. 3 PLEASE.**

## **II. GIVING ENTHUSIASTICALLY, (READ V. 3)**

**A. NOW THE MACEDONIANS GAVE WILLINGLY, THEY GAVE VOLUNTARILY OF THEIR OWN ACCORD. THEY DID NOT NEED TO BE PRESSURED OR COERCED TO GIVE, THEY GAVE ENTHUSIASTICALLY. NO MANIPULATION, NO PROGRAMS, NO MARKETING, NO FUND RAISING.**

**\* BUT GOING BACK TO THE MACEDONIANS, IT SAYS THEY NOT ONLY GAVE WHAT THEY COULD, BUT BEYOND WHAT THEY COULD, THEY GAVE BEYOND THEIR ABILITY, THEY GAVE**

**BEYOND WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED,  
BEYOND WHAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THOUGHT  
POSSIBLE IN THEIR CONDITION.**

**\*\* BELOVED AGAIN THEIR GIVING WAS  
VOLUNTARY AND SPONTANEOUS AND LIBERAL.  
IT WAS OF GRACE NOT PRESSURE. THEY GAVE  
BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO GIVE AND  
BECAUSE THEY HAD EXPERIENCED THE GRACE  
OF GOD.**

**1. AND GRACE NOT ONLY FREES US FROM OUR  
SINS, BUT IT ALSO GIVES US THE CAPABILITY TO  
FREE US FROM OURSELVES, SELFISHNESS,  
WHICH STOPS US FROM GIVING.**

**\*\* FOLKS, THE GRACE OF GOD WILL OPEN OUR  
HEARTS AND OUR HANDS AND THEN OUR  
GIVING AS WARREN WIERSBE SAID WILL NOT BE  
A RESULT OF COLD CALCULATION, BUT OF  
WARMHEARTED JUBILATION, YOU LOOK FOR  
WAYS TO GIVE, FOR NOTICE WHAT IT SAYS  
ABOUT THE MACEDONIANS IN V. 4. LOOK AT V. 4  
PLEASE.**

**B. READ V. 4. NOW THIS VERSE IS UNBELIEVABLE. THE MACEDONIANS BEGGED TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS OFFERING, THEY BEGGED PAUL TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS OFFERING. THE NIV SAYS, THEY URGENTLY PLEADED WITH US FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF SHARING.**

**\* AND THE WORD BEGGED HERE LIT. MEANS TO IMPLORE, TO PLEAD.**

**\*\* AND ENTIRELY ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE THE MACEDONIANS BECAME INVOLVED IN THE COLLECTION. AND PERHAPS THEY HAD TO BEG BECAUSE PAUL THOUGHT THEY WERE CANDIDATES FOR HELP, THAT THEY WERE IN NEED. THAT'S WHY THEY HAD TO ASK. THEY BEGGED TO PARTICIPATE.**

**1. AND THAT'S SOMETHING I'VE NEVER HEARD OF, CHRISTIANS BEGGING FOR SOMEBODY TO TAKE UP AN OFFERING – HAVE YOU?**

**\* BUT YOU KNOW WHAT FOLKS, THESE PEOPLE ARE TRUE TO FORM FOR THE PATTERN IN CHRISTIANITY TODAY, FOR THE NORM TODAY IS THE POOR GIVE MORE THAN THE MIDDLE CLASS PERCENTAGE WISE, THE MORE YOU HAVE THE MORE YOU CONSUME.**

**\* GIVING BY CLASS, ACCORDING TO GENEROUSGIVING.COM: “THE TWO GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES THAT GIVE THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGES OF THEIR INCOME ARE THE POOR (THOSE MAKING LESS THAN \$20,000 PER YEAR) AND THE RICH (THOSE MAKING MORE THAN \$100,00 PER YEAR). MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICANS (THOSE MAKING BETWEEN \$40,000 AND \$100,00 PER YEAR) ARE THE SMALLEST PERCENTAGE GIVERS.”**

**2. NOW BELOVED AS WE GET BACK TO THE MACEDONIANS THEY GAVE WILLINGLY AND THEY GAVE ENTHUSIASTICALLY EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE THE LEAST LIKELY TO GIVE.**

**\* AND THE REASON THEY WERE ABLE TO IS THIS IS FOUND IN V. 5 AND IT IS BECAUSE THEY GAVE THEMSELVES FIRST OF ALL TO THE LORD. LOOK AT V. 5 WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR THIRD POINT TODAY, GIVING OURSELVES.**

### **III. GIVING OURSELVES, (READ V. 5)**

**A. NOW IN V. 5 WE HAVE THE KEY PRINCIPLE TO TRUE STEWARDSHIP, AND THAT IS WHEN WE GIVE OURSELVES FIRST OF ALL TO THE LORD, EVERYTHING ELSE FOLLOWS, THERE'S A CHAIN REACTION, A DOMINO EFFECT, A SNOWBALL EFFECT.**

**\* FOR IF YOU'VE GIVEN YOURSELF TO THE LORD, HE HAS YOUR TIME, HE HAS YOUR GIFTS AND TALENTS, AND HE'S IN CONTROL OF YOUR MONEY, BECAUSE IN REALITY ALL OF IT IS HIS, EVERYTHING IS HIS. IT'S NOT MY MONEY!! IT'S NOT MY TIME!!**

**\*\* BELOVED IF WE GIVE OURSELVES TO THE LORD, WE WILL HAVE LITTLE PROBLEM GIVING OUR SUBSTANCE TO GOD. IF HE'S IN CONTROL OF OUR LIVES AND HE IS OUR FIRST LOVE, HE WILL HAVE CONTROL OF OUR POCKETBOOKS. HE WILL BE LORD OF OUR WALLETS OR PURSES.**

**1. AND THAT'S WHERE STEWARDSHIP STARTS, FIRST OF ALL GIVING OURSELVES TO THE LORD, THE APPLICATION OF ROMANS 12:1&2, PSALM 116:12, II CORINTHIANS 4:1 – THE MERCIES OF GOD ARE A MOTIVATION TO GIVE OURSELVES.**

**\* AND THAT IS THE WILL OF GOD FOR OUR LIVES, ACCORDING TO ROMANS 12:1&2 AND II CORINTHIANS 8:5, THAT IS WHAT GOD WANTS, TO GIVE OURSELVES TO HIM FIRST.**

**2. AND THAT'S WHY THE MACEDONIANS GAVE LIBERALLY OUT OF DEEP POVERTY, THEY FIRST GAVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD. THEY DIED TO THEIR DESIRES. THEY SAW THEMSELVES AS STEWARDS OF GOD'S MONEY, GOD'S TIME, AND**



**THE TALENTS AND GIFTS GOD HAD GIVEN THEM. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED GOD'S OWNERSHIP, THINGS DIDN'T OWN THEM AS IT DOES FOR SOME.**

**\* AND BECAUSE THEY GAVE THEMSELVES FIRST TO THE LORD, THEY COULD GIVE THEIR LIVES IN SERVICE TO PAUL AND THE POOR JERUSALEM SAINTS. IT DIDN'T HURT THEM TO GIVE.**

**\*\* AND SOMETIMES WE HEAR THE EXPRESSION "GIVE UNTIL IT HURTS" WHICH A LOT OF PEOPLE CANNOT COMPREHEND BECAUSE FOR SOME PEOPLE THE VERY THOUGHT OF GIVING HURTS!**

**3. BUT THE MACEDONIANS WENT FAR BEYOND PAUL'S HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS BECAUSE THEY GAVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD, THEY GAVE BACK WHAT WAS ALREADY THE LORD'S THEMSELVES, I CORINTHIANS 6:19&20. AS PAUL WRITES TO THE CORINTHIANS IN AN EARLIER EPISTLE.**

**\* AND THAT'S WHAT WE MUST DO IF WE ARE GOING TO BE FAITHFUL STEWARDS, AND THAT IS GIVING OURSELVES.**

**AND AS I WRAP UP THINGS TODAY (1) HOW CAN WE NOT GIVE WITH THE EXAMPLE BEFORE US, THE MODEL OF THE MACEDONIAN CHURCHES.**

**\* I MEAN HOW CAN WE LOOK AT THIS MODEL AND NOT BE MOTIVATED TO GIVE? HOW CAN WE NOT BE FAZED?**

**\*\* WE THAT KNOW JESUS AS OUR SAVIOR AND LORD THIS MORNING ARE RICH – PERIOD. WE WERE BANKRUPT BEFORE WE MET HIM, BUT NOW THAT WE HAVE TRUSTED IN HIM, WE SHARE IN ALL OF HIS RICHES BECAUSE OF HIS SOVEREIGN GRACE.**

**(2) WE ARE NOW THE CHILDREN OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD, AND JOINT HEIRS WITH JESUS CHRIST.**

**\* AND SINCE THIS IS TRUE, HOW CAN WE REFUSE TO GIVE. BUT MORE THAN THAT, HOW**

**CAN WE REFUSE TO GIVE OURSELVES TO THE LORD FIRST?**

**\*\*AND AGAIN THAT IS THE KEY TO STEWARDSHIP. GIVING OURSELVES FIRST TO THE LORD WHICH IS THE WILL OF GOD. THIS IS THE STARTING BLOCK.**

**(3) AND WHEN WE DO THIS WE WILL GIVE IN SPITE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND GIVE ENTHUSIASTICALLY BECAUSE WE HAVE GIVEN OURSELVES, AND ARE GIVING AS JESUS GAVE. IT WILL BE REFLECTED IN OUR FINANCIAL GIVING IN THE REST OF THE YEAR IN SPITE OF OUR ECONOMY AND WHAT MAY HAPPEN.**

**\* BELOVED WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE TODAY? WHO SITS ON THE THRONE OF YOUR HEART? HOW SINCERE IS YOUR LOVE FOR CHRIST? V. 8 OF CHAPTER 8 SAYS: "I AM NOT SPEAKING THIS AS A COMMAND, BUT AS PROVING THROUGH THE EARNESTNESS OF OTHERS THE SINCERITY OF YOUR LOVE ALSO."**

**\*\* SO HOW GREAT IS OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST?  
OUR SPIRITUALITY CAN BE MEASURED BY HOW  
WE VIEW MONEY, HOW WE SPEND IT, AND HOW  
WE GIVE IT.**

**\*\*\* AND THE LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF  
ALL KINDS OF EVIL, AND WE MUST FLEE FROM  
IT, QUOTE I TIMOTHY 6:10&11.**

**\*\*\*\* THEN JESUS SAID IN MATTHEW 6:21: “FOR  
WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR  
HEART BE ALSO.” SO WHERE IS YOUR HEART  
TODAY?**

**\*\*\*\*\* YOUR GIVING IS A GOOD INDICATOR WHERE  
IT IS, FOR OUR GIVING IS AN EXACT SPIRITUAL  
THERMOMETER. IT SHOWS THE SINCERITY OF  
OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST. (LET’S PRAY)**