

Lighthouse Bible Church
May 27th, 2012 Morning Service
2nd Corinthians 8: 1 – 7
‘Hidden or Hypocritical Giving’ Pt. #2

Stand – Read – Pray

Last week we looked at Matthew 6: 1 – 4 and the hidden versus the hypocritical act of worship in giving. We saw that the religious leaders did their giving to be seen by men because they, as **John 12: 43**, said, **loved the praises of men more than the praise of God.**

Jesus identified them as hypocrites, as an actor under and assumed character, in their giving, and as we shall see, in their praying and fasting as well.

Jesus said **let your charitable act of giving be done in secret**, not to be seen by men and not to receive the applause of men, **and the Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.**

Jesus, you remember said, **WHEN** you give, because the assumption is that you will give, that He wants you to give with the right heart attitude of worship and desire to glorify God. Remember the issue is never the place of giving but the heart attitude with which you give.

We left off last time wanting to look at our own personal giving from a biblical perspective. In these difficult economic times the tendency is to lay up treasures on earth and not in heaven but Paul told Timothy in **1st Timothy 6: 17** to **not trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things. Ecclesiastes 5: 10 he who loves money will not be satisfied with money nor he who loves abundance, with increase, this is**

So in light of that, we wanted to ask and answer five commonly asked questions about giving and they are:

Why should we give?

How should we give?

When should we give?

How much should we give? and

To whom should we give?

So we are going to look at our passage here in 2nd Corinthians, as well as other places, to answer those questions and more and in no particular order. The first question we want to ask is **WHY SHOULD WE GIVE?**

By the way 2nd Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9 deal with money and possessions and yet the word money is never mentioned in the entire section. It is described in different ways so as to help us understand why we are to give.

There are 4 reasons why we should give (Grace, Blessings, Fellowship, Service) and we will see them as we go.

The first reasons we are to give is *so that we can experience the grace of God and so that we can be the instrument that God would use to share His grace with others.*

Let me show you what I mean. Look at what Verse one says; **moreover, brethren we make known to you the GRACE of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.** That word Grace in verse one is the very same word, *charis*, used in Verse 4, except there it is the word GIFT, ...**that we would receive the gift...**

The gift there is the offering that was collected by the giving of the people of the churches in Macedonia that they wanted to give to Paul to help the church in Jerusalem

Then look at Verse 6. **So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this GRACE in you as well.** Here Paul is saying that he wanted the church at Corinth to also take up an offering that he calls Grace as well.

Look at Verse 7. **But as you abound in everything ... abound in this Grace also.** Paul says as you continue to abound in many Christian virtues, abound in this one too, in this grace, in your giving.

All of these verses talk about money being given by the churches to support others, so when we are talking about giving we are talking about receiving the grace of God as well as being the instrument by which God's grace is given to others through our giving.

One writer said "they didn't give like selfish Christians whose love of the eternal is matched by their love of the temporal, so that everything is a battle because they're still holding on to the world. They didn't give like selfish Christians and they didn't give like the unsaved rich, they gave like totally devout, dedicated, committed, sold out Christians give, and that is they gave magnanimously and generously in response to the work of the grace of God in their hearts. Where you look at someone and you see that sacrificial generosity, you know God is at work in that heart. The grace of God operating through love of the truth and obedience to the Spirit in gratitude, prompts giving."

The second reason for giving is *so that we can experience true fellowship.* Look at Verse 4. **...that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.**

You see, when you give, it is an act of fellowship. That very same word for fellowship, *koinonia*, is used in Chapter 9 and Verse 13 and there it says of their giving; that they gave **liberally Sharing (fellowship) with them and all men.**

In **Hebrews 13: 16** it says **but do not forget to do good and to SHARE, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.** This word share here is the same word, *koinonia*, as sharing and fellowshiping in the other verses. And it says ‘with such sacrifices of giving, sharing and fellowshiping, God is well pleased.

One writer said “so often today, we hear the cry for a need for more fellowship. That may say something about our giving, since giving is one of the key ways we share together with other believers. If your giving is not what it ought to be biblically, you will have a sense of isolation, a sense of not belonging and a lack of fellowship. *Gill Ruch commentary on 2nd Cor.*

A third reason to give is ***that it is an act of Service to others that brings glory to God.*** Look back at Verse 4 again. **That we should receive the gift and the fellowship of the MINISTERING to the saints.**

That word **ministering**, *diakonia*, is where we get the word Deacon from and it means to serve or a servant. So when someone gives, they are actually serving God and serving those to whom they are giving.

In **2nd Corinthians 8: 19 – 20** the same word *diakonia* is used but it is translated there **administered** and there it is talking about the gift, and they call it a **lavish gift** being administered. And the key to that is at the end of Verse 19 where it says the lavish gift was given **to the glory of the Lord Himself.**

In other words, when you give, you are doing it as an act of worship, by serving others and serving the Lord that brings glory to God. Some people may say ‘I don’t know where to serve in the church’. Guess what? One way that all of us can serve and serve faithfully, is by faithfully giving.

A fourth reason why we should give is *to receive a blessing and to be a blessing to others*. You see the word **generous** in Verse 5 and the word **bountifully** in Verse 6? These are both the same word in the original language, it is the word *eulogia* it is where we get our English word ‘eulogy’ from or to pronounce a blessing.

As a matter of fact of the over 30 times that the word *eulogia* is used it is almost always translated blessing. In **Ephesians 1: 3 *blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.***

You can read 2nd Corinthians 9: 5 this way ‘He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and he who sows with blessings will also reap blessings. And you see that is what happens when we give, when we tithe. We become a blessing to others and are blessed from God.

Isn’t that what Jesus said in **Luke 6: 38** when he said **give and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.**

In **Proverbs 11: 24** it says **there is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty.. The generous soul will be made rich and he who waters will also be watered himself.**

Malachi 3: 10 says bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in My house and try Me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessings that there will not be room enough to receive it.

You see, when you give you are a blessing to others and you receive a blessing from God. Have you ever said that you would like to be a blessing in someone's life? Well, you can be;

Just give sacrificially with a servants heart to the glory of God in the fellowship of the saints as an act of the grace of God on the lives of others and the life of this church and I guarantee you will be a blessing to others.

So far, we have not said a word about money. We are talking about more than that, we are talking about worshipping God through our giving and tithing in such a way that:

He is honored and thanked
Others are blessed and served and ministered to
We experience the grace and blessing of God

We need to see our giving and our tithing from this kind of perspective. Look back at 2nd Corinthians 8: 2 for a minute.

Verse 2: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

Paul talks about the churches in Macedonia going through great trials and afflictions and yet they have **an abundance of joy**. He says they are in deep poverty and yet **they abound in the riches of their liberality in giving**.

He says they weren't rich monetarily but they were rich in their generosity in giving. You see, that is the grace of God being bestowed on those churches for their giving and the heart with which they gave.

The grace of God, because of their giving, has given them an abundance of joy, although they were in great affliction. Affliction doesn't have to affect my giving and tithing and my joy as a believer. If God is operating in my life, I have a joy in spite of my circumstances. The world today has joy because of their circumstances, but believers have a joy regardless of them.

Paul is talking about a time that is not so much different than ours and in some ways worse than ours. They were in poverty, partly because of the unjust taxation by the Roman government and the less than honest tax collectors, much like our day today.

They were living in persecution as Christians and that did not allow them to have a business to work and earn money. The job market was just not there for them, much like people say it is today.

The economy of that time was in great turmoil because of the threats of invading armies and the constant threats to overthrow the governments and the corruptness of the government officials.

They were a poor people in a church going through great trials and afflictions and yet they are described as having an abundance of joy and a wealth of liberality in their giving.

Because they knew what many need to understand today; that in the gift of giving liberally came the grace and blessings of God and the fellowship and serving of the saints and a joy that transcends the most difficult circumstances. Then look at Verse 3

Verse 3: for I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, freely willing to give.

What Paul is **bearing witness about** to the Corinthian church is the ability for the other churches to give in spite of their deep poverty and circumstances and persecution and trials and afflictions and economic conditions.

He is saying this to the church at Corinth to motivate them to biblical giving, much like he is saying to us today as well. In spite of an uncertain economy or medical bills or foreclosures or bankruptcies or indebtedness or whatever, that we should be freely willing to give according to our ability and beyond.

Those churches understood that true biblical giving does not change with the changing economy or with what would be perceived as unfair taxes or with whatever financial limitations the government would place on them. **They gave according to their ability and beyond.**

You see, when the grace of God is operating, you have people giving because they want to. When you have people giving as a result of that grace of God operating in them, they are more than willing to give beyond their ability.

Most, if not all of us, can and do give. But how many of us give beyond our ability? You say 'you mean I have to give what I don't have'? No! What the Macedonian churches did and what we are called to do is to make giving a priority that is sacrificial regardless of what we have or don't have.

They gave well beyond what anyone would have expected them to be able to give and they were begging to do it. It says **they implored us with much urgency to receive the gift**, and now they were experiencing the blessings of God in that.

How many of us have that urgency and desire and willingness to give because we want to experience God's special grace and fellowship and be a blessing to others as we serve them through giving?

But notice what must come first before our giving and it is found in Verse 5.

Verse 5: and not only as we had hoped, but they FIRST gave themselves to the Lord and then to us by the will of God.

You see, the foundation for biblical giving is that one must **first give themselves to the Lord**. God was the first priority of their lives and ministry and because of that, they were willing to give beyond their ability, beyond what they had to Him and then trust Him to meet their every need. They believed what **Philippians 4: 19** says **my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus**.

They understood that their supreme act of worship is not in giving of their money or attending church or singing songs, as important as those are, but in giving of themselves and us giving ourselves totally and completely to God of which then our giving and attending and singing become acceptable acts of worship to Him.

So those are some of the reasons why we should give and now let's look at HOW WE SHOULD GIVE and in that we will answer the other 3 questions as well. There are four ways in which we should give: when

1) ***Regularly***. **1st Corinthians 16: 1 -2** says **now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also. ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collection when I come.**

According to **Acts 20: 7** the churches met on the first day of the week, which is Sunday, he says give on that day. That is what we do. The benefits of regular giving is that you regularly experience the grace of God, the fellowship of the believers and the joy of serving others and the blessing of worshipping this way.

You say, I only get paid once a month or twice a month or once a season or whatever. Well, you can divide that income into weekly giving so as to help you become more regular in your giving and to more regularly experience the blessing of God. Secondly you should give proportionately. How much

2) *give proportionately*: **1st Corinthians 16: 2** says **let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper**. You give as God has given to you and prospered you. Which assumes that you can know how God has prospered. Which means we must evaluate our finances and possessions regularly.

How has God prospered you materially, financially? What do you have and are you giving proportionately? You say ‘well, I don’t have much and I would give more if I had it’. Well, giving is not a matter of how much you have, it is the heart attitude in which you give no matter how much you give or have.

The churches in Macedonia were rich, but not in money. They were rich in liberality, in generosity in giving. it had nothing to do with what they had but with the heart attitude in which they gave it and that is where they were rich. They probably did not have a lot to give but they gave generously what they did have.

That is why **2nd Corinthians 8: 12** says that we are to **give according to what we have, not according to what we don’t have**. I am not expected to give as much as someone else who has much more. I am expected to give out of what I have. I am expected to give more than someone who has less than I do.

And please notice what it does not say; it does not say nor is it ever stated in the New Testament how much a believer is to give, because we all have differing amounts, we have all been blessed by God in different ways.

Most people believe that you are supposed to give 10% and there is nothing wrong with that but it is not a biblical command. That probably comes from when Abraham came out and was met by Melchizedek and Abraham gave him 10% of all in **Genesis 14: 20** says or Jacob in **Genesis 28: 22** giving a 10th of all God had given him, back to Him.

3) *give willingly and with Premeditation*: The Scripture commands that we give **as we purpose in our hearts** according to **2nd Corinthians 9: 7** this has to do with a willingness to give and to give what you plan in your heart, as you **purposed** in your heart. In other words you pre-planned, premeditated, had forethought on how much you would give, on what you would give.

It suggests planning. The person who is purposeful and premeditated in their giving, gives what they have purposed, what they have planned. There is nothing wrong with 5 dollars a week or 500 dollars a week if that is your planned, purposeful giving as the Spirit has directed in your heart.

By the way that Passage in **2nd Corinthians 9: 7** says **so let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver**. That word grudgingly means with pain or sorrow or grief. It grieves or pains some people when they have to give.

Or they do it out of necessity, like they feel they have to out of duty and not out of desire to honor God. He goes on to say that **God loves a cheerful giver**. That word **love** is the strongest kind of *agape* love. And that word **cheerful** is the word *hilaros* and it is where we get our English word hilarious from.

One writer said “there is usually little hilarity in the pews when the offering plate is passed in church. In fact, the atmosphere more often reminds us of a patient waiting in the dentist chair who knows a painful extraction is about to occur. *Workbook on Financial Seminar – Spragues*

If I view giving as a privilege and if there is joy in my giving, that pleases God. You will have to decide for yourself about your giving, it is a personal thing because it takes place in the heart first, as you purpose in your heart with the right kind of heart attitude, then you will give.

One writer said “the danger of giving is that it can be treated as simply another bill to be paid, and by not having the correct attitude I do not put myself in a position to receive the blessings God has for me when I give. *IBID Workbook.*

4) **give Bountifully: 2nd Corinthians 9: 6 says Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully.**

This 4th way of giving is establishing the principle that believers are to be generous, like those of the Macedonian churches. Remember what **Proverbs 11: 24 – 25** said **there is one who scatters yet increases more and there is one who withholds more than is right but it leads to poverty and the generous soul will be made rich.**

It is like the planting of a field. You spread the seed and you receive a greater harvest.

Maybe you have never tithed or given before because you were not sure of what to give or when or how to give or why you should give. Hopefully this has answered some of the questions for you.

Maybe you only tithe once in a while when you have some extra money or when all the other bills are pain. Well, trying giving God your first fruits and see what He will do in your life in blessing you. Make Him your first priority.

You may say, 'I just put my money in a box, it doesn't go to God does it?'. Well, let's look at what your tithe does:

First of all, to be very clear, this church and every Bible believing church was, as **Acts 20: 28** says, **purchased with Christ's own blood**, right. The church is important to Him. What has God called the church to do?

Take care of the poor, orphans and widows: **James 1: 27** **pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this; to visit the orphans and widows...** **1st Timothy 5: 3, 16** the church is to **care for widows**. Those that don't have family, this church is responsible to care for and meet their needs, which includes financially, if they cant.

To Evangelize the World: **Matthew 28: 19 – 20** **go into all the world, to all nations and make disciples...** So we give to support missionaries, and teaching locally and elsewhere, including S.S. Bible studies etc.

Pay those who Teach the Word: **1st Timothy 5: 17 – 18** **let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. You shall not muzzle an ox..**

The practical side is that there are and will be monthly bills to take care of such as rent, utilities, supplies etc.

All of that to keep a church functioning the way God intends it to so that He can use it to further His kingdom. And you all become a part of that as you give.

You become the instrument that God uses, through your giving, to meet the needs of those in need.

You become the instrument that God uses, through your giving, to train and send out someone who can share the gospel and lead someone to Christ.

You become the instrument that God uses, through your giving, to provide for your Pastor or Elder to be freed to study and prepare and present the Word of God so that you and others around you can grow in your faith.

You become the instrument that God uses, through your giving, to meet the practical, everyday needs in the church so that people can come here and worship and hear the word and grow in their faith or come to know Christ as their Savior and reach out to the lost.

Giving is a vital part of worshipping God, but we can do it in hypocrisy as the Pharisees did to be seen by men or we can do it from a heart of love that compels us to want to give for God's glory and to receive His grace and to enjoy the fellowship of the saints and to be a service to others.

Let me close by saying this. God does not need our money. He owns the cattle on every hill and the wealth in every mine. He choose the act of giving, not as a way of raising money but as His way of raising people into the likeness of His Son.

Jesus said in **Luke 16: 11** therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous money who will commit to your trust the true spiritual riches.

Closing prayer

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Introduction and Review:

5 questions commonly asked about giving

Why should we give?

Verse 1, 6 - 7: so that we can _____

Verse 4: so that we can _____
2nd Corinthians 9: 13, Hebrews 13: 16

Verse 4: it is an act of _____
2nd Corinthians 8: 19 – 20

Verse 5: to receive a ... and to be a _____
Ephesians 1: 3, 2nd Corinthians 9: 6
Luke 6: 38, Proverbs 11: 24, Malachi 3: 10

Verse 2: Affliction and Joy – Poverty and Riches & Liberality

Verse 3: Freely giving to their ability and beyond their ability

Verse 5: Giving themselves FIRST to the Lord
Philippians 4: 19

How we should give:

1) 1st Corinthians 16: 1 – 2 _____
Acts 20: 7

2) 1st Corinthians 16: 2 _____
2nd Corinthians 8: 12, Genesis 14: 20, 28: 22

3) 2nd Corinthians 9: 7 _____

4) 2nd Corinthians 9: 6 _____
Proverbs 11: 24 – 25

Giving to the Local Church:

Acts 20: 28, James 1: ;27, 1st Timothy 5: 3, 16
Matthew 28: 19 – 20, 1st Timothy 5: 17 – 18
Luke 16: 11

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