

“Generous Giving”
Romans 15:25-28
(Preached at Trinity, January 15, 2012)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Read Verses 15-25**

A. In this passage Paul has affirmed to these Roman Christians the nature of his calling: He was called as an apostle with a particular emphasis on reaching the Gentiles. This was his passion—to reach the Gentile world with the Gospel of Christ.

Romans 15:20 NAU - "And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named"

B. Because of this compelling charge upon his life Paul had been prevented to visit Rome and these Roman believers.

Romans 15:22 NAS - " For this reason I have often been hindered from coming to you;"

C. This was Paul’s great desire. He really wanted to make the trip to Rome. But Paul was a disciplined man; he knew how to maintain his priorities. Few people today are willing to deny themselves; to postpone gratification. Paul was intoxicated with Christ. Everything in his life was conducted with an eye to serving Christ.

D. But now in **Verses 22-23** Paul describes a great change in his ministry. Because of his great work in establishing the Gospel with the Gentiles he had been prevented from making visit to Rome – but now there has been a change: “I have been prevented from coming to you but now I can come to you.”

Why?

Paul makes the profound statement: “Because my mission has been accomplished I may finally be able to realize my hope of seeing you.”

Romans 15:23-24 NAS - "but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you ²⁴ whenever I go to Spain-- for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while--"

2. Paul had witnessed the mighty work of the Gospel and now he felt liberty to move on.

Acts 19:20-21 NAS - "So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing. Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

3. Paul’s goal of reaching Spain had not changed but now he could include a visit to Rome in his plans.

As I pointed out before, Paul had high expectations for his life and ministry. He had set high goals. He wanted to go to Rome. But he also felt a high desire to go to Spain. There were lost Gentiles in Spain.

4. But there was another powerful force directing Paul's travel plans. He also felt a great need to go to Jerusalem to bring the offering he had been collecting for the poor Jews.
Romans 15:25 NAU - "but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints."
- A. This was an obsession for Paul. Paul was so driven by this desire that some have actually presumed it was a sinful compulsion that was outside the will of God. They point to Acts 21
- Acts 21:4 NAS** - "And after looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem."
Acts 21:10-14 NAS - "And as we were staying there for some days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" ¹² And when we had heard this, we as well as the local residents *began* begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴ And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"
- B. Rather, this shows Paul's absolute determination to care for his Jewish brethren suffering in Jerusalem. Paul had collected an offering for the poor Jewish. We see this through several of his epistles.
1. All of 2 Cor. 9 deals with this collection.
 2. Paul mentions it in Galatians 2
 3. Again, he mentions it here in Romans 15
 4. With this trip to Jerusalem he is bringing the offering.
Acts 24:17 – "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings."
5. An important aspect of the Christian life deals with how we handle our money.
1. Many hate it when a pastor speaks on this subject. I don't often preach on this topic but when the text points to it I must not refuse.
 2. This is an important subject. God demands generosity, yet generosity does not come naturally. In fact, we are naturally selfish. Generosity has to be learned. James Montgomery Boice: "When the subject of charitable giving comes up, most people assume they are generous. They are not naturally that way, of course, since people are selfish by nature. It is part of what it means to be sinners. We need to be taught to be generous, which is why instruction about giving is a necessary part of all well-rounded Christian preaching."
6. It really speaks to the heart of the Christian experience. When God saves us everything changes. The Christian comes under the Lordship of Christ. We soon learn that this affects everything. The chief thing we must understand regarding our possessions is they do not belong to us. We are stewards of that which belongs to Christ.
7. This morning I want to set this important subject before you. Our text here in Romans 15
- I. Christian giving is practical
Romans 15:24 NAU - "to be helped on my way there by you"
Rom. 15:25 NAU - "but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints."
 - II. Christian giving is purposed
Romans 15:27 NAU - "they are indebted to them. "

- III. Christian giving is proportional
Romans 15:26 NAU - "For Macedonia and Achaia"
 - IV. Christian giving is passionate
Romans 15:26 NAU - "have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem."
 - V. Christian giving is productive
Romans 15:28 NAU - " Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs"
- I. Christian giving is purposed
Romans 15:27 NAS - "Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them."
Paul says they were "pleased" and they were "indebted"
Their giving was something they wanted to do and something they had to do
There is much to be said here
- A. First, God has purposed our giving – it is not an option
 1. There are two types of Christian giving – the tithe and the freewill offering
 2. Neither are optional, yet one contains a fixed amount
 - B. The tithe is fixed – the Hebrew word means “tenth part”
 1. There is much debate today regarding the tithe. They fall into two distinct camps. Those who deny the tithe almost always deny the application of any OT law to the NT believer.
 2. The NT does not allow such a hermeneutic. We’ve seen in the Book of Romans that the Law has to be properly applied. The NT makes certain application of OT law to the believer. With regard to his right to receive from the Corinthians Paul went straight to the OT law – **Deut 25:4**
1 Corinthians 9:7-11 NAU - "Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? ⁸ I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? ⁹ For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? ¹⁰ Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to *thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*. ¹¹ If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?"
 - C. God has also purposed special freewill offerings
 1. These are also mandatory, but there is no fixed amount given to them
 2. Yet, it is surely implied that we owe them.
 3. Paul states that the Gentile Christians should have a particular burden for the Jewish Christians through whom the Gospel came.
Romans 15:27 NAU - "they are indebted to them. "
 4. We have an indebtedness to those who serve a spiritual benefit to us

5. Yes, but in reality, we have an obligation to provide for the needs of every brother in Christ.

Galatians 6:10 NAS - "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

II. Christian giving is practical

Romans 15:24 NAU - "to be helped on my way there by you"

Romans 15:25 NAU - "but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints."

- A. Paul described two ways that giving served practical needs
1. The advance of missions
Romans 15:24 NAU - "to be helped on my way there by you"
 2. Meeting the physical needs of people
Romans 15:25 NAU - "but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints."
- B. Paul had the expectation of being assisted financially by the church of Rome
God has purposed to use us as His instrument of providing for the work of the church. Christians have a duty to provide for their spiritual leaders
1. This also has application to Paul's words in **Verse 27** "they are indebted to them." Most of the spiritual leadership of the early church were Jews.
 2. Paul consistently stated the necessity of providing for the pastoral leaders – those charged with preaching the Word
1 Timothy 5:17 NAU - "The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."
1 Corinthians 9:7-11 NAU - "Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? ⁸ I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? ⁹ For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? ¹⁰ Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*. ¹¹ If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?"
- C. The Bible has much to say about having compassion for the poor
Proverbs 21:13 NAS - "He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered."

III. Christian giving is proportional – Verse 26

The Macedonians were poor and couldn't give as much as the wealthy but they gave and gave liberally

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 KJV - "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; ² How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

- A. God has provided that all give, yet we do not give the same amount
 1. God has ordained proportional giving
 2. This is the nature of the tithe. Someone making 100G will give twice as much as someone making 50G
 3. Paul spoke of the nature of proportionate giving in 1 Cor. 8
2 Cor. 8:12-15 - "For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³ For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality-- ¹⁴ at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their need, so that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your need, that there may be equality; ¹⁵ as it is written, "HE WHO *gathered* MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO *gathered* LITTLE HAD NO LACK."
- B. The Christians in Macedonia were largely poor
 1. They didn't have as much to give. Sadly, the poor are often more generous than the wealthy. Wealth can make us greedy and covetous
 2. Obviously, the saints in Jerusalem were no longer able to give as much. But we should take note that years earlier they gave abundantly
Acts 2:44-45 NAU - "And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need."
 3. This leads to the next principle in Christian giving

IV. Christian giving is passionate

- A. As I said, the Macedonians were poor and didn't have as much to give
 1. Yet, listen to their record
2 Corinthians 8:1-4 NAU - "Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, ² that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. ³ For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord, ⁴ begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints,"
 2. Paul writes here concerning them:
Romans 15:26 NAU - "have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem."

- B. God is pleased by the generosity of our hearts
2 Corinthians 9:7 KJV - "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."
- V. Christian giving is productive
Romans 15:28 NAU - "Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs"
- A. Paul refers to this offering using the word "fruit"
1. Fruit implies bounty, harvest, profit, benefit
 2. Obviously, it was of great benefit to the Church of Jerusalem – they received of the offering and were helped
- B. But what about the giver?
1. There are blessings for the bountiful heart and those who are miserly will suffer to their detriment
 2. Paul also taught this to the Corinthian church
- C. What are some of the benefits of giving?
1. It proves our love genuine
2 Corinthians 8:7-8 NAU - "But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. ⁸ I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also."
 2. Our generosity encourages our brethren
2 Corinthians 9:2 NAU - "for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely*, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them."
 3. There are blessings that flow forth from a generous heart
2 Corinthians 9:6-8 NAU - "Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it is written, "HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER." ¹⁰ Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; ¹¹ you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God."

4. We naturally want to view this through a materialistic eye – so we will have more for ourselves.
 Contrary to the mentality of materialism, God’s blessings of wealth is meant to be given away, not hoarded – remember, it is not ours
 As we faithfully give away our blessings God is faithful to give more
Proverbs 3:9 – “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: ¹⁰ So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”
Proverbs 19:17 – “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”
Proverbs 28:27 – “He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.”
Malachi 3:10 – “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*”
5. God is able to bless us with abundance that transcends the materialism of this world.
2 Corinthians 9:8 NAU - "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;"
6. Your generosity will result in many prayers of thanksgiving being offered up to God.

Conclusion:

1. God expects us to give. But we are not to give out of necessity or grudgingly but liberally and cheerfully. The blessings are beyond measure.
2. If you don’t find great pleasure in giving, pray that God will bless you with generosity. It honors Christ and is a blessing to those who receive it.