

2nd Corinthians 9: 1-15; “God’s Indescribable Gift”, A Christmas Sermon
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 26th, 2021,
In the Morning Worship Service.

I want to speak to you this morning from verse 15 in particular – “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift”. In the King James this gift is called – “the unspeakable gift”. In the ESV it is called His inexpressible gift”. The gift that Paul is talking about here is God’s having given His only-begotten Son to a fallen world of needy sinners, in His Incarnation. It was the greatest gift ever given by God to men. The words indescribable, unspeakable and inexpressible are all attempting to describe the greatness of God’s gift in light of what we have received from the Father and the Son. Specifically, grace, mercy, and peace and all the blessings of our great salvation. And even more so, the gift of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. When the Father gave Christ, He gave unto us His very wisdom and His very righteousness. And He was made unto us our sanctification and our redemption.

And so, what I want to do now, is to show you 4 things about God Himself from this text, and talk to you about this gift. In doing this, I will show you that we learn how to be giving people ourselves, in thinking about God’s giving. We learn that it is more blessed to give than to receive. The Lord would have us to learn how to give in the way that He gives. This is especially the case when we see that there are needs among our brethren, which we might be able to help meet. So, I want you to see, 1st of all – That when God gave His Son, He did so bountifully. 2nd – When God gave Him, He gave Him cheerfully. 3rd – When God gave His Son, He gave Him so that we might have an abundance. And 4th – When God gave His Son, He gave Him to exceed our comprehension and expectation of all that we would receive. His gift of Christ is indescribably great, but let’s attempt to describe it as best we can according to this passage.

1st of all – When God gave His Son, He did so bountifully.

Verse 6 says – “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” This whole passage concerns a collection of money to help the poor in the church at Jerusalem. It was a collection which the church at Corinth needed to take. They had promised the apostle Paul that they would contribute to the gift to the poor saints of Jerusalem. Paul wants to stir them up to this giving in certain definite ways. In chapter 8, verse 3, he spoke to them about the fact that some of the most poor people in the Macedonian churches had contributed to this gift. They did this, it says in chapter 8, verse 4, even imploring Paul and those with him, with great urgency, to receive the gift and their fellowship of ministering to the saints.

Paul is writing now in chapter 9, to remind the church at Corinth of this. For they had boasted of what they would give, a whole year before this time. So Paul had exhorted some of his traveling companions who were willing to help him out in this good work, to go beforehand to Corinth, and to encourage them to prepare their gift ahead of time. If they would do this, he says, their boast would not be in vain. In chapter 8, verse 8, he says that he was not speaking this by way of commandment, but he was testing the sincerity of their love by the diligence of others. And then in verse 9 he gives to them this wonderful reminder of what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself did, in His coming in His Incarnation.

He says – “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” Ah, this was the greatest of gifts ever! This was the greatest of gifts in all time and space, in all generations, and for all generations of men! The Father gave His Son, and the Son even though rich, became poor, that we through His poverty, might become rich. Christ, the 2nd Person of the Divine Trinity, had always been infinitely rich in eternity past, because He was God’s only-begotten Son. The Lord possessed Him at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. He had

been established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth. When the world was created, He was beside the Father as a Master Craftsman and He was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and His delight was with the sons of men. (Proverbs 8)

Was it not, then, extraordinary love, when the Father gave His Son to be the Savior of the world? Was it not the most bountiful of gifts? The word bountiful means generous. In God's case, it meant that because He was God, He was free to give this great gift; free to bestow His favors of grace on whomsoever He will. The word bounty includes not only the gift or favor given, but it also includes the kindness of disposition with which it is bestowed. God gave His only-begotten Son out of the kindness and love in His heart. He pitied fallen mankind in their sinful estate. God in His essential being has, you should understand, a disposition to give, apart from the gift itself. For He is Goodness itself in His essential Being.

Titus 3: 4 – “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, it was not by works of righteousness which we had done, but it was according to His mercy that He saved us....” Christ is God's kindness. Christ is God's love. You see, when God determined that He would save us, He gave us His very Heart. He gave us His Son who had been in His bosom always. When He thought about giving Him, these were eternal and unchanging thoughts which flowed from His eternal purpose. His thoughts of love flowed from the Council of Redemption which the Father took with the Son in eternity past. Together, they purposed with great thoughtfulness and love, the salvation of every person who would ever be saved.

I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.” (Jeremiah 31: 3) The hymnwriter says – “The Love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell. It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell. The guilty pair bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win; His erring child He reconciled and pardoned from his sin. Could we with ink the ocean fill, and were the skies of parchment made, were every stalk on earth a quill, and every man a scribe by trade, to write the Love of God above, would drain the ocean dry; nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky. O Love of God, how rich and pure, how measureless and strong, it shall forevermore endure the saints and angels songs. And so it shall!

What can we learn from God's bounty in His Giving of His Son? It is to be generous ourselves. Generous in giving help to sinful people and generous in giving help to the saints. Generous with sharing the gospel. And generous in our giving of what we have so that Christ's kingdom might be furthered. If we sow sparingly, we shall reap sparingly, but if we sow bountifully, we shall reap bountifully. This was so very true of God's giving of His Son. He sowed Him as a seed in the ground, and He because He died for sinners and their sins, He reaped an incalculable harvest of people who will praise God forever! If this is the case, then do you not see that you also will reap bountifully in terms of fruit born to God, if you will give of yourself and your resources bountifully, for the cause of Christ. Isaiah 32: 20 – “Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.”

We must be those who are willing to give ourselves to missions and the spread of the gospel. If we are thankful for Christ's indescribable gift, then we will seek to give out the world, to broadcast it to the world, and by good works to show forth our love and our thankfulness for all that we have been given by God, because of His gift of Christ. Ecclesiastes 11: 1 – “Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.” “Give a serving to seven and also to eight, for you do not know what evil will be on the earth.” And verse 6 of that same chapter – “In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good.” We must be willing to give of our selves, our time, our money, and our strength, to further Christ's cause.

2nd – When God gave His Son, He gave Him cheerfully.

Verse 7 says – “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” The reason that God loves a cheerful giver is because He Himself is a cheerful Giver. He gave His only begotten Son, as He had purposed in His great heart. He did not give Him grudgingly, or of necessity, but cheerfully; that is, in giving Him, He fully anticipated the complete success of His and His Son’s plans and purposes. But He knew that it would cost Him very dearly, in the sufferings of His Son. But He would rejoice in the outcome of all that He would accomplish. The words – God loves a cheerful giver can be understood as meaning “giving with a cheerful countenance” or “with a cheerful heart”.

When the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ gave His only-begotten Son, He gave Him knowing all of what He would accomplish by means of His obedience unto death. It is spoken about in Isaiah 53: 10 – “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul and offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.” “He shall see the labor of his soul, and be satisfied.” This is why I believe that I can legitimately say that the Father gave Christ cheerfully. It was because He knew that He would be pleased with everything that Christ would do in His earthly ministry.

He rejoiced in the greatness of His gift; all that He would lay upon His Son in terms of His obedience to His holy law, and His bearing our sins on the cross. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. Not that He took any pleasure in seeing His Son suffer, but He was pleased that, in and by means of His sufferings, to make His soul an offering for our sins. And so, He was in an exalted sense, in which we cannot describe, continually cheered by what His Son was doing at every point in His earthly ministry, in that sense.

It is not as though God was down and depressed, and needed cheer in the way that a man needs cheer. But His holy heart has always been made glad by everything that Christ did. He said – “This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” “He was pleased that Christ His Son was voluntarily submitting Himself to those sorrows which were necessary to show the evil of sin.” “He was pleased that he would subject Himself to such great sorrows to save God’s elect.” “He was pleased with the end in view, and with all that was necessary in order that the end might be secured.” (See Albert Barnes’ comments on this)

Does God need to be cheered as a man needs to be cheered? No, for God is impassible. But brethren, let us always remember that even though God is above being affected by anything that anyone outside of Himself thinks, feels, or does, He nevertheless, because of the Incarnation, because Deity and humanity were joined, He really does feel an unchanging joy concerning what has been accomplished by His Son. On this basis, He blesses all believers. He continually lifts up the light of His countenance upon them. In Numbers 6: 24 – “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”

The Father is continually and forever cheered in the Son. For the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. And because of this there is everlasting joy and happiness in their fellowship with one another, and with us as believers. 2nd Corinthians 5: 19 – That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” Can God really plead through men who preach? Yes, He really can and He does. And when sinners come to Him in faith and repentance, He rejoices over them.

Zephaniah 3: 17 – “The Lord your God is in Your midst, a Mighty Warrior who saves.” “He will exalt over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with joy, He will rejoice over you with singing.” These words show us how indescribable is God’s gift in Christ. You, too, can be of good cheer because Christ has come into the world, and in His coming He

overcome the world and the Devil. And by faith in Him, He will help you to overcome them as well. It is in your weakness that His strength of grace shall be found sufficient for you; His power being perfected in your weakness. This is God's indescribable Gift!

3rd – When God gave the gift of His Son, He gave Him so that we might have an abundance.

I take this from verses 8-11 – “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things may have an abundance for every good work.” “As it is written: ‘He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.’” “Now may He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in every thing for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.” So, we see here that if God is able to make all grace abound toward you, the reason is that there is an abundance of grace in Christ so that you might have an abundance of His grace for every good work that you are engaged in.

The reason that God can make all grace abound to you is because He is the God of all grace, and the Father of mercies. He has all power to be able to do this, and the wisdom to know how to what He wants to see His grace accomplish in our lives and in our help to people around us. When He gave Christ, He knew that in Him we as believers would continually and fully find, an overflowing abundance of grace to continually help us to know how to live the Christian life and how to help other people around us, especially other believers. With Christ we always have an abundance. We have an all sufficiency in all things. We always have enough to be able to meet the needs of the poor.

This quote in verse 9 is taken from Psalm 112, verse 9, but let me read it to you in its context from verse 1 to verse 9. “Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments.” “His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed.” “Wealth and riches will be in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.” “Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; He is gracious and full of compassion, and righteous.” “A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion.” “Surely he will never be shaken; the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.” “He will not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.” “His heart is established; He will not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his enemies.” “He has dispersed abroad, he has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever; his horn will be exalted with honor.”

So, I hope that as you heard these verses that you can grasp the idea that in Christ, God's indescribable gift, you will find an all sufficiency in all things. He is the one who gives grace in abundance. The Father is the One who lavishes it upon you, for Christ's sake. Because of Christ, God never stops giving you grace, and many times, even in material things, He blesses us abundantly because we are His children. I think that sometimes Christians forget this, or they do not realize it as they should. God supplies you with great grace each and every day, so that you as a believer are a spiritual rich man or woman. You will have this wealth in your heart, and it will overflow into your house when you are faithful to Him.

You will have light in the midst of the spiritual darkness around you. You will be gracious and full of compassion towards people around you. You will guide your business affairs with discretion; that is, you will pray for wisdom on how to handle all of your financial concerns, and God will give you that wisdom through His word and by His Spirit working in your mind and heart. By this means, you shall never be shaken, for you know that the Father is watching over you in love. You know that He is holding you in everlasting remembrance for Christ's sake.

And so, because the Spirit of Christ is in you, you will not be afraid of evil tidings because your heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. Your heart is established, and you will not be afraid. You know that even if you have enemies because you have been trying to do what is right, that

God will protect you from all evil and keep your soul. Your righteousness will endure forever because Christ is your righteousness, and thus your horn will be exalted with honor. Your power to do good and to have godly influence with people around you will be established. You will be enriched in everything by Christ's grace. You will be able to be generous in your giving financially to further Christ's kingdom and to help people around you. And this will cause thanksgiving to abound to God.

4th - When God gave His Son, He gave Him to exceed our comprehension and expectation of all that we would receive.

Verses 13-15 – “While, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your having generously shared with them and all men, and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you.” “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” Paul is simply saying that other believers will be extremely grateful to you for your having liberally shared with them in their need. They will praise God for your obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, because you having been given much, loved much and shared much, and thus you became more like Christ, God's indescribable gift! The gift of Christ by the Father is indescribable because it is so very full and great in blessing to all men.

The gift of Christ exceeds all of our comprehension, in regard to its implications for our future as believers. Can anyone comprehend the greatness of all that God is bringing us into in the New Heavens and New Earth in which dwell righteousness? Can anyone state the value of a perfectly righteous spirit and a glorified body being brought back together for all eternity for each and every believer? And how much praise is God worthy of, for having given us this indescribable gift? Only eternity can tell, and it will never end. So let us praise God together, all during this Christmas season, and forevermore, for His indescribable gift!