

God's Inexpressible Gift Fuels Our Generosity 2 Corinthians 8-9

INTRODUCTION

Gift-giving is a given during Christmastime.

Everybody who observes Christmas gives gifts, don't they? More accurately, we don't give gifts—we trade them. Someone gives me something, so I think, **“Now I've got to give him something.”** So, I run out and get him something comparable in exchange. It feels uncomfortable just to receive without balancing the scale.

At the heart of Christmas is the never-old story that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, born in a humble stable, born to give His life for us on the cross. We cannot possibly even the score by giving back to God. His gift was too great, too precious. And yet, out of gratitude for what He did for us, we should respond from the heart by doing all that we can for Him—not to pay Him back, but to say thank you for such an indescribable gift.

God is a giving God. He gave the most astounding gift imaginable when the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal second person of the Trinity, gave up the splendor of heaven and came to this earth, took on human flesh, and bore our sins on the cross.

I. _____ at God's _____ gift,

Please note 3 truths that emerge from 2 Cor 8:9...

A. The Lord Jesus Christ was _____

B. The Lord Jesus Christ became _____

C. That we (you and me) might become _____

He came so that we who were poor might become rich. How does that happen? **Most of you are familiar with the term guilt by association.** That means if I hang around with a fellow who has committed a crime, I may be considered guilty also because of my close relationship with him. Turn that concept around and you've got Christmas. **It is grace by association.** All the grace of God is available to me because of my relationship with Jesus Christ. The theologians have a word for this as well. **They call it the doctrine of substitution and imputation.** Earlier in this letter, Paul described it: **“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** (2 Cor. 5:21). What a gift!

II. We should become _____ givers. Generosity should be the _____ and _____ of those who belong to the Lord, of those who have _____ from His gift

Here's where things get sticky (remember, this hits my pocketbook just as hard as it hits yours)! But the blow is softened by the motive that permeates these chapters, namely, God's abundant grace toward us in Christ (the Greek word for "**grace**" appears 10 times (8:1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 16, 19; 9:8, 14, 15). Keep God's grace in view and you will be motivated to give, even though it's not always easy. **You can tell that you've lost sight of God's grace when giving when it's more of a duty than a delight.**

With that as a backdrop, let me briefly mention marks of generous giving:

A. Generous giving applies to _____, even the poor (2 Cor 8:2)

Devout believers live above their circumstances. Devout believers give above their circumstances.

B. Generous giving is _____ & _____ (2 Cor 8:3)

C. Generous giving is _____, not _____ (2 Cor 8:3b-4)

D. Generous giving is based on a _____ to Christ and His people (2 Cor 8:5)

E. Generous giving involves _____ and faithful _____ (2 Cor 8:10)

F. Generous giving looks to God as the _____
for generous giving (2 Cor 9:8)

G. Generous giving reaps bountiful results
(2 Cor 9:6, 10-4)

CONCLUSION/INVITATION

Martin Luther said, ***“When a person is converted, 3 conversions are necessary: Head, heart, and purse. And then he concluded: “Purse is the hardest.”*** The real secret to giving is found when we give ourselves totally to Christ. Once we sell out to Him, He has the rest of us.

Will you connect the two this morning – Christmas & giving?
“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.” (2 Cor 8:9)

Will you marvel at God’s indescribable gift – His son? If so, will you commit to being as generous as God has been to us in Christ?